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Racial Politics in the Contemporary Prison Society: The Importance of Race and Ethnicity to Prison Social Organization

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Abstract:

Prior research documents race and ethnicity as central to how individuals navigate the social and physical space of prisons. Racial segregation persists as a feature of prison life, and in navigating this racialized structure, racial groups construct and enforce a set of racialized norms to govern behavior (i.e., the “racial code”) that reinforce and reify prison racial politics. These processes, however, have remained largely descriptive in nature. Using data from a sample of incarcerated men in Arizona prisons ($N = 251$), this paper extends prior work by operationalizing the concept of the racial code, assessing its dimensionality, distinguishing it from the prison code, and differentiating how features of prison social organization influence racial code adherence and mobilization. Results suggest that the racial code is distinct from the prison code, and that racial differences exist in the extent of adhering to versus mobilizing the racial code, net of gang status.

Keywords: race, ethnicity, incarceration, corrections, gangs, prisons

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Introduction

Race and ethnicity are salient features of prison social organization. Oftentimes, the importance of racial and ethnic identity in the social order of prisons is narrowly discussed within the context of gang membership (e.g., Skarbek, 2014; Trammell, 2012). Research has only recently begun to focus on the racialized order of prisons, in which race and ethnicity are unique dimensions of the social order that dictate norms and rules organized around race as a socially ascribed status (e.g., Bloch & Olivares-Pelayo, 2021; Furst, 2017; Goodman, 2008, 2014; Lopez-Aguado, 2018; Walker, 2016). This is an important oversight given the history of racialized punishment in the United States and how mass incarceration has qualitatively changed the nature of prison organization over the last 40 years. Mass incarceration exacerbated racial and ethnic disparities in the American prison system (Alexander, 2010; Clear & Frost, 2015; Western, 2006), effectively centering prisons as “race making” institutions in our society that construct, reproduce, and perpetuate inequalities (Goodman, 2008, 2014; Wacquant, 2001; Walker, 2016). Consequently, as prisons became more racially diverse, scholars began to observe changes in the way incarcerated individuals socially organized that directly challenged traditional theories of prison order, increased racialized violence, and presented issues for institutional safety and control (Hemmens & Stohr, 2014; Skarbek, 2014; Wacquant, 2001).

In particular, amid the racial diversification of the prison landscape during mass incarceration, a new racialized prison order emerged in which racial and ethnic identity became the predominant organizing features of the prison society, both at the institutional- and individual-level (Goodman, 2008; Walker, 2016). From the “top down,” correctional institutions implemented a classification system designed to identify and segregate men (e.g., where they housed and with whom) according to gang status, which often meant a reliance on race and

ethnicity as a proxy for gang affiliation (Bloch & Olivares-Pelayo, 2021; Goodman, 2008). Despite pre-existing racial, ethnic, or gang identities, upon entering the carceral space, men were required to identify with a set of monoracial categories that dictated all behavior and socialization in prison thereafter (Lopez-Aguado, 2018). This is because the institutionalization of racial segregation encouraged the emergence of informal codes and norms that further specified how these racial categories are performed, negotiated, and enacted at the individual-level (Bloch & Olivares-Pelayo, 2021). The institution giving race meaning in this context essentially required that racial groups adapt by implementing their own race-based rules to govern the intra- and inter-group dynamics of this newly racialized space. These “bottom up” processes whereby racial groups navigate the racialized structure of the institution by assigning rules surrounding racial group membership and behavior are often referred to as racial politics (Bloch & Olivares-Pelayo, 2021).

An emerging body of research has explicitly centered race and ethnicity as key organizing features of the prison society, documenting evidence of racial group categorization and the performance of racial politics in prison (Bloch & Olivares-Pelayo, 2021; Furst, 2017; Goodman, 2008, 2014; Lopez-Aguado, 2018; Walker, 2016). This research, however, is predominantly descriptive in nature, and has yet to unpack how these “bottom up” processes take shape to reinforce and reify racial politics. In particular, little is known about the informal racial code of conduct (i.e., the racial code) that arguably bridges the gap between institutional racial classification and the enactment of racial categories to participate in the racial politics of prison.

Using data from the Arizona Living and Working in Prison Project, the present study builds on prior work by operationalizing the concept of the racial code, evaluating its dimensionality, distinguishing it from the more traditional prison code,¹ and examining how features of prison social organization influence one’s adherence to and willingness to mobilize the racial code. In

doing so, we aim to clarify the distinctive importance of gang status and the prison code in influencing racial code adoption to provide a better understanding of how correctional approaches may produce and/or exacerbate both intra- and interracial tensions conducive to violence.

Background

Race, Ethnicity, and the Prison Code

Seminal works documenting the social organization of prisons unveiled a prison code that was thought to be universally understood by all who were imprisoned. Conceptually, the prison code has been characterized as “an inmate-defined and regulated culture consisting of a set of values that governs behaviors and interactions with inmates and correctional staff” (Mitchell, 2018, p. 3). These values dictate that incarcerated individuals should be loyal to other incarcerated individuals, maintain an image of strength and toughness, and avoid close interactions with correctional staff (Clemmer, 1940; Mitchell et al., 2017; Sykes, 1958; Sykes & Messinger, 1960). Recent scholarship investigating the dimensionality of the prison code supports the existence of four unique dimensions encompassing these values: masculinity, invisibility, strategic survival, and social distance (Mitchell, 2018; Mitchell et al., 2020). Operationalized by Mitchell (2018), the masculinity dimension taps into aspects of the code that prize toughness and strength. The invisibility dimension captures components of the code that encourage incarcerated people to “do their own time”, never snitch, and keep to themselves. The strategic survival component encourages hyper independence and excessive caution out of a belief that everyone is essentially “on their own” in prison. Finally, social distance captures tenets of the code that emphasize avoiding the development of any kind of trusting or vulnerable relationship with correctional staff.

Despite recent advancements made in the way of conceptualizing and operationalizing the prison code, the foundational studies in this area primarily focused on theorizing the origins and

tenets of the prison code, which fell into two major camps: deprivation and importation.² Consequently, seminal works documenting prison life in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s—while valuable—did not center race or ethnicity as key organizing features of prison life. Part of this omission is attributable to the prison population characteristics at the time which were largely White and racially homogenous (Langan, 1991). Most scholars acknowledged the racially-segregated aspect of prison social organization at the time, but did not give attention to how racial and ethnic cleavages might disrupt the solidarity created by the traditional prison code.

It was not until the 1970s and 1980s that research began to focus on how race relations shaped prison social organization in the context of an increasingly diverse prison population (e.g., Carroll, 1974; Irwin, 1970, 1980; Jacobs, 1977, 1979). As prisons became more racially heterogenous, racialized violence ensued that reinforced pre-existing practices of informal racial segregation as a necessary mechanism of protection, and further helped construct race- and ethnicity-based organizations (Irwin, 1980). By the 1970s, “race [had become] the most important determinant of an individual’s prison experience” (Jacobs, 1979, p. 15), dictating the division of public space and the governance of daily prison life (Irwin, 1980; Jacobs, 1979). At this point, however, the carceral system had yet to experience the detrimental effects of the War on Drugs and the various “tough on crime” policies that dramatically increased racial disparities in incarceration and significantly altered the racial and ethnic landscape of the American prison system (Clear & Frost, 2015; Travis et al., 2014). Indeed, research since has still not kept pace with the effects of mass incarceration on the dynamics of the contemporary prison society (Kreager & Kruttschnitt, 2018). Today, scholars continue to study the social organization of prisons through the lens of the traditional prison code (e.g., Crewe, 2005; Mitchell, 2018; Mitchell et al., 2020;

Ricciardelli, 2014; Trammell, 2012); with much less research investigating the social order of prisons through a lens in which race is a central organizing feature of the prison social system.

Race, Ethnicity, and Prison Gangs

The changing racial and ethnic landscape of American prisons during mass incarceration disrupted the order generated by the traditional prison code and made way for a new racially-fragmented carceral order to emerge in its place; one in which race and ethnicity became central to an individual's prison experience and race-based gangs became the primary authoritarians of the prison social order (Hemmens & Marquart, 1999; Skarbek, 2014; Trammell, 2012; Wooldredge, 2020). The confluence of the racial diversification of the prison system, prison overcrowding, and the rise in prison gangs created an environment rife with tension that caused serious concerns for institutional safety due to increases in racially-motivated violence against staff and incarcerated individuals (Hemmens & Stohr, 2014; Noll, 2012). In response, prison administrators implemented a classification system to minimize interracial violence by means of segregating individuals along gang membership lines (i.e., by security threat group [STG]; (Griffin & Hepburn, 2006), often relying on race as a proxy for gang affiliation (Pyrooz & Mitchell, 2020).

To capture the complex imposition of power among incarcerated individuals, correctional officers, and prison administrators, Goodman (2008) adopted the term “negotiated settlement.” Essentially, during the prison intake process, correctional staff “sort” people based on socially-constructed, monoracial categories (e.g., White, Black, Hispanic, and Other) that dictate where and with whom people are housed (Bloch & Olivares-Pelayo, 2021). Newly incarcerated individuals must “declare a racial identifier and gang affiliation” that manages all assignments, including expectations for socializing (Bloch & Olivares-Pelayo, 2021, p. 7). In this way, these pseudo-racial categorizations are influenced by those who do the categorizing (prison officials) as

well as by those who are categorized (incarcerated individuals); thus, racialization is created and reproduced at multiple levels (Bloch & Olivares-Pelayo, 2021; Trammell, 2012). Consequently, in the contemporary prison setting, prison gangs are considered the main source of prison social organization both informally—as they enforce norms of racial division—and formally, as correctional administrators use STG status to reinforce security (Griffin et al., 2013).

While the emergence of gang conflict in prison served as a catalyst for race-based institutional segregation, race is, and continues to be, “*the* [emphasis added] defining characteristic of prison gangs” (Mitchell et al., 2017, p. 7) and most dominant influence on prison behavior (Bloch & Olivares-Pelayo, 2021; Goodman, 2008; Trulson et al., 2006). Racial solidarity is viewed as necessary for survival in prison; therefore, loyalty to one’s gang comes secondary to loyalty to one’s racial group (Lopez-Aguado, 2018). Upon incarceration, individuals embark on a process of reframing previous racial/ethnic and gang identities to not only identify themselves by the monoracial categories available to them, but to also successfully “perform” their race and abide by the informal code of conduct enforced by their racial group (Lopez-Aguado, 2018). Consequently, understanding the extent to which gang status is associated with racial code adoption, net of race and ethnicity, is warranted. By institutionalizing the racialization of prison space, correctional institutions may unknowingly perpetuate a system of racial politics that constructs, reinforces, and/or aggravates intra- and interracial divisions conducive to violence that may not entirely be rooted in gang conflict.

The Emergence of Prison Racial Politics

Evidence of a racialized prison society has been interspersed throughout literature seeking to understand the social structure of prison life (e.g., Carroll, 1974; Jacobs, 1979); however, research explicitly centering race as a key feature of prison social organization is in nascent stages.

Only a handful of studies have emerged on this topic in the past decade (e.g., Bloch & Olivares-Pelayo, 2021; Dolovich, 2011, 2012; Furst, 2017; Walker, 2016), with research focusing almost exclusively on description (rather than explanation) of racial formation and categorization processes taking place in correctional facilities (Bloch & Olivares-Pelayo, 2021; Furst, 2017; Goodman, 2008; Lopez-Aguado, 2018). Research on “race making” in prison has emphasized the construction of race at the institutional level for risk management purposes (Goodman, 2008; Lopez-Aguado, 2018). This “top down” race-making process, however, may result in greater interracial conflict due to how race is performed among incarcerated individuals from the “bottom up” (Bloch & Olivares-Pelayo, 2021). By giving race meaning in this context, the institution creates a stratified prison society in which groups are formed along racial lines and intergroup hostility is amplified (Tapia et al., 2014).

The “bottom up” process whereby racial groups navigate the racialized structure of the institution by assigning rules surrounding racial group membership and behavior has been referred to as “racial politics” (Bloch & Olivares-Pelayo, 2021; Lopez-Aguado, 2018; Walker, 2016). Enforced by gang “shot callers,” informal racial politics govern movement, behavior, and socialization in jail and prison settings (Lopez-Aguado, 2018; Skarbek, 2014; Trammell, 2012; Walker, 2016). Upon entering the facility, individuals are given the rules of their racial/ethnic group by a “high status” incarcerated individual including “where he can walk; which sink, toilet, and shower to use; and where *his* [emphasis in original] tables are” (Walker, 2016, p. 1064). Rules even dictate the timing of mandated group workouts and the maintenance of personal hygiene/appearance (Bloch & Olivares-Pelayo, 2021).

Racial politics also prohibit the development of bonds across racial lines, which may increase racial tension and the likelihood of conflict. So, while this racial classification system is

in place as a mechanism for deterring racialized violence, a major consequence of racializing prison space is the potential for inciting racially-motivated violence (Dolovich, 2011, 2012; Goodman, 2014; Lopez-Aguado, 2018). By “choosing” to affiliate with a particular racial or ethnic group, members enter into a “series of complicated decisions that require him to perform tests of loyalty and acts of violence in adherence to a strict ‘code of conduct’” (Bloch & Olivares-Pelayo, 2021, p. 1330). When conflict arises between members of opposing racial groups, the situation escalates into larger intergroup conflict wherein full racial groups feel obligated to participate or face the consequences (Bloch & Olivares-Pelayo, 2021; Skarbek, 2014). Thus, racial politics promote interracial violence, but also encourage intra-racial policing to keep all group members in line, maintain their group’s reputation, and evade conflict with other races (Skarbek, 2014).

While this body of work has proved insightful for understanding how institutional- and individual-level racial categorization facilitates a racialized social order, research has yet to empirically examine the racialized code of conduct (i.e., the racial code) that facilitates racial politics performance. We conceptualize the racial code as an informal race-based code of conduct that structures social interactions and governs intergroup behavior in prison by dictating a set of norms and rules regarding racial group membership. These norms encourage adherence to beliefs surrounding racial segregation and obedience and loyalty to one’s race, as well as a willingness to mobilize misconduct and/or violence in defense of one’s racial group. Thus, whereas racial categorization is conducive to constructing race at an institutional level, the racial code may function as a necessary precursor to the performance of race at the individual level.

Indeed, differences in the adoption of the racial code in terms of belief versus willingness to activate said beliefs may produce variation in the extent to which individuals engage with racial prison politics. Most individuals report participation in racial politics as a survival strategy to

navigate the racialized order of prisons; one that is dependent on learning the general norms of racial group membership to protect and position oneself within the racialized carceral order (Lopez-Aguado, 2018). While norms governing racial group membership are acknowledged as a necessary adaptation to prison life, individuals still maintain some level of agency when navigating integrated spaces to “disrupt” racial politics when they do not agree with how it is enacted (Walker, 2016). Thus, it is likely that many individuals adhere to the general beliefs surrounding racial group membership in accordance with the code (e.g., obedience, loyalty, segregation), but fewer demonstrate a willingness to mobilize violence in service of their race. These nuances in beliefs versus activation potentially condition differences in actual behavior. Therefore, understanding the extent of racial politics participation in prison first necessitates a general understanding of the nature and extent of adoption of the racialized codes that precede potential behavior.

In sum, a contemporary understanding of prison social organization requires an explicit focus on race and ethnicity, especially with regard to the racial code that emerges from a racialized prison space and facilitates and perpetuates prison racial politics. Unlike the prison code which develops in response to poor prison conditions (e.g., pains of imprisonment and negative prison relations; Sykes, 1958; Sykes & Messinger, 1960) and the importation of attitudes and values from the street (e.g., code of the street; Mitchell et al., 2017), the racial code is a norm-based adaptation that is largely sourced from the “top down” institutional prison policies dictating the racialization of prison space. While both racial and prison codes are likely at play in the contemporary prison society, we know relatively little about how these codes of conduct are interrelated. Furthermore, given the inextricable links between race and gang membership, an explicit focus on how gang status is associated with the adoption of the racial code, net of race and ethnicity, is warranted. Accordingly, the current study seeks to build on extant work centering race and ethnicity in the

study of prison social organization by: 1) operationalizing the concept of the racial code; 2) investigating its dimensionality; 3) distinguishing it from the prison code; and 4) examining how features of prison social organization (i.e., gang status and prison code) are associated with adherence to and a willingness to mobilize the racial code in service of racial politics. In doing so, we provide a better understanding of how race and ethnicity might be a neglected component of the prison social system, with implications for institutional safety, management, and control.

Methods

Data and Sample

The current study uses interview-based survey data from the Arizona Working and Living in Prison Project, a longitudinal study of the impact of restrictive housing on the mental health of adult male incarcerated individuals in Arizona over a 1-year period. The study used a prospective cohort design to interview incarcerated men at three time points. Baseline interviews were conducted in September 2017 through August 2018 and were open to all adult men incarcerated in Arizona who had at least 1 year to serve on their sentence and were within 3 weeks of their permanent placement in maximum custody, close custody, or medium custody in the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry (ADCRR).³ The inclusion criteria for the baseline interviews required that the men were either entering ADCRR from county jail to start a new sentence, returning to prison due to a parole violation, or reclassifying to maximum custody from a lower custody placement within ADCRR. Of those eligible for inclusion in the study, 57.9% participated, resulting in a baseline sample of 326 men. Follow up interviews were then held at 6 months and 12 months from baseline. At the 6-month interview, 288 men participated (88.3%) and at the 12-month interview, 266 men participated (81.6%).⁴ After accounting for missing data,⁵ the final sample size includes 251 incarcerated men who participated in interviews across all three

time points. Approximately 36% of the sample identified as Hispanic, 29% as White, 20% as Other, and 15% as Black (see Table 1 for descriptive statistics). These statistics are comparable to the racial and ethnic demographics of prisons in the state of Arizona (with the exception of White individuals being somewhat underrepresented; Shinn, 2021).

[Insert Table 1 about here]

Measures

Racial Code. The racial code is operationalized as men's self-reported agreement on a set of racialized norms and rules that encourage adherence to beliefs regarding racial segregation, obedience and loyalty, and varying degrees of one's willingness to mobilize misconduct and/or violence in defense of their race. Accordingly, a 7-item scale comprised of two hypothesized factors—adherence (4-item subscale; $\alpha = .86$) and mobilization (3-item subscale; $\alpha = .91$)—was constructed capturing men's agreement with seven racial codes at the 12-month interview (1 = *Strongly disagree* to 5 = *Strongly agree*; see Table 2 for the list of items). Items were averaged to create the scale where higher scores reflect greater racial code adoption.

Prison Code. To assess how the racial and prison codes might be interrelated yet distinct constructs, a 9-item composite measure of the prison code was included from the 12-month interview. This measure was adapted from prior literature asking respondents the extent to which they agreed (1 = *Strongly disagree* to 5 = *Strongly agree*) with several statements tapping three interrelated dimensions of Mitchell's (2018) pre-validated scale: invisibility (3-item subscale; $\alpha = .51$), masculinity (3-item subscale; $\alpha = .66$), and strategic survival (3-item subscale; $\alpha = .62$). A focus on the individual subscales of the prison code was deemed important given the substantive differences in these concepts that may exert unique associations with the racial code. Higher scores reflect greater obedience to the prison code (see Table 2 for the list of items).⁶

Gang Status. Given the “top down” processes of race-based sorting that is often highly conflated with gang status but largely driven by racial and ethnic identity, we would expect race, ethnicity, and gang status to be strong correlates of the racial code. Gang status is measured dichotomously (1 = Yes), asking respondents whether they had ever been affiliated with a street or prison gang, with about 34% reporting gang affiliation.

Relevant Correlates

Dummy variables (1 = Yes) for respondent race (White, Black, Hispanic, Other,⁷ with White as the reference category) were included from the baseline interview in addition to respondent age (in years) and a dummy variable (1 = Yes) measuring if the respondent had served at least one prior prison term. A 6-item subscale of the Symptom Checklist-90-Revised (SCL-90-R; Derogatis 1994) measuring hostility was also included.⁸ Respondents demonstrating a predisposition for general hostility may be prone to demonstrating intergroup hostility and, thus, potentially greater adoption of the racial code. Consequently, items from the 6-month interview were averaged to create this measure where higher scores indicate greater hostility ($\alpha = .82$).

Several indicators capturing prison conditions and experiences were included due to the theoretical salience of prison deprivations in influencing prison code adoption (Sykes, 1958; Sykes & Messinger, 1960). Negative relations were assessed at the 6-month interview and asked participants about negative experiences during incarceration using an 11-item scale (Listwan et al., 2013). Participants were asked to report how often several events occurred over the last 6 months (1 = *Never* to 4 = *Often*). Items were averaged to create a mean score, with higher scores reflecting more frequent negative relations ($\alpha = .84$). Pains of imprisonment was measured using a 19-item scale ($\alpha = .88$; Rocheleau, 2013) asking participants how hard over the last 6 months a number of items had been for them (1 = *Not hard at all* to 5 = *Extremely hard*). Items were

averaged to create a mean score, with higher scores reflecting greater pains of imprisonment. Lastly, custody level was measured using a series of dummy variables (minimum, medium, close, and maximum custody; 1 = Yes) indicating the security level of the unit each respondent was housed during the 12-month interview. Maximum custody is the reference category.

Analytic Strategy

The analysis proceeds in four stages. First, we examine levels of agreement with items on the racial code to assess the extent to which incarcerated men reportedly adhered to and mobilized this code. Second, we test the dimensionality of the racial code using a series of nested confirmatory factor analytic models. Guided by prior research suggesting variation in demonstrated belief versus activation of the code in service of racial politics, we compare a unidimensional factor model to a correlated two-factor model comprised of two interrelated dimensions: adherence and mobilization.⁹ Once the best fitting model is identified, the third stage of the analysis focuses on differentiating the racial code from the prison code in terms of key correlates. Specifically, we seek to establish whether the racial code is a distinct feature of prison social organization that maintains unique associations with key variables net of the variance explained by the prison code. To test this, we estimate a series of bivariate and partial correlations between the racial code subscale scores, the prison code, and key criteria. The final stage of the analysis focuses on understanding the factors associated with the racial code in a multivariable context, namely how features of prison social organization frame adherence to and mobilization of the racial code. Given the continuous nature of the racial code, a series of ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions are estimated.¹⁰

Results

Scope of Racial Code Adherence and Mobilization

The first stage of the analysis explores the extent to which incarcerated men reportedly adhered to the racial code. Table 2 shows levels of agreement across each item in the racial code grouped by the hypothesized factors, adherence and mobilization. Results demonstrate that a majority of individuals (between 55% and 68%) agreed that it was important to be loyal, obey, and defend their racial group at all costs. To a lesser, but still noteworthy extent, respondents agreed that it was also important to segregate by race for protection (39%). When examining the set of items capturing a willingness to mobilize misconduct and/or violence in service of these racialized beliefs, however, respondents demonstrated greater hesitation to comply. Specifically, between 20% and 26% of respondents agreed that it was important to do what the people in their racial group told them even if it meant risking getting a ticket or beating, injuring, or harming someone. Even fewer respondents agreed (15%) that it was important to make sacrifices for their racial group if it meant harming themselves or others. Thus, consistent with literature describing the processes of racial politics, individuals in this sample vary in the extent to which they adhere to and demonstrate a willingness to actually mobilize the racial code in service of their race. For comparison purposes, differences in agreement across prison code dimensions are also presented in Table 2. A majority of respondents adhered to the invisibility and masculinity dimensions, but fewer adhered to the strategic survival dimension.

[Insert Table 2 about here]

Dimensionality of the Racial Code

The second stage of the analysis examines the dimensionality of the racial code. The results of the confirmatory factor models show that a correlated two-factor model provides a better fit to the data than a single factor model (see Table 3).¹¹ Therefore, the racial code is comprised of two distinct dimensions, which we refer to as adherence and mobilization. The dimensionality of the

racial code is further confirmed in Table 4 when investigating the factor loadings across the two dimensions. The adherence dimension of the racial code is comprised of four items that capture an individual's general compliance with a set of norms that dictate expectations for racial group membership (factor loadings: .75 – .88); whereas the mobilization dimension is comprised of three items that capture a willingness or proclivity to engage in misconduct and/or violence in defense of their race (factor loadings: .88 – .93).

[Insert Tables 3 and 4 about here]

Distinguishing Racial and Prison Codes

Having established the existence of two factors of the racial code, the analysis turns to distinguishing the racial code from the prison code in terms of theoretically relevant criteria.¹² Table 5 demonstrates the bivariate and partial correlations between the racial code subscale scores, the prison code, and key covariates. While the racial code was highly correlated with all three dimensions of the prison code, especially strategic survival, the racial code appears to be a distinct aspect of the prison social organization with unique correlates. Black respondents were less likely to participate in racial politics, but appear more likely to adhere to the prison code (when accounting for the variance explained by the racial code). Hispanic individuals, on the other hand, were more likely to adhere to and mobilize the racial code. Individuals who fall into the Other racial category were not significantly associated with the racial code, but were associated with a lower adherence to the prison code. Identifying as White was not significantly associated with either racial or prison code adoption. Consistent with prison society literature, indicators of a poor prison environment demonstrated greater alignment with the prison code; however, we did not see these same associations for the racial code. Thus, it appears the factors associated with racial code adherence and mobilization may extend beyond environmental effects.

[Insert Table 5 about here]

Antecedents of the Racial Code

The final stage of the analysis explores the antecedents of adherence to and mobilization of the racial code. Table 6 shows a series of OLS regressions of racial code adherence on key prison social organization variables (i.e., gang status and prison code). Model 1 assesses the effect of gang status on racial code adherence, Models 2 through 4 assess the independent effects of each prison code dimension on racial code adherence, and Model 5 represents the comprehensive model in which all key variables are included.¹³ In Model 1 (Table 6), there was no association between identifying as a gang member and adherence. However, similar to the correlation analysis, Black individuals were significantly less likely to adhere to the racial code relative to their White counterparts. Identifying as Hispanic, being younger, and reporting greater hostility were associated with a greater likelihood of racial code adherence. Further, in Models 2 through 4 (Table 6), each dimension of the prison code is significantly related to racial code adherence, with the strategic survival dimension demonstrating the strongest effect ($B = 0.51; p < .001$). In Model 5 (Table 6), in addition to the racial and ethnic effects, only the masculinity and strategic survival dimensions were significantly associated with adherence to the racial code, with strategic survival still demonstrating the greatest association ($B = 0.37; p < .001$).

[Insert Table 6 and 7 about here]

Table 7 assesses the aforementioned relationships focusing on the second subscale of the racial code, mobilization. Similar to the models testing adherence to the racial code, in Table 7, Model 1 tests the effect of gang status on racial code mobilization, Models 2 through 4 assess the individual effects of each prison code dimension on mobilization, and Model 5 represents the comprehensive model. Much like the adherence subscale, in Model 1 (Table 7) gang status has no

effect on mobilization; however, identifying as Black or Other race, reporting at least one prior prison term, and levels of hostility were significantly associated with racial code mobilization. Black respondents and those identifying as Other were significantly less likely than their White counterparts to report an affinity for the mobilization of misconduct and/or violence in service of their race, while those with a prior prison record and greater hostility were more likely to report a willingness to mobilize the racial code. Unlike racial code adherence, there was no ethnic effect on mobilization.

In Models 2 through 4 in Table 7, we see a similar pattern to the adherence subscale in that all three dimensions of the prison code were associated with a greater likelihood to mobilize the racial code, especially for the strategic survival dimension ($B = 0.43; p < .001$). In the full model, only masculinity, strategic survival, and prior prison term were associated with increased mobilization beliefs, with strategic survival demonstrating the strongest effect ($B = 0.40; p < .001$), while identifying as Black was significantly associated with a decreased willingness to mobilize the code. Thus, similar to the partial correlation analysis, it appears that the prison environment (i.e., negative relations and pains of imprisonment) and gang status play a minimal role in shaping adherence to and mobilization of the racial code. Instead, race, ethnicity, and obedience to the prison code, especially strategic survival, play a larger role in adhering to racialized codes, and the likelihood of mobilizing misconduct, especially violence, in defense of this code.

Discussion

In a special introduction for the 2007 edition of *The Society of Captives*, Bruce Western observed that, “these days, we tend to look in free society for the prison’s significance” (Sykes, 1958 [2007], p. x). In other words, scholars seek to evaluate the true impact of incarceration by looking to its collateral consequences on communities, families, and crime. The study of prison

social organization reminds us that the prison's significance is very much observable on the inside. While this is an area of inquiry that has received considerable scholarly attention, the study of prison social organization has also neglected to identify the full scope of race and ethnicity as primary organizing features of prison life. To our knowledge, this study is the first to conceptualize and operationalize the concept of the racial code, which has been largely anecdotal/theoretical in nature until now. Additionally, we were able to provide the first quantitative assessment of how widespread racialized codes are in prison, distinguish the concept of the racial code from the prison code, and demonstrate the extent to which race and ethnicity are associated with racial code adherence and mobilization relative to the prison code and gang status. Our work here leads to four findings.

First, our findings reaffirm and advance the notions documented in prior work. Namely, racial and ethnic identity are salient features of prison social organization that are central to how individuals experience and navigate prison life. A majority of respondents reported adherence to a set of racialized norms promoting ideas of racial group loyalty, obedience, and commitment. A smaller percentage of the sample, in comparison, agreed that they would then willingly mobilize these norms in a way that incited violence or risked disciplinary action. Thus, individuals vary in the extent to which they comply with the fundamental rules of the racial code, versus willingly enacting these codes to a point of harming themselves or others (Skarbek, 2014; Walker, 2016). Nevertheless, it is worth noting that adherence to and mobilization of the racial code are highly correlated ($r = .72$), suggesting that increases in adherence often coincide with increases in the mobilization of the code.

Second, the racial code, while strongly correlated with the prison code, is a distinct aspect of the prison social order with unique correlates. Most notably, while race and ethnicity appear to

be stronger correlates of the racial code, age and indicators of a poor prison environment demonstrate stronger associations with the prison code. Indicators of poor prison environment were not significantly associated with the racial code. Thus, unlike the prison code, deprivation explanations do not appear to be associated with adherence to or mobilization of the racial code.

Third, race, ethnicity, and the prison code all matter in influencing the racial code. Notably, masculinity and strategic survival emerged as significant predictors of racial code adherence and mobilization, while the invisibility dimension of the prison code did not. These findings make sense given that invisibility encourages an attitude of “doing your own time,” which runs in contrast to attitudes of doing gang time or doing your race’s time, often required by engaging in racial politics. Strategic survival surfacing as the strongest prison code dimension aligns with expectations based on prior work suggesting that individuals may engage with racial politics merely as a means to surviving a highly racialized prison environment instead of in furtherance of a political agenda (Lopez-Aguado, 2018; Walker, 2016). With regard to the effects of race and ethnicity on the racial code, Black individuals were significantly less likely than Whites to report adhering to these racialized beliefs and even less likely to express favorable attitudes toward engaging in misconduct and/or violence in service of racial politics. Those who identified as Hispanic were significantly more likely to adhere to but not mobilize the racial code relative to their White counterparts. These racial differences could reflect the population dynamics in Arizona prisons, where White and Hispanic individuals are the majority and likely “run” the yard (Griffin et al., 2013). Black individuals are the minority in terms of group representation in our sample (15%); thus, there may be less benefit of racial politics participation for Black individuals in the broader scheme of group competition over power.

Lastly, racial code adherence and mobilization appear to be correlated with an individual's affiliation with their racial and ethnic group, not their membership in a gang. Contrary to what we would expect based on the synonymous nature of race and gang membership (Camp & Camp, 1985; Mitchell et al., 2017; Trammell, 2012), there was no association between racial politics participation and gang status. Hence, racialized gangs may create and impose racial politics, but focusing narrowly on reported gang membership as an identifier of politics participation misses the proportion of the population whose identity is not defined by gang membership.¹⁴

Implications

In light of these findings, race and ethnicity should be centered in correctional practice and policy in the following ways. First, explicit attention could be given to ensuring that race and ethnicity are not conflated with security threat group status, as they often are (Camp & Camp, 1985; Mitchell et al., 2017). Our analyses provide some evidence that engagement in racial politics is not limited to those who report identification as members of prison gangs. Gang membership, in this study, was weakly correlated with the racial code and was not found to be a significant predictor of racial code adherence or mobilization. Thus, when race or ethnicity is reduced to an indicator of assumed prison gang membership, much of the complexity of the racial organization of prisons is lost, including the ability to distinguish behaviors and attitudes associated with the racial code net of gang membership. Consequently, measures taken to curb violence by prison gangs can end up applied uniformly based on an individual's race or ethnicity, failing to account for the nuances of how racial politics shapes perceptions and behaviors outside of gang membership.

Second, programs, workshops, and trainings that embrace diversity and inclusion could be provided to both incarcerated people and correctional administrations. A descriptive assessment

of the racial code items in this study reveals the prevalence of attitudes and perceptions that likely stoke divisions. With over half of the men in the study either agreeing or strongly agreeing that it is important to be loyal to their race, obey the rules of their racial group, and defend their racial group at all costs, it is clear that there is a need to address attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors that promote and contribute to racial divisions in the prison setting. A particularly promising approach could be to integrate groups of incarcerated people and correctional administrators in such a way that those who were formerly incarcerated could become the staff who provide the programming (see Page & Travis, 2011). Third, and most broadly, explicit attention could be given to the practice of racial segregation in prisons, whether involuntary or voluntary, and especially when done in the name of security and safety. Segregation in prison can send the message that people of different races or ethnicities are unable to live together; this practice can create and reinforce stereotypes and can further aggravate racial tension and animosity upon release (Hemmens & Stohr, 2014). Again, descriptive findings from this study highlight the prevalence and salience of such attitudes. It must be acknowledged, however, that a number of complexities make racial integration within some prisons dangerous, to include a preference on the part of people in prison to remain segregated independent of correctional policy and practice. Consistent with the above, centering race and ethnicity within correctional practice could mean a number of organizations working alongside correctional staff to safely integrate all aspects of life in correctional facilities.

This study has several limitations worth noting. First, gang status was measured using a dichotomous indicator of past or current gang affiliation. Thus, we were unable to differentiate between prison, street, current, or past gang membership which likely underestimated the effect of gang status on engagement with the racial code. Furthermore, as is the case with any self-report instrument, issues of gang status underreporting are possible. Though the interviews that produced

the data for this study were conducted privately and the confidentiality of responses was ensured and communicated to participants to facilitate accurate reporting, it is not out of the realm of possibility that participants would have been hesitant to disclose their gang status especially when it can have serious implications for one's reputation, safety, and housing. Second, given that the prison and racial codes were measured at the same time point in the study, our ability to disentangle the evolution of race-based and prison-based identities over time was not possible. Third, this study could not assess the actual extent of racial group formation and participation in prison racial politics. While the racial code captures individuals' agreement with a set of racialized norms governing behavior, an examination of how race structures the physical space of prisons and influences social dynamics was beyond the scope of this study. Lastly, given the demographics of Arizona prisons as being predominantly White and Hispanic, the findings of this study may not be generalizable to other prison societies with different racial group dynamics.

Nevertheless, the limitations of this study offer exciting starting points for continued research of the racial code. Specifically, future research should aim to more accurately tease out the relationship between prison/street gang membership and the racial code, explore the theoretical underpinnings of racial group formation and racial politics participation, examine how these processes unfold in prisons with differing racial dynamics, and investigate whether the prison code develops first, runs secondary to, or bolsters the racial code. Relatedly, future work should also seek to unpack the intersection of incarcerated individuals' multiple identities, outside of race alone, that likely impact how they are accepted or act within racial and ethnic groups.

Conclusion

Altogether, our findings reinforce the notion that a contemporary study of prison social organization is incomplete without centering race and ethnicity. By not doing so, scholars miss an

important opportunity to situate our understanding of the prison society within the context of the racial and ethnic diversification of the carceral system over the last 40 years. The racialized order of the prison society is evident and, if ignored, could lead to possible under-theorizing regarding the roots of today's prison social system (and by extension the origins of racialized violence), or over-theorizing regarding the salience of other features of prison social organization, like gang status and the prison code. While questions remain as to whether racial and ethnic identities supersede other prison identities to govern behavior, this study adds to a body of work evidencing support for prisons as race making institutions in which a racialized prison society persists and warrants attention in prison social organization research moving forward.

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¹ For the sake of using more humanizing language of incarcerated individuals, we choose to use the terminology prison code over the more traditional convict code used in prior literature.

² Given the considerable attention these explanations have received in the literature, they require little restating here. In short, the deprivation model argued that the code grew from dire conditions of confinement and served as an adaptation to the pains of imprisonment (Goffman, 1961; Sykes, 1958; Sykes & Messinger, 1960); whereas the importation model contended that the code reflected the values, belief systems, norms, and life experiences that people brought into prison with them (Irwin, 1970; Irwin & Cressey, 1962). Recently, research has shown consensus that both deprivation and importation explanations contribute to the construction the prison code (Crewe, 2012; McKendy & Ricciardelli, 2019).

³ At the baseline time point, 122 men were interviewed at maximum custody, 94 in close custody, and 110 in medium custody. Maximum custody is the highest and most restrictive level of custody, with 22 to 23 hours a day spent alone in a cell, controlled movement, and few work opportunities that all necessitate officer supervision at the time of study. Close custody is the second highest level of custody, where individuals are able to move throughout the facilities with officer supervision, have a cellmate, and have access to programs and contact visitation. Medium custody is the next highest level of custody and the least restrictive of the three, where individuals are allowed to move freely throughout the facilities, are housed within dormitory units or open-style bunk units, and have access to programs.

⁴ Men who participated in baseline and 12-month interviews but refused to participate at the 6-month interview were not included in the analysis ($N = 11$). Thus, 255 men were interviewed at all study time points.

⁵ Four cases (~2% of the sample) were removed from the analysis because they demonstrated more than 40% missing data on key measures (i.e., racial code and prison code subscales).

Otherwise, we relied on mean imputation to account for the remaining missing data, which included only four cases (~1.6% of the final sample) that were missing data on no more than one item for a given scale.

⁶ While the original data collection effort was longitudinal in nature, our analyses use measures that were captured at a single time-point, not over time. Please see Table 1 for the corresponding waves for each study measure. Because we are interested in assessing antecedents to the racial code at the 12-month interview, all of our measures were drawn from baseline and/or 6-month interviews to capture the time ordering of these processes. The only measure that was drawn from the 12-month interview was the prison code, which was only measured at this time point.

⁷ Other race predominantly includes individuals who identified as being mixed race/ethnicity ($N = 15$) or Native American ($N = 2$), as well as those who identified as being of Latin American descent but did not identify as Hispanic ($N = 19$). Individuals identifying with their Latino roots but not categorizing themselves as Hispanic might identify more as Mexican Nationals. Thus, we include them in the “other race” category so as not to conflate their racial identity and national heritage, which was beyond the scope of this study and remains a worthy avenue for future research.

⁸ See Appendix A for a list of items in the hostility, pains of imprisonment, and negative relations scales.

⁹ Due to the ordinal nature of the items, we use mean and variance adjusted weighted least squares (WLSMV) estimation in Mplus 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012). A corrected chi-square

difference test is used to determine whether the correlated two-factor model fits better than a single factor model (DIFFTEST procedure in Mplus 8).

¹⁰ Data contain 251 respondents nested within 58 prison units. Multilevel modeling was deemed inappropriate for two reasons. First, we do not have level two data, other than the unit code at the 12-month interview. Second, upon further inspection of the intercept models and calculation of variance components for a multilevel linear regression, it was determined that the variance across the 12-month unit variable was not significantly different from zero ($z = 0.20$; $p = .42$) for the racial code mobilization subscale. Thus, we determined that the most appropriate analysis plan to account for the nested structure of the data and the correlated error terms was to estimate a series of OLS regression models with robust standard errors clustered at the 12-month unit level.

¹¹Acceptable fit was determined using cut off values of .90 or greater, and .95 or greater to indicate a good fit for CFI and TLI (Hu & Bentler, 1999). RMSEA values between .05 and .10 indicate an acceptable fit, while values less than .05 indicate a good fit (McDonald & Ho, 2002).

¹² To further assess that there was no redundancy in racial code and prison code subfactors, we estimated another set of confirmatory factor analytic (CFA) models. First, we estimated a correlated five-factor model in which the dimensions of the racial code (adherence and mobilization) and prison code (invisibility, masculinity, and strategic survival) loaded onto their respective factors. Doing so allowed us to evaluate the fit of a model representing these constructs as distinct, including an evaluation of the factor score and item-level correlations across the five subfactors. Strong factor score correlations were observed between the racial code adherence subfactor and the prison code masculinity ($r = .66$) and strategic survival ($r = .72$) subfactors (see Table 8 in Appendix B), with moderate item-level correlations also observed across these dimensions. To ensure that these factors were not redundant, we estimated and

compared a series of nested CFA models in which racial code adherence: 1) loaded onto the same factor as masculinity and strategic survival (correlated three-factor model); 2) loaded onto the same factor as strategic survival (correlated four-factor model); and 3) loaded onto its own factor (correlated five-factor model). Using the corrected chi-square difference test (DIFFTEST procedure in Mplus 8), the results confirm that the correlated five-factor model is the best fitting model for the data in which the racial code and prison code dimensions load onto their respective factors (see Table 9 for fit indices and Table 10 for the factor loadings in Appendix B). These results provide added support for the distinctness of the racial and prison code constructs.

¹³ Multicollinearity diagnostics were estimated for all regression models and revealed no issues (VIF range = 1.10 – 1.90; mean VIF \leq 1.54).

¹⁴ Some scholars have observed racial groupings in prison that are distinguishable from racially organized prison gangs (Dolovich, 2011). It then becomes difficult to determine where the influence of racially-based gangs on prison social organization ends and the influence of racial politics as a function of race and ethnicity begins. In fact, Dolovich (2012, p. 994) argues that “irrespective of gang membership status, all incarcerated individuals are expected to affiliate with a racial group and abide by the accompanying racial politics.” Consequently, understanding the extent to which race and ethnicity predominate prison social organization and influence adherence to and mobilization of the racial code—net of current gang membership—warrants further attention.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables (N = 251)

Variables	Wave	%/M	N/SD	Range	α
Racial Code					
Adherence	12-month	3.59	1.00	1 - 5	.86
Mobilization	12-month	2.68	1.08	1 - 5	.91
Prison Code					
Invisibility	12-month	4.04	0.72	1.67 - 5	.51
Masculinity	12-month	3.78	0.82	1 - 5	.66
Strategic Survival	12-month	3.28	0.78	1 - 5	.62
Gang					
Gang status	Baseline	33.47%	84		
Demographics					
White*	Baseline	28.69%	72		
Black	Baseline	15.14%	38		
Hispanic	Baseline	35.86%	90		
Other	Baseline	20.32%	51		
Age	Baseline	33.33	9.62	18 - 76	
Prison Priors	Baseline	73.31%	184		
Mental Health					
Hostility	6-month	0.67	0.78	0 - 3.83	.82
Prison Environment					
Negative Relations	6-month	2.06	0.63	1 - 3.73	.84
Pains of Imprisonment	6-month	1.97	0.80	0 - 3.58	.88
Custody Level					
Minimum	12-month	9.56%	24		
Medium	12-month	32.67%	82		
Close	12-month	30.28%	76		
Maximum*	12-month	27.49%	69		

Notes. %/N is reported for categorical variables whereas M/SD is reported for continuous indicators; Cronbach's alphas reported for all study scales and subscales. * = reference category

Abbreviations: M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; N = Number of respondents; % = Percentage of respondents

Table 2. Descriptives for Racial Code & Prison Code Items (N = 251)

Variables	% Agree	N	Range	Mean	SD
Racial Code					
<i>Adherence</i>					
Be loyal to your race	67.33%	169	1 - 5	3.84	1.17
Segregate by race for protection	39.44%	99	1 - 5	3.15	1.24
Defend your racial group at all costs	54.98%	138	1 - 5	3.57	1.24
Obey the rules of your racial group	68.13%	171	1 - 5	3.81	1.10
<i>Mobilization</i>					
Do what the people in your racial group tell you, even if it means beating, injuring, or harming someone	20.32%	51	1 - 5	2.71	1.17
Do what your racial group tells you, even if it means risking getting a ticket	25.89%	65	1 - 5	2.80	1.20
Make sacrifices for your racial group, even if it means harming yourself or others	14.74%	37	1 - 5	2.50	1.13
Prison Code					
<i>Invisibility</i>					
Keep to yourself as much as possible	66.13%	166	1 - 5	3.73	1.07
Mind your own business and pretend like you don't see or hear what is going on around you	74.50%	187	1 - 5	3.94	1.07
Do not leak information to a correctional officer about an inmate	87.65%	220	1 - 5	4.46	0.90
<i>Masculinity</i>					
Show strength and toughness at all times	58.97%	148	1 - 5	3.58	1.14
Never show fear	75.30%	189	1 - 5	3.96	0.94
Defend your reputation at all costs	63.75%	160	1 - 5	3.77	1.11
<i>Strategic Survival</i>					
Do not help prison staff when they need it	43.03%	108	1 - 5	3.41	1.11
Be loyal to inmates and not loyal to prison staff	61.60%	154	1 - 5	3.78	1.00
Do not help other inmates if they are in trouble or hurt	15.60%	39	1 - 5	2.64	1.01

Notes. “% Agree” column denotes those who marked “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”

Abbreviations: SD = Standard Deviation; N = Number of respondents

Table 3. Fit Indices Comparing Confirmatory Factor Models (N = 251)

Variables	χ^2	<i>df</i>	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	<i>p</i> -value
Model 1: Single factor	247.647	14	.945	.917	.258	-	-	-
Model 2: Correlated two-factor	25.281	13	.997	.995	.061	69.545	1	< .001

Notes. CFI = Comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation

Table 4. Correlated Two-Factor Model of the Racial Code (N = 251)

	Factor 1	Factor 2
<i>r</i> = .72		
Adherence		
Be loyal to your race	.88	
Segregate by race for protection	.75	
Defend your racial group at all costs	.86	
Obey the rules of your racial group	.85	
Mobilization		
Do what the people in your racial group tell you, even if it means beating, injuring, or harming someone		.93
Do what your racial group tells you, even if it means risking getting a ticket		.91
Make sacrifices for your racial group, even if it means harming yourself or others		.88

Notes. Entries are standardized factor loadings

Abbreviations: *r* = factor score correlation between subfactors estimated in Mplus 8

Table 5. Correlations between the Racial Code, Prison Code, and Key Criteria (N = 251)

Variables	Racial Code	Racial Code	Racial Code	Racial Code	Prison Code	Prison Code
	Adherence	Mobilization	Adherence	Mobilization	<i>r</i>	<i>pr</i>
	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>pr</i>	<i>pr</i>		
Prison Code (average score)	.54***	.37***	-	-	-	-
Invisibility	.25***	.11+	-	-	-	-
Masculinity	.49***	.30***	-	-	-	-
Strategic Survival	.51***	.43***	-	-	-	-
Gang Status	.01	.04	-.03	.01	.07	.07
White	-.07	.07	-.06	.08	-.02	-.03
Black	-.16**	-.23***	-.26***	-.28***	.10	.25***
Hispanic	.17**	.15*	.16**	.14*	.06	-.04
Other	.02	-.06	.11+	-.01	-.13*	-.15*
Age	-.14*	-.06	-.03	.03	-.22***	-.19**
Prison Priors	-.02	.09	.03	.12+	-.07	-.10
Hostility	.14*	.13*	.02	.05	.23***	.19**
Negative Relations	-.09	-.02	-.19**	-.07	.12+	.18**
Pains of Imprisonment	-.03	.02	-.17**	-.06	.20**	.24***
Minimum	.01	.04	.04	.06	-.03	-.05
Medium	.02	.02	-.06	-.03	.12+	.13*
Close	-.10	-.06	-.10	-.05	-.03	.02
Maximum	.08	.01	.14*	.04	-.08	-.12+

Notes. *r* = bivariate correlations; *pr* = partial correlation between the racial code subscale score and the target variable after controlling for the prison code average score and the correlation between the prison code and target variable after controlling for the racial code average score.

****p* < .001, ***p* < .01, **p* < .05, +*p* < .10

Table 6. OLS Regression of Racial Code Adherence on Gang Status and Prison Code ($N = 251$)

Variables	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5		
	<i>b</i>	β	(se)	<i>b</i>	β	(se)	<i>b</i>	β	(se)	<i>b</i>	β	(se)	<i>b</i>	β	(se)
Gang Status	-0.04	-0.02	0.14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.14	-0.07	0.11
Invisibility	-	-	-	0.42***	0.30	0.09	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.04	0.03	0.09
Masculinity	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.60***	0.49	0.07	-	-	-	0.43***	0.35	0.09
Strategic Survival	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.66***	0.51	0.08	0.48***	0.37	0.08
Black	-0.41*	-0.15	0.19	-0.47*	-0.17	0.20	-0.47*	-0.17	0.21	-0.33+	-0.12	0.18	-0.38+	-0.14	0.19
Hispanic	0.23+	0.11	0.13	0.23+	0.11	0.13	0.19	0.09	0.12	0.21	0.10	0.13	0.24+	0.12	0.13
Other	0.01	0.01	0.19	0.06	0.03	0.17	0.05	0.02	0.18	0.22	0.09	0.17	0.25	0.10	0.18
Age	-0.01*	-0.12	0.01	-0.01+	-0.10	0.01	-0.01	-0.05	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.01
Prison Prior	0.01	0.00	0.13	0.06	0.03	0.13	-0.01	-0.01	0.12	-0.01	-0.01	0.11	0.02	0.01	0.10
Hostility	0.26+	0.20	0.13	0.26+	0.20	0.14	0.13	0.10	0.11	0.15	0.11	0.13	0.09	0.07	0.12
Negative Relations	-0.15	-0.09	0.11	-0.20+	-0.13	0.10	-0.14	-0.09	0.09	-0.09	-0.06	0.11	-0.08	-0.05	0.11
Pains of Imprisonment	-0.06	-0.05	0.10	-0.10	-0.08	0.09	-0.13+	-0.10	0.08	-0.08	-0.06	0.09	-0.13	-0.10	0.08
Minimum	-0.08	-0.02	0.25	-0.17	-0.05	0.25	0.04	0.01	0.24	-0.14	-0.04	0.19	-0.09	-0.03	0.20
Medium	-0.03	-0.04	0.16	-0.20	-0.09	0.16	-0.07	-0.04	0.18	-0.28+	-0.13	0.15	-0.25	-0.12	0.16
Close	-0.31	-0.14	0.22	-0.37+	-0.17	0.22	-0.23	-0.10	0.23	-0.33+	-0.15	0.19	-0.28	-0.13	0.20
Constant	4.35***		0.35	2.81***		0.45	2.05***		0.41	1.81***		0.42	0.67		0.47
F-test	3.75***			8.08***			16.09***			17.17***			34.13***		
R-squared	.11			.19			.33			.34			.44		

Notes. Robust standard errors are reported (se).

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, + $p < .10$

Table 7. OLS Regression of Racial Code Mobilization on Gang Status and Prison Code (N = 251)

Variables	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5		
	<i>b</i>	β	(se)	<i>b</i>	β	(se)	<i>b</i>	β	(se)	<i>b</i>	β	(se)	<i>b</i>	β	(se)
Gang Status	0.06	0.03	0.17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.02	-0.01	0.15
Invisibility	-	-	-	0.21*	0.14	0.09	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.12	-0.08	0.09
Masculinity	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.40***	0.30	0.09	-	-	-	0.25**	0.19	0.09
Strategic Survival	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.59***	0.43	0.09	0.54***	0.40	0.08
Black	-0.86***	-0.29	0.17	-0.88***	-0.30	0.18	-0.89***	-0.30	0.16	-0.78***	-0.26	0.18	-0.79***	-0.26	0.17
Hispanic	-0.02	-0.01	0.19	0.00	0.00	0.17	-0.02	-0.01	0.16	-0.01	-0.01	0.18	-0.02	-0.01	0.18
Other	-0.42*	-0.16	0.19	-0.37*	-0.14	0.16	-0.37*	-0.14	0.17	-0.20	-0.07	0.14	-0.21	-0.08	0.15
Age	-0.01	-0.08	0.01	-0.01	-0.07	0.01	-0.00	-0.04	0.01	0.00	0.03	0.01	0.00	0.04	0.01
Prison Prior	0.25+	0.10	0.13	0.29*	0.12	0.13	0.26*	0.11	0.12	0.25*	0.10	0.12	0.24*	0.10	0.12
Hostility	0.26+	0.19	0.13	0.26+	0.19	0.14	0.18	0.13	0.12	0.16	0.11	0.13	0.11	0.08	0.12
Negative Relations	0.01	0.01	0.11	-0.01	-0.00	0.10	0.02	0.01	0.10	0.07	0.04	0.10	0.09	0.05	0.10
Pains of Imprisonment	-0.06	-0.05	0.11	-0.08	-0.06	0.11	-0.11	-0.08	0.10	-0.08	-0.06	0.11	-0.09	-0.07	0.11
Minimum	0.05	0.01	0.28	-0.02	-0.01	0.27	0.10	0.03	0.26	-0.04	-0.01	0.23	0.04	0.01	0.24
Medium	-0.02	-0.01	0.15	-0.09	-0.04	0.14	-0.02	-0.01	0.15	-0.21	-0.09	0.14	-0.16	-0.07	0.14
Close	-0.23	-0.10	0.16	-0.26+	-0.11	0.15	-0.18	-0.08	0.17	-0.25	-0.11	0.16	-0.20	-0.09	0.17
Constant	2.98***		0.44	2.17***		0.56	1.44**		0.51	0.66		0.46	0.35		0.56
F-test	4.30***			4.10***			10.53***			8.89***			12.06***		
R-squared	.12			.13			.20			.27			.30		

Notes. Robust standard errors are reported (se).

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, + $p < .10$

APPENDIX A: Measures in Key Constructs

Hostility Index

Symptom Checklist-90-Revised (SCL-90-R)

6-item scale measured at the 6-month interview

(not at all, a little bit, moderate, quite a bit, extremely)

In the past week, how much were you bothered by...

- Feeling easily annoyed or irritated?
- Temper outbursts that you could not control?
- Having urges to beat, injure, or harm someone?
- Having urges to break or smash things?
- Getting into frequent arguments?
- Shouting or throwing things?

Negative Relations Scale

11-item scale measured at the 6-month interview

(never, rarely, sometimes, often)

Over the past 6 months, how often have the following occurred...

- Inmates being beaten up?
- Gang fights between inmates?
- Your belongings being taken?
- Inmates feeling afraid of being assaulted in prison?
- You being disrespected or talked down to?
- You getting into a fight with another person?
- Correctional officers using inmates against each other?
- Correctional officers belittling or talking down to inmates?
- Weak inmates being someone else's property?
- People being threatened when they first come to prison?
- Correctional officers making fun of inmates?

Pains of Imprisonment Scale

19-item scale measured at the 6-month interview

(not hard at all, a little hard, moderately hard, quite hard, extremely hard)

Over the past 6 months, how hard were each of the following for you...

- Missing family or friends?
- Missing certain activities?
- Conflict with prisoners?
- Regrets about the past?
- Concerns about the future?
- Missing personal possessions?
 - Boredom?
 - Lack of privacy?
 - Excessive noise?
- Quality of medical care?
- Missing freedom?
- Conflicts with staff?
- Not being able to make my own decisions?
 - Quality of food?
- Environment where we eat?
- Cleanliness of the facility?
- Following prison rules?
- Overcrowded conditions?
- Concerns about my safety?

APPENDIX B: Additional Tables

Table 8. Factor Correlations for Racial Code and Prison Code Subscales (*N* = 251)

	1	2	3	4	5
Racial Code					
1. Adherence	-				
2. Mobilization	.72	-			
Prison Code					
3. Invisibility	.50	.19	-		
4. Masculinity	.66	.38	.68	-	
5. Strategic Survival	.72	.59	.72	.67	-

Notes. Factor score correlations were estimated in Mplus 8.

Table 9. Fit Indices Comparing Confirmatory Factor Models for Racial and Prison Codes (N = 251)

	χ^2	<i>df</i>	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	<i>p</i> -value
Model 1: Correlated three-factor	451.629	101	.933	.921	.118	-	-	-
Model 2: Correlated four-factor	326.393	98	.957	.947	.096	77.228	3	< .001
Model 3: Correlated five-factor	236.656	94	.973	.965	.078	67.343	4	< .001

Notes. CFI = Comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation

Table 10. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Five-factor Model of the Racial Code and Prison Code (N = 251)

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Racial Code					
<i>Adherence</i>					
Be loyal to your race	.86				
Segregate by race for protection	.76				
Defend your racial group at all costs	.87				
Obey the rules of your racial group	.84				
<i>Mobilization</i>					
Do what the people in your racial group tell you, even if it means beating, injuring, or harming someone		.93			
Do what your racial group tells you, even if it means risking getting a ticket		.91			
Make sacrifices for your racial group, even if it means harming yourself or others		.88			
Prison Code					
<i>Invisibility</i>					
Keep to yourself as much as possible			.32		
Mind your own business and pretend like you don't see or hear what is going on around you			.56		
Do not leak information to a correctional officer about an inmate			.92		
<i>Masculinity</i>					
Show strength and toughness at all times				.72	
Never show fear				.71	
Defend your reputation at all costs				.69	
<i>Strategic Survival</i>					
Do not help prison staff when they need it					.44
Be loyal to inmates and not loyal to prison staff					.70
Do not help other inmates if they are in trouble or hurt					.78

Notes. Entries are standardized factor loadings.