

THE CONVICT CODE REVISITED: AN EXAMINATION OF PRISON CULTURE AND ITS  
ASSOCIATION WITH VIOLENT MISCONDUCT AND VICTIMIZATION

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by

Meghan M. Mitchell

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## **DEDICATION**

For my grandmas, both of whom were extraordinary women.

## ABSTRACT

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Within some inner-city neighborhoods, a street culture exists that values autonomy, violence, risk-taking, and street smarts. Street culture is not solely confined to the street; rather, values and beliefs from the street are imported into the prison—where a unique prison culture also exists. The convict code—*an inmate-defined and -regulated culture consisting of a set of values that govern behaviors and interactions with inmates and correctional staff*—encourages inmates to refrain from snitching, do their time, be tough, and never become too friendly with officers. Following the start of mass incarceration, studies of the convict code almost disappeared from academia, which has led scholars to call for a resurgence of research on prison culture. I sought to answer these calls by creating quantitative measures of the convict code and devising four research questions to explore the subject: Is the convict code a multi-dimensional construct? Who is most likely to adhere to the convict code? Is the convict code associated with violent misconduct? And, is the convict code associated with violent victimization? Data from the LoneStar Project were used. Through face-to-face interview-based surveys, data were collected from 802 randomly sampled male inmates preparing for release in 2016. These data are ideal for studying the convict code since they provide the most comprehensive estimates of the convict code to date and because they were collected in Texas—the largest department of corrections in the nation with a longstanding history of prison culture. Results from exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses reveal that the convict code is multi-dimensional, consisting of four factors:

social distance, masculinity, invisibility, and strategic survival. Moreover, ordinary least squares regressions indicate that adherence to factors of the convict code was consistently associated with the code of the street and some prison contextual factors (i.e., procedural justice, and exposure to violence), but other correlates also mattered. And finally, based on findings from logistic regressions, only the strategic survival factor was associated with violent misconduct and victimization. The results from this dissertation have implications for correctional policy and practice pertaining to the prison environment, procedural justice, risk assessments, and treatment programming.

**KEY WORDS:** Convict code, Prison culture, Prison misconduct, Prison victimization, Structural equation modeling

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction**

Much of the research within corrections has not accounted for the importance of culture on behaviors and prison experiences (Kreager & Kruttschnitt, 2018; Simon, 2000). However, the convict code is an important culture within prisons that could influence inmate behaviors. Through many qualitative studies, scholars have explored the mechanisms, norms, and likely behaviors associated with the convict code (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Hayner & Ash, 1940; McCorkle & Korn, 1954; Ohlin, 1956; Sykes, 1958). However, much of this research was conducted prior to the era of mass incarceration. In fact, since the advent of mass incarceration, studies of the convict code have substantially diminished, which has led scholars to call for research that evaluates the convict code in the era of mass incarceration (Simon, 2000). As a result, in this dissertation I revisit prison culture by evaluating if the convict code is a multi-dimensional construct, determining who is most likely to adhere to it, and exploring how the convict code is associated with violent misconduct and violent victimization.

### **Prison and Street Influences**

Scholars have consistently demonstrated that a unique culture exists within communities and neighborhoods that have been plagued by decades of discrimination, poverty, and limited social capital (Wilson, 1987). The importance of this culture dates back to the work of Cohen (1955), Miller (1958), and Wellford (1967), to name only a few. Collectively these scholars demonstrated that when faced with opposition, inner-city youth adopt lower-class standards, which often include toughness, street smarts, living for excitement, relying on fate, and autonomy. Anderson's (1999) qualitative

observations in Philadelphia may be the most seminal work to date. Through his research, Anderson concluded that the despair in disadvantaged neighborhoods is so pervasive that it results in an oppositional culture called “the code of the street.” This code consists of an informal set of rules that governs behaviors and encourages individuals to “watch their back,” “gain respect,” “use violence,” and “never back down from confrontation.”

Spawning from the work of Anderson and others, scholars have demonstrated street culture as an important predictor of violence and victimization (Baron, 2017; Berg, Stewart, Schreck, & Simons, 2012; Stewart, Schreck, & Brunson, 2008; Stewart & Simons, 2006).

Street culture is not bound solely to the streets; rather, Irwin and Cressey (1962), as part of their cultural deviance perspective, proposed that an individual’s characteristics, beliefs, and experiences prior to incarceration are imported into the prison and affect his behavior while incarcerated. Specifically evaluating the importation of street culture, scholars have confirmed that adherence to the code of the street was associated with increased violent misconduct while incarcerated (Mears, Stewart, Siennick, & Simons, 2013). Despite the importation of street culture into prison, prisons are unique, and a distinct culture also exists within the prison walls.

The totality of the prison experience generates many “pains,” which deprive inmates of autonomy and leave them feeling powerless, with limited material goods and liberties (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Hayner & Ash, 1940; McCorkle & Korn, 1954; Ohlin, 1956; Sykes, 1958). As a means of coping with the prison environment, some inmates rely on the convict code, which is the prevailing culture within prisons. Historically, prisons were reserved for only a small portion of the population (Pollock, 2012).

However, changes in incarceration policies and procedures significantly expanded the number of people who were exposed to prison and its unique culture (National Research Council, 2014). Consequently, as people moved in and out of prisons, street and prison culture meshed as individuals learned to cope with the confines of incarceration.

### **Defining the Convict Code**

The convict code can be challenging to operationalize given culture remains a broad and encompassing construct (Small, Harding, & Lamont, 2010). Consequently, scholars have used many terms (e.g., values, norms, customs, and principles) and keywords (e.g., adoption, sanction, and define) to explain the convict code. Building upon prior work, I operationalize the code as *an inmate-defined and -regulated culture consisting of a set of values that governs behaviors and interactions with inmates and correctional staff*. The convict code includes a number of tenets that encourage inmates to: (a) never snitch, (b) do their time, (c) mind their own business, (d) be tough, and (e) never be too friendly with a correctional officer (Clemmer, 1940; Cloward, 1960; Reimer, 1937; Sykes, 1958; Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Thomas & Poole, 1975; Wellford, 1967). The convict code flourishes within prisons where the “pains” experienced by inmates—loss of autonomy, power, and material goods—are great. Therefore, the convict code is used to foster in-group solidarity by allowing inmates to disassociate from stigma and regain minimal amounts of power. Ultimately, the convict code alleviates some pains of incarceration while also providing guidelines for appropriate behaviors in prison (Caldwell, 1956; McCorkle & Korn, 1954; Ohlin, 1956; Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Wellford, 1967).

## Studying the Convict Code

Much of the prior research on the convict code was qualitative, which provided a strong foundation for scholars to think empirically about its tenets and adherence to its norms. Building upon this foundation, some scholars systematically measured the convict code using quantitative indicators (see Garabedian, 1963; Thomas, 1973; Tittle & Tittle, 1964; Wheeler, 1961, for example). However, prior studies were limited in some ways: for example, no consistent definition existed, and the questions used to measure the convict code varied between studies. Also, prior studies were heavily focused on only *some* tenets (e.g., inmate alliance and anti-staff sentiments) and did not fully examine *all* tenets of the convict code (e.g., minding one's business, emulating toughness, and defending one's reputation).

Research on the convict code flourished during the prison sociology era, from the 1920s to the 1980s (Simon, 2000). However, the start of mass incarceration significantly changed the type of prison research that was conducted. For research to be applicable to correctional administrators, it needed to focus on the challenges prisons faced as a result of mass incarceration (e.g., overcrowding, riots, and violence) and research on prison culture—often inmate-focused—was no longer as applicable to the day-to-day operations of administrators (Kreager & Kruttschnitt, 2018; Simon, 2000; Wacquant, 2002). As a result, studies of prison culture almost disappeared from academia after the 1980s, which led scholars to call for a resurgence of research on prison culture (Crewe, 2005; Kreager & Kruttschnitt, 2018; Simon, 2000). Some scholars attending to those calls have asserted that the convict code is evolving—inmate alliances have weakened, the “don’t snitch”

culture has lessened, and inmates now value peace while incarcerated (see Crewe, 2005; Ricciardelli, 2014a; Trammell, 2012, for example).

Scholars have provided a strong theoretical understanding of the convict code, yet some theoretical and substantive questions remain. From a theoretical perspective, much of the prior research on the convict code was conducted prior to mass incarceration, which leads scholars to question, does the convict code still exist today? Substantively, much of the research on the convict code has not been validated quantitatively using representative samples. Because prior studies only measured *some* tenets of the convict code, it is unclear if the prior quantitative items accurately represent the dimensionality of the convict code. Consequently, the first research question of this study involved exploring the convict code during the era of mass incarceration by creating items to measure the convict code, and by determining if the convict code is a multi-dimensional construct.

### **Adhering to the Convict Code**

Some scholars theorized that the vast majority of inmates adhered to the convict code once imprisoned (Akers, Hayner, & Gruninger, 1977; Reimer, 1937). In reality, inmates are likely to more strongly adhere to *certain* tenets when navigating *certain* situations, rather than fully adhere to *all* tenets in *all* situations (Clemmer, 1940; Reimer, 1937; Roebuck, 1963; Sykes, 1958; Thomas, 1970; Wellford, 1967). For example, some scholars have reported that demographic factors (e.g., age, social class, and prior behavior), attitudes and associations (e.g., feeling of alienation and receiving visits), and prison contextual factors (e.g., negative staff interactions) strengthen adherence to the convict code (Akers et al., 1977; Cline, 1966; Peat & Winfree, 1992; Schwartz, 1971;



Thomas, 1973; Thomas & Foster, 1972; Tittle & Tittle, 1964; Wellford, 1967; Wheeler, 1961). Scholars have yet to thoroughly evaluate the correlates of adherence using items that measure all dimensions of the convict code, which is the purpose of Research question 2 in this study.

### **The Convict Code, Violent Misconduct, and Violent Victimization**

Researchers have theorized about how the convict code could associate with behaviors. However, they did not directly link the convict code to violence or experiences while incarcerated. One prominent tenet of the convict code is toughness—acting fearless and never being afraid to “man up” when faced with a violent situation (Ricciardelli, 2014a; Trammell, 2012). Adherence to this tenet could be associated with more violent misconduct as inmates maintain their reputation. Conversely, because of the victim/offender overlap in prison (Toman, 2017), subscription to this tenet may also increase violent victimization, when an individual engages in violent behavior.

Other tenets of the convict code dictate inmates do their time, mind their own business, play it cool, and respect others (Irwin, 1980; Ricciardelli, 2014a; Sykes & Messinger, 1960). Adhering to these tenets could also decrease the likelihood of engaging in violent misconduct and being victimized. Conversely, inmates who snitch or fail to mind their own business may be victimized as a means to enforce the convict code and punish inappropriate behaviors (Einat & Einat, 2000; Trammell, 2012).

The illustrations above demonstrate that the exact association between the convict code and violent misconduct and violent victimization is unclear. Therefore, the purpose of Research questions 3 and 4 is to explore this relationship.

## **Research Purpose and Significance**

The purpose of this dissertation is twofold. The first objective is to explore the convict code in the era of mass incarceration by determining if the convict code is a multi-dimensional construct and exploring what factors are associated with adherence. Two research questions concern this objective: Is the convict code a multi-dimensional construct? What background characteristics (e.g., demographics and prior criminal history), attitudes and associations (e.g., criminal associations, beliefs, and culture), and prison contextual factors (e.g., exposure to violence and procedural justice of correctional officers) are associated with adherence? The second objective is to determine how the convict code is associated with violent misconduct and violent victimization. As part of this objective, I asked two research questions: Is adhering to the convict code associated with self-reported violent misconduct? Is adhering to the convict code associated with self-reported violent victimization? The overarching goal of this dissertation is two-fold. First, to demonstrate that prison culture—though abstract and historically understudied—can be studied systematically using quantitative indicators. Second, to determine if the convict code is a protective or risk factor for inmates while incarcerated. Based on the implications of this research, the convict code could be linked to criminal justice practices and policies related to the prison environment, inmates' perceptions of procedural justice, risk assessments, and treatment programs.

## CHAPTER II

### Theoretical Framework

In the following chapter I demonstrate the importance of culture in prison by exploring how the convict code has evolved from an abstract cultural element to a potential correlate of both violent misconduct and victimization. To accomplish this objective, the next section explores how deprivations within prison, mass incarceration, and importation of street culture collectively influence the convict code. Following this section, the convict code is defined, and its central tenets are fully explained. Next, an overview of empirical research evaluating the convict code is discussed. Then, variations in adherence to the convict code are explored. Finally, the causes and correlates of violent misconduct and violent victimization are detailed, and hypotheses presented of how the convict code can be used to predict their occurrence.

#### Convict Code

**Prison and street influences.** Scholars studying the foundation of prison culture have explored the importance of the prison environment, finding that unique deprivations exist. Prisons are designed to physically and symbolically separate inmates from the larger society (Sykes, 1958). They are total institutions, built with the intent of protecting the free society from a dangerous class housed within the prison walls (Goffman, 1961a, 1961b). The conditions of confinement within a prison are not intended to be pleasant or allow for a great deal of autonomy. Rather, prisons are strategically designed to house inmates in a setting that provides the least amount of comfort and freedom possible, without being held legally negligent (Sykes, 1958). Incarceration and contact with the criminal justice system begins with a degradation ceremony, designed to create a new

inmate identity that is subordinate to the administration (Cloward, 1960). In an attempt to maintain control, power, and formal rules within the institution, corruption can permeate the prison, which may create hostility and distrust between correctional officers and prisoners (Hayner & Ash, 1940; Liebling & Arnold, 2012; Sykes, 1958). When attempts are not made to remedy this divide, hostility intensifies, resulting in isolation and destroyed bonds between prisoners and officers (Cloward, 1960; Sykes, 1958; Weinberg, 1942).

Confinement within institutions also decreases quality of life and an individual's power. Sykes (1958) revealed that incarceration coincided with environmental and psychological deprivations, which in turn generate "pains" that include the lack of freedom, autonomy, power, materials, goods, security, heterosexual relationships, and liberties. Sykes not only detailed the pains of imprisonment but also suggested that these conditions influenced the prison culture. Moreover, maintaining order in prison through coercive and hostile means creates a unilateral power structure between the haves (i.e., correctional staff) and the have-nots (i.e., inmates), which results in strains for inmates because they lack the means to achieve their goals (Cloward, 1960; Garabedian, 1963; Thomas, 1970).

Inmates cope with the confines of incarceration in many ways. At one extreme, inmates may rely on retaliation via riots; on the other, subtle tactics are more frequently used and can involve withdrawal, both physically and mentally (Sykes, 1958). An inmate may become "con-wise [as] he discovers that he desires certain things denied [to] him by the prison administration" (Hayner & Ash, 1939, p. 364). Therefore, inmates can use the

debilitating prison environment as an impetus to evolve and create a means of restoring their status (Cloward, 1960).

Historically, only a small proportion of the population was exposed to the prison culture. For example, from the creation of the Walnut Street Jail (established in 1817) and Auburn Penitentiary (1829) through the early 1970s, incarceration rates were very low, ranging from 40 to 140 per 100,000 (Pollock, 2012). However, from 1972 to 2007, the U.S. prison system grew 4.5 times its size (National Research Council, 2014). This mass incarceration expanded the number of people exposed to the prison culture—with poor, uneducated, people of color, most directly impacted (Hinton, 2016; Provine, 2011; Roberts, 2004). The influx of individuals incarcerated in prisons created a collision of cultures from the free world (i.e., streets and communities) with the culture and conditions within prisons.

Prison culture does not exist in isolation from street culture; instead, Irwin and Cressey (1962) theorized that street culture and characteristics, beliefs, and experiences before incarceration are imported into the prison and affect the individual's behavior while incarcerated (Irwin & Cressey, 1962). Street culture exists within communities, and people who adhere to it often value toughness, autonomy, risk-taking, and violence. For example, the inability of lower-class boys to meet middle-class standards results in a status frustration, a rejection of conventional standards, and creation of lower-class standards (Cohen, 1955; Miller, 1958). Individuals with beliefs in opposition to conventional norms were viewed by society as criminal and belonging to a culture of violence (Wellford, 1967; Wolfgang & Ferracuti, 1967). Street culture, in opposition to pro-social norms, is typically fostered within socially and economically deprived

neighborhoods. Anderson (2012) noted that culture within inner-cities has been created through decades of social ailments, including poverty, discrimination, crime, and limited social capital. Although some neighborhoods may produce more organized criminal cultures than others (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960), Anderson (1999) asserted that the despair in disadvantaged neighborhoods is “pervasive enough to have spawned an oppositional culture” (p. 32), and that out of this oppositional culture “evolved a code of the street” (p. 33).

Some scholars have argued that the importation of street culture into prisons makes the culture within inner-city neighborhoods and prisons almost indistinguishable. As Wacquant (2001) noted, “the ghetto [has become] more like a prison” . . . and young black men entering prison “undermin[e] the ‘inmate society’ . . . mak[ing] the prison more like a ghetto” (p. 95). Wright (2015) made parallel arguments highlighting similarities between inner-city neighborhoods and prisons, regarding racial segregation, cultural norms, anti-social influences, and limited job and educational programming. The transmission of culture from the street to the prison can occur through conversations and connections with community members who have been incarcerated. Lopez-Aguado (2016) reported that youth construct their carceral identities and learn about prison culture from formally incarcerated individuals. Through these conversations, youth are taught how they would fit into the prison culture should they be incarcerated.

Over 606,000 individuals are imprisoned each year, and 93% of the incarcerated population will be released at some point (Carson, 2018; Petersilia, 2003). Consequently, the drift between culture on the street and in prison is constant. As Wacquant (2001) noted, prisons can be just as detrimental, if not worse, than the inner-city neighborhoods

from which many individuals are incarcerated. Therefore, prison culture cannot be viewed as separate from street culture; rather, imported characteristics and beliefs should be considered in conjunction with the prison experience (Schwartz, 1971). Even Sykes (1958)—who believed that deprivations from the prison environment are key to understanding prison culture—asserted that

[prisoners] bring with them the attitudes, beliefs, and values of this larger world.

The prison is a social system, which does not exist in isolation any more than the criminal within the prison exists in isolation as an individual; and the institution and its setting are inextricably mixed despite the definite boundary of the wall (p.9).

**Defining the convict code.** Culture can be defined broadly as encompassing: (a) *values* (the end to which behavior is directed), (b) *frames* (how people perceive themselves), (c) *repertoires* (common actions and behaviors), (d) *narratives* (interpretations of life and life events), (e) *symbolic boundaries* (guides for interactions and distinctions between objects, people, and practices), (f) *cultural capital* (knowledge or information acquired through experiences), and (g) *institutions* (formal rules and behaviors codified, or norms enforced through informal sanctions) (Small et al., 2010). It is likely that the convict code fits within this broader umbrella of culture. Within institutions, the convict code is the prevailing culture, but when we think more broadly about criminal behavior, the convict code would be part of a more prevailing criminal culture that exists outside of the prison walls (Wellford, 1967).

Operationalizing culture can be difficult. Consequently, the convict code has been defined in many ways. One of the earliest studies defined the convict code as “a set of

rules and regulations and a guiding principle for the maintenance of status within the prison community” (Hayner & Ash, 1939, p. 364). Other terms used to define the convict code have included: (a) values (Bronson, 2006; Crewe, 2005; Ohlin, 1956; Sykes, 1958; Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Thomas, 1970; Thomas & Foster, 1972), (b) attitudes (Caldwell, 1956; Thomas & Foster, 1972), (c) norms or normative behavior (Bronson, 2006; Cloward, 1960; Gibbons & Katzenbach, 2006; Sykes, 1958; Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Thomas & Foster, 1972; Wellford, 1967; Wheeler, 1961), (d) customs (Caldwell, 1956; Clemmer, 1940), (e) folkways (Caldwell, 1956; Clemmer, 1940), (f) rules (Bronson, 2006; Crewe, 2005; Hayner & Ash, 1939), (g) organizations (Bronson, 2006; Thomas, 1970), (h) regulations (Hayner & Ash, 1939), (i) principles (Hayner & Ash, 1939), (j) habits/behaviors (Caldwell, 1956), (k) dogmas/myths (Wheeler, 1961), and (l) positions (Thomas & Foster, 1972).

When describing the convict code, keywords that explain its utility often rely on: (a) adoption (Wellford, 1967), (b) sanction (Ohlin, 1956), (c) define (Thomas & Foster, 1972), (d) control (Ohlin, 1956), (e) govern (Cloward, 1960), (f) sustain (Wheeler, 1961), (g) maintain (Hayner & Ash, 1939), (h) establish (Bronson, 2006), (i) guide (Sykes & Messinger, 1960) (j) employ, and (k) negotiate (Crewe, 2005). Given the variety of prior conceptualizations of the convict code, for this research, I defined the convict code broadly as, *an inmate-defined and -regulated culture consisting of a set of values that governs behaviors and interactions with inmates and correctional staff*.

The convict code is not merely for figurative purposes; rather, it embodies important utilitarian means. These means include: (a) fostering in-group solidarity, (b) disowning rejection, (c) gaining control and status, (d) alleviating pains, and (e)



providing guidelines for appropriate behaviors and interactions. First, in-group solidarity is fostered rather organically because the foundation of the convict code is built on opposition to conventional society. Often inmates easily relate to one another because they collectively experience the pains of incarceration while their resentment toward prison staff deepens (Sykes & Messinger, 1960). This collectivity often creates an argot and language unique to the prisoners (Garabedian, 1963; Schrag, 1954, 1961; Sykes, 1958; Weinberg, 1942). Second, as previously mentioned, incarcerated individuals are often socially rejected by conventional society (Becker, 1963). Inmates are cognizant of this disapproval; however, in prison, the convict code provides a context to dissociate from the criminal stigma in an attempt to prevent feelings of social rejection from internalizing (Cloward, 1960; McCorkle & Korn, 1954). As part of this dissociation, the convict code creates an impetus for inmates to join together through common experiences and increases their feelings of adequacy, self-respect, and personal satisfaction (Ohlin, 1956; Sykes & Messinger, 1960). Third, by relying on the convict code, inmates regain a small portion of control over their lives (Caldwell, 1956; Cloward, 1960; Hayner & Ash, 1939; McCorkle & Korn, 1954; Trammell, 2012). In an environment where inmates are afforded minimal autonomy and privileges, they rely on the convict code to exert their masculinity and ultimately gain power and status among inmates (Caldwell, 1956; McCorkle & Korn, 1954; Sykes, 1958; Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Tittle, 1969). Fourth, the tenets of the convict code help to alleviate the pains of imprisonment. The convict code is comprised of a set of tenets that help inmates deal with the stress and pressures of incarceration with minimal psychological and physical discomforts (Cloward, 1960; Sykes, 1958; Tittle & Tittle, 1964). Fifth and finally, the convict code provides guidelines

for appropriate behaviors and interactions (Garabedian, 1963; Kaminski, 2003; Trammell, 2012; Wellford, 1967, 1973). Inmates are taught how to survive in prison by evading prison rules, avoiding victimizations, and manipulating the prison staff for their benefit (Gibbons & Katzenbach, 2006; McCorkle & Korn, 1954; Tittle & Tittle, 1964; Trammell, 2009).

The convict code consists of a set of tenets, which include: (a) Never snitch (Akerström, 1989; Caldwell, 1956; Einat & Einat, 2000; Hayner & Ash, 1939; Kreager et al., 2017; McCorkle & Korn, 1954; Reimer, 1937; Ricciardelli, 2014a; Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Tittle, 1969; Wellford, 1967), (b) do your time and play it cool (Bronson, 2006; Irwin, 1970; Irwin & Cressey, 1962; Sykes & Messinger, 1960, 1960; Wellford, 1973), (c) mind your own business (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Crewe, 2009; Irwin & Cressey, 1962; Ricciardelli, 2014a; Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Trammell, 2009), (d) be respectful and loyal to other inmates (Bronson, 2006; Cloward, 1960; Crewe, 2009; Gibbons & Katzenbach, 2006; Kaminski, 2003; Kreager et al., 2017; Reimer, 1937; Ricciardelli, 2014a; Sykes, 1958; Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Thomas & Poole, 1975; Wellford, 1967), (e) be tough, never show weakness, and act like a man (Bronson, 2006; Crewe, 2009; Gibbons & Katzenbach, 2006; Irwin & Cressey, 1962; Kaminski, 2003; Ohlin, 1956; Ricciardelli, 2014a; Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Thomas & Poole, 1975; Tittle, 1969; Trammell, 2009, 2012), and (f) do not be friendly with or talk to officers (Akers, 1985; Bronson, 2006; Caldwell, 1956; Crewe, 2009; McCorkle & Korn, 1954; Ohlin, 1956; Ricciardelli, 2014a; Tittle, 1969; Weinberg, 1942).

Most of the theoretical and empirical work on the convict code presented thus far has been centered on prisons within the United States and male inmates. The majority of

the research on the convict code fits squarely into these two categories. Although, it is worth noting that variations in the convict code, via international and gendered experiences, do exist (see Appendix A for a complete review of the literature).

**Studying the convict code.** Through decades of qualitative research and case studies, scholars have explored: (a) how street and prison culture combine to influence the convict code, (b) the tenets that make up the convict code, and (c) the utility of the prison culture in diminishing the deprivations of the prison environment. This foundation has been rich in details and theoretical connections, thus enabling scholars to begin to think about measuring the convict code quantitatively. As a result, studies emerged in the 1960s and 1970s where scholars systematically explored the convict code using vignettes and survey items. These studies provided a starting point for ways of measuring the convict code, for which improvements could be made. For example, prior researchers were not consistent with the terms used to identify the convict code; scholars have labeled it variously as: socialization (Garabedian, 1963), subscription to the inmate or prison code (Tittle, 1969; Tittle & Tittle, 1964), normative assimilation (Thomas, 1973; Thomas & Foster, 1972; Thomas & Poole, 1975), or prisonization (Akers et al., 1977; Wheeler, 1961).

Moreover, the prior measures of the convict code were constructed in a piecemeal fashion and without building on previously published work. Furthermore, the psychometric properties of the convict code in prior studies were commonly assessed with correlation coefficients. Therefore, questions may have been highly correlated but did not necessarily confirm the convict code as a latent construct. And finally, prior studies on the convict code had not comprehensively assessed the dimensions of the

convict code. Because most scholars identified the convict code as a *singular* construct, studies commonly focused on inmate alliances and social distance from correctional officers (Cline, 1966; Garabedian, 1963; Wheeler, 1961). Scholars did not fully account for other tenets of the convict code, including the need to emulate toughness and never show fear, or the importance of defending your reputation and demonstrating no fear in the use of violence (Bronson, 2006; Crewe, 2009; Kaminski, 2003; Ricciardelli, 2014a; Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Trammell, 2009). Moreover, inmate alienation while incarcerated was not measured, which scholars have identified as an important convict code tenet that reminds inmates to do their own time and keep to themselves (Bronson, 2006; Cloward, 1960; Reimer, 1937; Sykes & Messinger, 1960).

The quantification of the convict code occurred during the prison sociology era (Simon, 2000). During this time, prison research was focused on the cultural conditions of prisons and rehabilitative ideals, which mutually influenced prison management strategies. This era persisted from the 1920s until the 1980s. As a result of mass incarceration, prison officials dealt with overcrowded facilities as the prison population increased and expanded with diverse inmate populations (Feeley & Simon, 1992; Garland, 1990; Hunt, Riegel, Morales, & Waldorf, 1993; Wacquant, 2001). Consequently, three important shifts occurred in criminology as a field, specifically within corrections.

First, criminology as a discipline began to explore more individualistic (e.g., rational choice and self-control) and policy-related (e.g., incarceration rates, sentencing, and riots) research (Simon, 2000). The implications of this research were directly related to the challenges that prison administrators faced at the time (e.g., rising incarceration

rates). The implications generated from the convict code research failed to directly link findings to policy and practice, so this research was disconnected from the day-to-day operations of prison management (Simon, 2000).

Second, prison/researcher collaborations had weakened and institutional review boards enacted stricter regulations surrounding prison research, which made it more challenging to get “in and out of the belly of the beast,” as Wacquant noted (2002, p. 271).

Third, prison management strategies began to shift. Prison management during the sociology era emphasized the role of the convict code, and inmate experiences were central to the day-to-day operations and policies of the institutions. Strategies shifted to a top-down, order-maintenance, paramilitarized style of governing inmates (DiIulio, 1987). Within this model, inmate experiences and input were considered less important. Instead, the focus was on controlling inmate behavior and protecting prison staff and administration. As a result of order-focused corrections, very little empirical research focused on prison culture. Consequently, relatively few studies assessing the measurement or correlates of the convict code within the 21st century have been conducted.

In the last decade, calls have been made for researchers to examine the convict code in order to more clearly understand it and how adherence to it influences behaviors. According to Kreager and Kruttschnitt (2018), “the groundwork has been laid for a resurgence in embedded prison research and explorations of inmate society” (p. 17). A few scholars have revisited the convict code to update and validate its tenets, however, many empirical questions remain.

Using a semi-ethnographic research design, in a medium security prison in the UK, Crewe (2005) recognized adaptations to the convict code. He reported that the shared value system had been diluted. Consequently, inmates were more individualistic—solely watching out for themselves instead of other inmates. He also asserted that the “don’t snitch” culture, once very strong in prison, was not as prevalent. Specifically, he revealed that snitching on another inmate was *not always* forbidden; rather, it was appropriate in some contexts (e.g., when being bullied or exploited). Lastly, he reported that the social distance between officers and inmates was not as wide as once theorized. Instead, inmates recognized officers as only instituting rules set by the administration, which resulted in mixed levels of trust between inmates and staff.

In another evaluation of the convict code, Ricciardelli (2014a) used open-ended, semi-structured interviews to explore the convict code tenets for 56 men in a Canadian prison. She determined five tenets within the convict code—some of which had been acknowledged in previous research and some that were newly revealed. These tenets included: (a) never snitch and do not get close with correctional officers; (b) be dependable and keep your word; (c) follow daily rules (i.e., hygiene, never look into another man’s eyes); (d) mind your own business; and (e) be fearless and act tough. Ricciardelli’s first two tenets are new contributions to this literature, but their inclusion makes theoretical sense. Both are directly related to in-group solidarity and toughness, which are important overarching concepts of the convict code. In Ricciardelli’s work, the convict code was maintained partly through a violent prison environment where many felt at risk and never safe.

Additionally, Trammell (2009, 2012) conducted interviews with men (and women Trammell, 2012) who were released from prison in California. She asserted that prisoners valued peace, as a means of avoiding violence and correctional officers. Trammel's works (2009, 2012) were the first instances where peace was identified as a tenet of the convict code. Her findings are interesting given that other tenets emphasize acting tough, keeping to yourself, and defying the institution. Finally, Kreager and Kruttschnitt (2018), suggested in a summary piece that, in general, prison culture is changing due to diverse sentencing laws, the added control that gangs exhibit over the prison and illicit markets, and through the prevalence of drugs and drug offenders within the prison units.

In conclusion, many of the prior quantitative studies exploring the convict code occurred prior to mass incarceration. Through these studies, scholars provided a host of items used to measure the convict code; however, those items were only representative of *some* tenets of the convict code and did not fully measure *all* tenets. Moreover, it is unclear if the prior quantitative items accurately represent the convict code—and its dimensionality—throughout mass incarceration, given that researchers have revealed that the convict code is evolving. Therefore, this dissertation, through the first research question, explores prison culture in the era of mass-incarceration by creating specific questions to measure the convict code and exploring its dimensionality.

### **Adhering to the Convict Code**

Prior studies of the convict code suggested that adherence was largely a result of prisonization, where inmates adjust to the prison culture once they have learned its norms and customs (Clemmer, 1940). Akers and colleagues (1977) concurred, stating that “the inmate system is pervasive enough to be recognized and that enough inmates participate

in it that we may speak of it as a system which sets the tone and style for the *entire* [emphasis added] prison” (p. 529). Other scholars alluded to a similar understanding, concluding that if inmates wanted to achieve a favorable status, they must adapt to the patterns and behaviors that are in line with the prison culture (Reimer, 1937). However, the majority of scholars believed that adherence to the convict code varied between inmates (Clemmer, 1940; Copes, Brookman, & Brown, 2013; Kaminski, 2003; Reimer, 1937; Roebuck, 1963; Sykes, 1958; Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Thomas, 1970, 1973; Wellford, 1967). In fact, Tittle (1969) revealed that anywhere from 70% to 30% of his sample adhered to prison culture. As a result, some scholars have tried to determine which factors associate with adherence to the convict code. Collectively these scholars have confirmed that inmates were more likely to adopt the convict code (for comparisons see Wellford, 1967) if they were older (Akers et al., 1977; Onojeharho & Bloom, 1986; Schwartz, 1971), if they came from a lower-class background (Cline, 1966; Thomas, 1973), or had lower educational attainment (Onojeharho & Bloom, 1986). Criminal history was also an important predictor of convict code adherence. Convict code adherence has been confirmed to strengthen as the number of arrests and prior commitments increases (Schwartz, 1971). In contrast, one study reported that first-time offenders have exhibited stronger adherence to the convict code (Tittle & Tittle, 1964). Although some researchers reported positive or negative associations between the convict code and time served, Wheeler’s (1961) study revealed a curvilinear relationship. That is, prisonization was lowest at the beginning and end of an inmate’s incarceration. Finally, Thomas (1977) asserted that drug offenders adhered differently to the convict code while incarcerated.



Convict code adherence may vary based on attitudes and associations. In fact, inmates who prioritize personal relationships were more likely to adapt to the convict code (Thomas & Foster, 1972). However, feelings of alienation often strengthen adherence to the convict code (Clemmer, 1940; Thomas, 1973; Tittle & Tittle, 1964; Wheeler, 1961). Being connected to the free world and preparing for and anticipating a return to the community can also influence adherence. Receiving letters from the free world, participating in treatment programs, and having positive post-prison expectations, reduced adherence to the convict code in some studies (Peat & Winfree, 1992; Thomas, 1973, 1977; Thomas & Foster, 1972; Tittle & Tittle, 1964; Wheeler, 1961). The prison environment also affects adherence. Thomas and Poole (1975) acknowledged that feelings of powerlessness were directly associated with adherence to the convict code. Moreover, many studies have indicated that negative staff orientation correlated with convict code adherence (Akers et al., 1977; Schwartz, 1973, 1973; Thomas & Foster, 1972).

Collectively, this research demonstrated that adherence is influenced by a variety of factors and situations. Therefore, it is plausible that the convict code is selectively adhered to as part of a “toolkit” to survive, thrive, and live while incarcerated (Swidler, 1986). Inmates may rationally choose to adhere to certain tenets to accomplish certain means, while simultaneously diminishing adherence to other tenets. Cloward (1960) asserted that inmates, “emphasize accommodation and passivity—[which] are *strategic* [emphasis added] agents of social control” (p. 48). Moreover, his research confirmed that prisoners are aware of disruptive activities and will *choose* to intervene, if necessary to enforce the convict code. As one respondent stated,

. . . it was touch and go for a while there, but the agitators finally quieted down . . . the big boys gave them a little nudge, cooled them off . . . they don't like things to be disturbed and messed up, so they move in any time anything starts to happen and put the damper on it (Cloward, 1960, p. 47)

Similar rational calculations were acknowledged in Kaminski's (2003) study, where inmates were constantly calculating the benefits of their behavior because minimal resources existed within the prison environment.

The convict code should not be viewed as a dichotomous construct, where individuals choose or fail to adhere to its tenets. Rather, background characteristics, attitudes and associations, and prison contextual factors are likely to affect the strength of adherence to the convict code and which tenets are more frequently relied upon when navigating the institutional setting. To make advancements that directly relate to policy implications, a basic question must be answered: What factors are associated with adherence to the convict code? This is one focus of Research question 2.

### **The Convict Code, Violent Misconduct, and Violent Victimization**

Researchers using qualitative studies of the convict code have described its tenets, and proposed a relationship between the convict code and important prison outcomes, particularly violence. However, many of these associations exist merely in theory and have not been tested. The implications of adhering to the convict code—or adhering to specific tenets—may have varying effects on behavioral outcomes. For example, one tenet of the code states that inmates be tough, never show weakness, and always act “like a man” (Irwin & Cressey, 1962; Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Tittle, 1969). Naturally, this tenet would associate with violence, aggression, and retaliation. However, other tenets of

the convict code state to “not lose your head,” “play it cool,” and be respectful to other inmates (Irwin & Cressey, 1962; Reimer, 1937; Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Tittle, 1969). Based on these tenets, appropriate behaviors would include avoidance of violent situations, negotiations, and calm behavior.

In another instance, inmates who are part of prison treatment groups or reentry programs may have weaker adherence to the tenets of the convict code that emphasize violence. Instead, they may be more likely to rely on group cohesion and non-confrontational tenets (i.e., do their time and be loyal to other inmates) to complete the program or leave prison without any issues. In this scenario, the reward of “going home” or receiving “good time” may override any convict code norms that would be counterproductive to their success.

Though these examples are hypothetical, they provide a foundation for thinking about how the convict code could affect behavior. Therefore, a natural extension of this work should begin to explore the link between the convict code and violent misconduct and violent victimization. This is the purpose of the second dissertation objective. Implications of this dissertation may indicate that the convict code is not only a culture but that this culture has direct implications for violent behaviors and experiences. Therefore, the remainder of this section will include literature that supports these assumptions by first providing a summary of each empirical study and then explaining the links between the convict code and violent misconduct and violent victimization.

**Violent Misconduct.** Misconduct, particularly violence, within prisons is relatively common and has been since the development of institutional corrections (Irwin, 1980). Prison misconduct encompasses many behaviors and ranges on a continuum from

minor to major infractions (Steiner, Butler, & Ellison, 2014). To measure misconduct for this study, I solely relied on violent misconduct, because the convict code tenets are most closely tied to violence and because inmates rely on violence as a means of enforcing the convict code (Bronson, 2006; Crewe, 2009; Gibbons & Katzenbach, 2006; Irwin & Cressey, 1962; Kaminski, 2003; Ohlin, 1956; Ricciardelli, 2014a; Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Thomas & Poole, 1975; Tittle, 1969; Trammell, 2009, 2012). Scholars have thoroughly explored the factors associated with violent misconduct through numerous studies. For example, Steiner and colleagues (2014) reviewed 98 studies, evaluating the individual- and macro-level correlates of prison misconduct. Collectively, scholars acknowledged that anywhere from 9% to 32% of correctional populations report engaging in violent misconduct (Mears et al., 2013; Tewksbury, Connor, & Denney, 2014; Walters & Crawford, 2013). Because prison staff are tasked with maintaining safety within prison, violent misconduct is an administrative challenge for prison officials and costly for the state (Gaes & McGuire, 1985; Gendreau, Goggin, & Law, 1997; Jiang & Fisher-Giorlando, 2002; McCain, Cox, & Paulus, 1981; Nacci, Teitelbaum, & Prather, 1977; Walkey & Gilmour, 1984; Wooldredge, Griffin, & Pratt, 2001). Unsafe prison environments directly threaten the safety of inmates and create adversity in the work environment for prison staff. Therefore, high rates of violence in prison are burdensome for administrators because cases can result in civil liabilities, prison reform, and collateral consequences for staff, prisoners, and their families (Cole & Call, 1992; Jiang & Fisher-Giorlando, 2002; Lovell & Jemelka, 1996; Vaughn & del Carmen, 1995).

Involvement in violent misconduct can have long-term implications on reentry success. For example, engaging in violent misconduct while incarcerated is likely to

result in increased recidivism and criminal behavior upon release (Duwe & Clark, 2011; Trulson, DeLisi, & Marquart, 2011). Therefore, determining the correlates of violent misconduct is necessary to correctly inform prison treatment and programming needs, and to promote safe prison environments (Cao, Zhao, & Van Dine, 1997; Jiang & Fisher-Giorlando, 2002; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2009b).

The convict code may be related to violent misconduct while incarcerated. The convict code stresses the importance of toughness—acting fearless and never being afraid to “man up” when faced with a violent situation (Bronson, 2006; Sykes & Messinger, 1960). Toughness is often used as a means to gain respect and maintain a persona that is credible among other inmates (Gibbons & Katzenbach, 2006). Conversely, cowering in the face of controversy would be in direct opposition to the convict code. Rather, inmates should defend themselves and fight to maintain their level of respect (Trammell, 2012). As a result, adhering to these tenets may be associated with violent misconduct as inmates “man up” and act out violently, in an attempt to adhere to the convict code and gain respect.

In another illustration, the convict code embodies loyalty to other inmates, keeping to oneself, and never snitching. Inmates who do not strongly adhere to those tenets may be differentially involved in violent misconduct, because they show lack respect for others or otherwise show failure to subscribe to these tenets of the convict code. As Trammel (2012) determined in her research, male inmates rely on violence to enforce the convict code and ensure that people are behaving within the norms.

However, the convict code is not solely based on violence and toughness. Instead, the convict code states to “do your time,” “mind your own business,” and “play it cool”

(Bronson, 2006; Irwin, 1970; Irwin & Cressey, 1962; Sykes & Messinger, 1960, 1960; Wellford, 1973), which could affect the likelihood of encounters. By letting specific issues slide, inmates who adhere more strongly to these tenets may be less involved in violent misconduct. This is especially applicable when inmates are preparing for release. Inmates may do their time and ignore certain threats of violence in an attempt to gain parole or to be discharged from their incarceration.

The theoretical situations detailed above explain a few of the associations that could exist between the convict code and violent misconduct. The exact association between the convict code, its tenets, and violent misconduct is unclear and deserves further empirical evaluation. To answer these questions, I will determine if the convict code is associated with violent misconduct while controlling for other important predictors.

Although the influence of prison culture—via the convict code—is the main variable of interest for this dissertation, other important controls can be associated with violent misconduct (see Bottoms, 1999; Gendreau et al., 1997; Schenk & Fremouw, 2012; Steiner et al., 2014 for reviews). For background characteristics, researchers have reported that age inversely relates to violent misconduct (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2006; Griffin & Hepburn, 2006; Jiang, Fisher-Giorlando, & Mo, 2005; Rocheleau, 2013; Sorensen & Cunningham, 2010; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2008; Walters & Crawford, 2013). That is, as individuals age, they are less likely to be involved in violent infractions. Other background characteristics, such as race and ethnicity (Drury & DeLisi, 2010; Griffin & Hepburn, 2006; Rocheleau, 2013), education levels (Morris, 2016;

Steiner & Wooldredge, 2008), and being married (Tewksbury et al., 2014; Walters & Crawford, 2013), are inconsistently associated with violence in prison.

When measuring attitudes and associations, researchers have revealed that low levels of self-control are linked to general misconduct while incarcerated—including violence (DeLisi, Hochstetler, & Murphy, 2003). Moreover, gang membership has been reported to increase the odds of engaging in violent misconduct, with one study indicating that gang members are two times more likely than non-gang members to engage in violence while incarcerated (Griffin & Hepburn, 2006; Mears et al., 2013; Pyrooz, Turanovic, Decker, & Wu, 2016). Other important predictors include social support; for example, inmates with low family support engage in more violent behaviors while incarcerated (Mears et al., 2013).

Accounting for the influence of prison context, researchers have revealed that inmates with prison work assignments are less likely to engage in misconduct (Steiner & Wooldredge, 2008). Establishing and maintaining bonds can also be forged through prison visitation. Inmates who receive visits or phone calls from family members and friends are less likely to engage in misconduct, although this relationship may not be linear (Hensley, Koscheski, & Tewksbury, 2002; Jiang & Winfree, 2006; Tewksbury et al., 2014). According to Celinska and Sung (2013), misconduct generally declines in anticipation of prison visits, increases immediately following the visit, and then returns to a stable level. Further, inmates who report more frequent confrontations with correctional staff are more likely to engage in misconduct (Rocheleau, 2013).

As detailed above, the researchers accounting for variations in prison misconduct have been thorough, and they have determined a plethora of important predictive

variables. However, researchers have not fully measured the importance of prison culture in influencing misconduct. Given the theoretical link between the convict code and violence, it is necessary to evaluate the association between the convict code and violent prison misconduct.

**Violent victimization.** Although prison administrators are tasked with maintaining control and order within prisons, this requirement can be very difficult to accomplish (DiIulio, 1987; Park, 2000; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2009a; Toch, Adams, & Grant, 1989). As discussed in the previous section, misconduct is prevalent throughout incarcerated populations and victimization may coincide with each occurrence. In fact, based on the victim/offender overlap, individuals who engage in higher levels of violence are also more likely to be victims (Gaes & McGuire, 1985; Pyrooz, Moule, & Decker, 2014; Toman, 2017; Wooldredge & Steiner, 2013; Wright, 1991). Before 2003, researchers evaluating the causes and correlates of victimization in prison were relatively scarce. The passage of the Prison Rape Elimination ACT (PREA) sparked an increased awareness of victimization in prison (Schuhmann & Wodahl, 2011).

Although some scholars differentiate between victimization types (e.g., physical, sexual, and property), for this dissertation I focus on violent victimization. Limiting the scope to violent victimization is intentional, given that inmates rely on violence as a means of enforcing the convict code (Trammell, 2012). Violent victimization in prison affects anywhere from 12% to 35% of the inmate population, with a sizable portion ending in death (Blitz, Wolff, & Shi, 2008; Lahm, 2009; Mumola, 2005; Noonan, Rohloff, & Ginder, 2015; Wolff, Blitz, Shi, Siegel, & Bachman, 2007; Wolff, Shi, & Siegel, 2009b; Wooldredge, 1998). Inmates commonly report having experienced



multiple violent victimizations throughout their incarceration (Listwan, Daigle, Hartman, & Guastafarro, 2014; Listwan, Hanley, & Colvin, 2012). These estimates may only represent a portion of victimization because researchers have revealed that official data underestimate the magnitude of victimization, only capturing about 10% to 20% of occurrences (Byrne & Hummer, 2007).

Being physically victimized—or even observing victimization (for example see Listwan et al., 2012)—while incarcerated can result in negative repercussions. For example, inmates who report violent victimizations have higher levels of fear and lower levels of well-being, including: (a) depression, (b) anxiety, (c) helplessness, and (d) withdrawal (Boxer, Middlemass, & Delorenzo, 2009; Maitland & Sluder, 1996). Moreover, experiencing violence can make inmates feel less safe while incarcerated and can negatively impact their reentry experiences (Wolff & Shi, 2009; Zweig, Yahner, Visher, & Lattimore, 2015). Despite the prevalence of violent victimization and the consequences associated with this experience, prison victimization is understudied, especially in comparison to prison misconduct. The specific factors affecting this limited empirical attention remain unknown, although a few plausible explanations exist. First, some studies exploring various types of victimization are conducted with relatively small samples and lack generalizability. Second, a large portion of research has focused on *sexual* victimization given the legislative priority established through PREA, ultimately creating a knowledge gap surrounding other types of victimizations. Third, the “general public often ignores the personal welfare and safety of prison inmates” (Lahm, 2009, p. 348). In other words, prisoners are out of sight from the free world, which may decrease social—and even academic—interest in their experiences. Fourth, data on this topic are

limited. Potentially, the lack of data is due to the prison culture that has historically stigmatized victims and threatened to further harm these individuals for reporting their experiences to correctional officials (Caldwell, 1956; Hayner & Ash, 1939; McCorkle & Korn, 1954; Reimer, 1937; Sykes & Messinger, 1960). Consequently, scholars have called for the expansion of research to determine the factors that associate with victimization (Lahm, 2009).

The literature on prison victimization is not as developed as the research on misconduct. Within this developing body of work, little is known regarding the relationship between victimization and culture. For example, stronger adherence to the convict code could affect the likelihood of violent victimization. Moreover, the convict code encourages inmates to mind their business, do their time, play it cool, and even encourages peace among inmates (Bronson, 2006; Cloward, 1960; Crewe, 2009; Gibbons & Katzenbach, 2006; Kaminski, 2003; Kreager et al., 2017; Reimer, 1937; Ricciardelli, 2014a; Sykes, 1958; Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Thomas & Poole, 1975; Wellford, 1967). In fact, Ricciardelli (2014a) revealed that minding your business was a strategic survival strategy as one participant described it: “no looking at stuff that you shouldn’t be, don’t listen to anything you shouldn’t be listening to, and don’t say nothing you shouldn’t be saying. In other words, stay to yourself and keep your nose clean and you’ll be alright” (p. 13). Ultimately, by relying on passive precautions, inmates keep to themselves, they avoid bothering other inmates and, as a result, are left alone (McCorkle, 1992). Because violent victimization within prison is relatively common, inmates may adapt these tenets of the convict code as a means of minimizing risk and gaining safety (Listwan et al., 2014; Steiner, Ellison, Butler, & Cain, 2017; Wooldredge & Steiner, 2013, 2014).

Another tenet of the convict code deals with respect, often gained through demonstrating toughness and fighting back. Standing one's ground may have varying effects on victimization. In fact, when inmates are first incarcerated, they may engage in violence to assert their toughness; however, exerting toughness can minimize victimization risk long-term. Kuo and colleagues (2014) asserted that inmates who were willing to fight back, experienced fewer victimizations while incarcerated, compared to those who were not willing to stand up for themselves. As a participant in Bronson's (2006) study stated, "when faced with adversity, many respondents advised that inmates stand up for themselves. It was revealed that inmates who fight send a message to others that they were prepared to use violence and, therefore would be difficult to exploit" (p. 61).

Researchers have demonstrated that individuals who engage in criminal behavior are more likely to be victims (Gaes & McGuire, 1985; Jennings, Higgins, Tewksbury, Gover, & Piquero, 2010; Wooldredge & Steiner, 2013; Wright, 1991), which is termed the victim/offender overlap. Support for the victim/offender overlap has also been confirmed within the prison environment (Toman, 2017). In other words, inmates who engage in violent and retaliatory behavior are involved in risky encounters that may result in a victimization. The convict code fits squarely into the logic of the victim/offender overlap. Because the convict code encourages individuals to fight when faced with a violent situation, and values retaliation against any threats to their manhood or violations of respect (Irwin & Cressey, 1962; Ricciardelli, 2014a; Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Tittle, 1969; Trammell, 2012), inmates adhering to violent tenets of the convict code may be victimized at a higher rate because they are engaging in higher levels of violence.

One of the most prevalent tenets of the convict code is not snitching. Violating this norm could associate with increases in violent victimization while incarcerated. As a participant in Einat and Einat's study (2000) stated, "a prisoner who *sings*, becomes a *snitch* ... be ambushed, knifed, his face will be cut ... so everybody will know who he is, and that they should never act like him" (p. 314). By using violence to enforce the convict code, inmates may punish snitches. Snitching is commonly a result of inmates *not* minding their own business—another tenet of the convict code. Therefore, inmates putting themselves in others' business, and snitching about their behavior, could result in increased victimization. Finally, respect in prison is gained by the way inmates carry themselves as well as through the threat of violence. Individuals who are timid, weak, or who are afraid to stand up for themselves, may be preyed upon by more powerful inmates. As a participant in Bronson's (2006) study mentioned, "[prisoners] . . . prey on weaknesses, so best thing to do is, watch how you carry yourself" (p. 67).

Reducing the risk of violent victimization in prison has been reported to govern behaviors and influence the way individuals identify with other inmates while incarcerated (Hannah-Moffat, 2004; Ricciardelli, 2014b). Therefore, determining the association of the convict code with violent victimization is necessary to explain experiences while incarcerated. In this dissertation I address this question while controlling for other theoretically related predictors. Therefore, the remainder of this section will review important variables that correlate with violent victimization in prison (for review, see Steiner et al., 2017).

For correlates that measure background characteristics, age is a relatively salient predictor of violent victimization, in that older individuals are less likely to be victimized

in prison (Listwan et al., 2012; Pare & Logan, 2011; Wooldredge, 1998; Wooldredge & Steiner, 2013). Other demographic factors, such as race and ethnicity have inconsistent effects (Kuo et al., 2014; Lahm, 2009; Teasdale, Daigle, Hawk, & Daquin, 2016; Wooldredge, 1994). Scholars have typically demonstrated that educational levels and marital status are seldom predictive of violent victimization experiences (Kuo et al., 2014; Lahm, 2009; Listwan et al., 2012; Pare & Logan, 2011). An inmate's prior criminal record is rarely associated with victimization experiences (Listwan et al., 2012; Wooldredge & Steiner, 2013). Similarly, inconclusive effects have been reported when evaluating the association between incarcerating offense and victimization (Teasdale et al., 2016; Wolff et al., 2009b; Wooldredge, 1998). However, some scholars have asserted that, as time served or sentence length increases, the likelihood of victimization also increases (Listwan et al., 2012; Pare & Logan, 2011; Pérez, Gover, Tennyson, & Santos, 2010; Wooldredge & Steiner, 2013). As previously mentioned, the victim/offender overlap is important in determining the correlates of victimization. Inmates with a history of prison misconduct also report higher rates of victimization (Kuo et al., 2014; Lahm, 2009; Pare & Logan, 2011; Teasdale et al., 2016; Toman, 2017; Wooldredge & Steiner, 2013).

Scholars' abilities to predict violent victimization based on variables measuring attitudes and associations is limited. For example, despite its association with victimization in the free world (Wu & Pyrooz, 2016), gang membership has not been consistently correlated with violent victimization while incarcerated (Lahm, 2009; Wolff et al., 2009b; Wooldredge & Steiner, 2013). Additionally, in one study, Kerley and colleagues (2009) reported that most dimensions of self-control (i.e., impulsivity, self-

centeredness, and temperament) were not directly associated with violent victimization. However, other scholars indicated that social support can limit the negative consequences experienced following victimization while incarcerated (Listwan, Colvin, Hanley, & Flannery, 2010).

The prison context is an important correlate of violent victimization. As opportunity theorists would suggest, individuals who have prison work assignments, and who are involved in activities, may be at a higher risk for violent victimization because they are in contact with more individuals; however, time spent in programming may also help to limit victimization as individuals are under more direct supervision (Teasdale et al., 2016; Wooldredge & Steiner, 2013). Moreover, inmates' perceptions of the unit and how correctional staff treats them correlates with experiences of violent victimization. Researchers have indicated that inmates' satisfaction with the prison, and perceptions of safety and correctional officer fairness, are associated with a decrease in victimization; although, the exact reasoning behind this relationship is unclear (Wolff et al., 2009b; Wooldredge & Steiner, 2013).

Although scholars evaluating violent victimization in prison have revealed some correlates of victimization, a cultural component is missing from this line of inquiry. Scholars evaluating street culture have found that adherence to the code of the street increases the likelihood for victimization, because these individuals heavily rely on violence and power to gain respect and defend their reputation (Stewart et al., 2006). Given the theorized relationship between the convict code and violent victimization, further evaluations into these associations are necessary.

## Synthesis and Current Research

Although some researchers within criminology have moved away from exploring the importance of prison culture on behaviors, this dismissal of culture is not true for all areas (Kreager & Kruttschnitt, 2018). In fact, researchers have reported that culture is important in predicting fear of crime (McNeeley & Yuan, 2016), experiences of violence and victimization (Baron, 2017; Berg et al., 2012; Stewart et al., 2008; Stewart & Simons, 2006), and even cohesion and operations among police officers (Ingram, Paoline III, & Terrill, 2013; Paoline III, 2003). Researchers have developed bodies of literature that can be relied upon to evaluate the influence of culture systematically, using quantitative indicators. Much of the research on prison culture is decades behind, despite the strong theoretical foundation that prior scholars have developed. As Kreager and Kruttschnitt (2018) concluded, “inmate social organization within U.S. prisons remains opaque, a state that is particularly problematic because the transformations that accompanied mass incarceration substantially altered both prisons and the inmate population” (p. 2). Therefore, it is important to revisit how the convict code has changed throughout mass incarceration. As part of this exploration, a number of unanswered questions remain. To date, criminology is still lacking systematic questions to measure the convict code. Moreover, the convict code has been typically viewed as a singular construct. Instead, items measuring the convict code should be sensitive to the dimensionality of this prison culture. Therefore, it is important to determine if the convict code is a multi-dimensional construct. Additionally, no comprehensive evaluation has answered the question of who is most likely to adhere to the convict code.

Adherence to certain tenets of the convict code could be associated with violent misconduct and violent victimization. The relationship between these variables is supported theoretically, but these empirical connections have yet to be validated. Exploring this relationship is vital for the discipline to understand the mechanisms influencing violent behaviors and experiences while incarcerated. As a result, it is important to determine how the convict code is associated with violent misconduct and violent victimization.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **Data and Methods**

#### **Introduction**

Data from the LoneStar Project were used to determine Objective 1: discover if the convict code a multi-dimensional construct and explore what factors are associated with adherence, and Objective 2: discover how the convict code is associated with violent misconduct and violent victimization. Specifically, these objectives are used to explore the following research questions: Research question 1: Is the convict code a multi-dimensional construct? Research question 2: What background characteristics, attitudes and associations, and prison contextual factors are associated with adherence? Research question 3: Is adhering to the convict code associated with self-reported violent misconduct? Research question 4: Is adhering to the convict code associated with self-reported violent victimizations?

#### **Data**

Data for this dissertation were gathered as part of a larger original data collection effort—The LoneStar Project—a National Institute of Justice funded (2014-MU- CX-0111) research project in collaboration with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ).<sup>1</sup> Wave 1 from the LoneStar Project—Study of Offender Trajectories, Associations, and Reentry—involved face-to-face survey-based interviews with 802 Texas male inmates within a week prior to their release from prison.<sup>2</sup> The original

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<sup>1</sup> Principal investigators of the LoneStar Project were Scott Decker and David Pyrooz.

<sup>2</sup> The author was the project manager for the LoneStar Project and was heavily involved in the planning, implementation, and collection of the data. The author conducted over 80 interviews and spent many days and nights in the prisons overseeing operations.

purpose of the LoneStar Project was centered on gang members and reentry and sought to determine answers to the following questions: how do inmates organize themselves in prison? How do inmates transition from prison to their communities and what contributes to their successes and hardships? What role do gangs play in prison organization and reentry? And, how similar are gangs and gang members in prison settings to those in street settings?

The sampling strategy involved a disproportionate stratified random sample (Daniel, 2011) drawn weekly from a population of all male inmates scheduled for release from the Huntsville unit. This unit is one of TDCJ's six regional release centers and is responsible for releasing approximately 75% of TDCJ offenders in prison. On average, approximately 100 inmates are released daily—Monday through Friday—from this unit. It is likely that inmates released from this location may not have fully represented all TDCJ releases, because this location releases (a) all sex offenders (6% of the incarcerated population); (b) every administrative segregation inmate (2% of the population); (c) all inmates going on electronic monitoring (< 1% of the population); and (d) those returning to the southeastern part of the state.

To allow for comparisons across groups and a specialized focus on gang involved individuals, TDCJ identified gang members—which constitute confirmed, reconfirmed, suspected, or ex-members—were oversampled by a factor of five. Gang members represented almost half (46%) of the respondents whereas, the remainder of the sample (54%) were non-gang involved.<sup>3</sup> The entire sample included 802 inmates, who were

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<sup>3</sup> All analyses were conducted using weighted data to account for the overrepresentation of gang members in the sample. Therefore, weighted estimates are presented throughout this dissertation.

representative of the population of inmates released during that time regarding race, custody levels, and criminal histories (see Mitchell, Spooner, Wu, Pyrooz, & Decker, 2018).

Wave 1 data collection for the LoneStar Project started in April 2016 and ended in December 2016. Face-to-face interview-based surveys occurred at two Texas prisons, with inmates scheduled for release in one to seven days (see Mitchell et al., 2018 for a complete overview of Wave 1 methodology). Lower custody inmates (e.g., general population inmates and those with lower custody levels) were interviewed daily at the Huntsville unit in a high traffic, public, visiting area without a barrier between the respondent and interviewer. Higher custody inmates (e.g., those in administrative segregation or with higher custody levels) were interviewed weekly at the Estelle unit's administrative segregation visiting area, with a barrier between the interviewer and the respondent for security purposes. On average interviews lasted 1.5 hours, from consent to completion, and included 44 sections and 88 domains. Trained interviewers were prompted to ask survey questions and gather data using Blaise—a computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) software.

Self-reported survey responses from the LoneStar Project were merged with official data from the TDCJ—including incarceration length, incarcerating offense, and prior incarcerations.<sup>4</sup> These combined data provided a solid foundation for exploring the convict code and violent behaviors and experiences. These data were ideal for this dissertation for several reasons. First, these data included many important constructs (e.g., demographics, criminological theory, attitudes, and reentry planning) that could be

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<sup>4</sup> All variables are from the LoneStar Project unless otherwise noted.

related to the convict code, misconduct, and victimization. Second, these data—though not the first to quantify the convict code—provided the most comprehensive and current questions designed to measure the convict code and do so with the largest sample to date. Third and finally, Texas is an ideal state to study prison culture. At the time of the data collection, Texas was the largest state department of corrections in the nation housing almost 164,000 inmates (Carson, 2018). Moreover, Texas has a longstanding prison culture, which is partially attributable to the tradition of gangs, building tenders, and a diverse incarcerated population (Crouch & Marquart, 1989).

Lastly, over 76,000 TDCJ inmates were released from TDCJ custody in 2016 (Carson, 2018). The volume at which individuals are incarcerated and reenter in Texas allows for a constant blend of street and prison cultures. This drift of culture is fluid among incarcerated populations (Schwartz, 1971), which only emphasizes the need for empirical evaluations of the convict code to understand how prison culture may impact behaviors and experiences. The remainder of the methods section details the variables and statistical analyses used for each research objective.

### **Objective 1**

This objective was used to explore the dimensionality of the convict code and evaluate correlates of adherence to this prison culture. In doing so, Research question 1 determined if the convict code is a multi-dimensional construct. Research question 2 explored which factors (i.e., background characteristics, attitudes and associations, and prison contextual factors) are associated with adherence.

**Dependent variable.** For this study, the *convict code* was the dependent variable for Research questions 1 and 2. For Research question 1, the convict code as a construct

was explored and its psychometric properties were assessed. For Research question 2, the convict code construct—created in Research question 1—was used as the dependent variable. As previously mentioned, prior attempts to quantify the prison culture were methodologically limited. Therefore, nine quantitative indicators were adapted from prior studies (see Table 1). Also, seven items were created, based on themes from qualitative research, and these items measure important tenets of the code not fully captured by prior researchers.

Table 1

*Development of Current Convict Code Questions*

Original Questions and Themes	Studies	Current Questions
The best way to do time is to keep your mouth shut and never let the staff know that anything is getting you down. I have learned that you can't trust anyone in prison, staff or even fellow inmates.	Thomas & Foster, 1972; Thomas, 1973; Thomas & Poole, 1975; Peat & Winfree, 1992; Winfree et al., 2002 Winfree et al., 2002	<i>It is important to...</i> do your time and never let the staff know that anything is getting you down. not trust anyone in prison, even fellow inmates.
White notices that Lemon is getting upset ... White talks to Lemon's parole officer about the whole situation (vignette).	Garadedian, 1963	never talk with prison staff about personal problems
Never get too friendly with the [prison-specific term for staff] because they will want you to [prison specific term for betray] your fellow inmates.	Winfree et al., 2002	never get too friendly with the correctional officers because they will want you to betray your fellow inmates.
*Inmates should be dependable, not loyal	Ricciardelli, 2014a	show other inmates that you are dependable and that you will keep your word.
*Inmates should be fearless	Bronson 2006; Crewe 2014; Ricciardelli, 2014a	never show fear.
*Inmates should defend their reputation and maintain respect from others	Gibbons & Katzenbach, 2006; Crewe, 2009; Kreager et al., 2017	defend your reputation at all costs.
*Be tough at all times	Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Kaminski 2003; Trammel, 2009	show strength and toughness at all times.
*Do not get into other people's business	Coward, 1960; Crewe, 2009; Ricciardelli, 2014a	mind your own business and pretend like you don't see or hear what is going on around you.
*Keep to yourself	Reimer, 1937; Cloward, 1960	keep to yourself as much as possible.
*Do your own time	Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Cloward, 1960; Bronson 2006	do your time and not complain about things.
Around here its best to do something to others before they get a chance to do it to you	Thomas & Poole, 1975; Peat & Winfree, 1992	stay out of trouble but nobody is going to push you around and get away with it.
... If he doesn't describe the whole situation, he may lose up to a year of good time. He can avoid it by blaming Brown and Henry (vignette).	Wheeler, 1961; Akers et al., 1977	not leak information to a correctional officer about an inmate.
Never get too friendly with the [prison-specific term for staff] because they will want you to [prison specific term for betray] your fellow inmates.	Winfree et al., 2002	do not help prison staff when they need it.
You have to do what you can to help other inmates even when it might get you in trouble with the officers.	Thomas & Foster, 1972; Thomas, 1973; Thomas & Poole, 1975	do not help another inmate if they are in trouble or hurt.
When inmates stick together it is a lot easier to do time.	Thomas & Foster, 1972; Thomas, 1973; Thomas & Poole, 1975	be loyal to inmates and not loyal to prison staff.

*Note.* \*Questions adapted from qualitative research

Responses to the 16 questions varied from *strongly disagree* (coded 0) to *strongly agree* (coded 4), all questions displayed in Table 2. The means for these items ranged from 1.21 to 3.15, although responses existed on the entire continuum, from 0 to 4.

Table 2

*Questions Measuring the Convict Code*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
It is important to...		
not trust anyone in prison, even fellow inmates.	2.39	1.19
do your time and never let the staff know that anything is getting you down.	2.42	1.08
never get too friendly with the correctional officers because they will want you to betray your fellow inmates.	2.43	1.11
show other inmates that you are dependable and that you will keep your word.	3.07	0.78
mind your own business and pretend like you don't see or hear what is going on around you.	3.02	0.93
do not help other inmates if they are in trouble or hurt.	1.21	0.84
show strength and toughness at all times.	2.12	1.07
never show fear.	2.76	1.00
not leak information to a correctional officer about an inmate.	3.15	0.93
do not help prison staff when they need it.	1.83	1.10
be loyal to inmates and not loyal to prison staff.	1.96	1.06
defend your reputation at all costs.	2.31	1.13
keep to yourself as much as possible.	2.81	0.97
never talk with prison staff about personal problems.	2.48	1.09
do your time and not complain about things.	3.02	0.80
stay out of trouble but nobody is going to push you around and get away with it.	2.89	0.92

*Note.* Weighted estimates. Min = 0, Max = 4. Response options: *strongly disagree* = 0, *disagree* = 1, *neutral* = 2; *agree* = 3, *strongly agree* = 4.

**Controls.** For Research question 2, numerous variables were used to predict factors associated with adherence to the convict code. These items included background characteristics, attitudes and associations, and prison contextual factors.

**Background characteristics.** Prior researchers have not determined age-graded or racial/ethnic variation in adherence to the convict code. Some researchers have suggested that the convict code is a time-stable trait that spans all age categories (McCorkle & Korn, 1954; Reimer, 1937). Therefore, *age* at the time of the interview was measured as a continuous variable ranging from 19 to 73 (Table 3). The mean age of respondents was 40 years old. Moreover, prisons historically have been racially charged institutions, where inmates often align strongly with racial groups (Pelz, Marquart, & Pelz, 1991; Skarbek, 2011). Therefore, age and race and ethnicity were used as controls. Race and ethnicity were dichotomously coded into five categories. Thirty-eight percent of the sample identified as *white* (reference), 27% identified as *black* (coded 1), 8% identified as *multi-racial* (coded 1), 1% identified as *other* (coded 1), which included Native American, Asian, and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; and finally, 31% of the sample was *Latino* (coded 1).

It is plausible that individuals who have experienced multiple incarcerations or longer incarcerations may develop a stronger adherence to the convict code. To account for this variation, TDCJ official data were used to determine the number of *total incarcerations* experienced throughout an inmate's life. On average, respondents had 1.84 incarcerations ( $SD = 1.22$ ), but this number ranged from one to nine. The same data were used to assess *incarceration length* for the current sentence. The average incarceration length was 4.42 years ( $SD = 5.39$ ), although some individuals served less than a half of a year in TDCJ facilities, whereas some inmates were incarcerated for almost 35 years. Due to the skewed nature of this indicator, the natural log was used for analyses. For the natural log estimates, the mean was 1.36 ( $SD = 0.76$ ) with a range from



0.04 – 3.58. To account for prior behavior, TDCJ data were used to create dichotomized indicators for incarcerating offense, which included *violent crime* (reference), *property crime* (coded 1), *drug crime* (coded 1), and *other crime* (coded 1)—which included items such as traffic violations, public disorder, fraud, weapons, forgery, obstruction, and sex crimes. Within the sample, 39% of respondents were incarcerated for a violent crime, 19% for a property offense, 15% for a drug crime, and 27% were incarcerated for other crimes.

***Attitudes and associations.*** Scholars have reported that inmates with higher levels of self-esteem can more easily cope with institutionalization (Gullone, Jones, & Cummins, 2000; Negy, Woods, & Carlson, 1997); therefore, their reliance on the convict code may diminish. To determine how *self-esteem* associated with adherence to the convict code, and other dependent variables, five items from the Rosenberg self-esteem scale (1965) were used. Possible responses ranged from *strongly disagree* (coded 0) to *strongly agree* (coded 3), and three items were reverse coded (see Table B.1). All items loaded onto one-factor (loadings = 0.48 to 0.77) with an appropriate degree of reliability ( $\alpha = 0.79$ ; IIC = 0.22; SRMR = 0.04; CD = 0.83).<sup>5</sup> To measure self-esteem, a mean scale was created where higher numbers represented greater levels of self-esteem ( $M = 2.12$ ;  $SD = 0.53$ ; Range = 0.40 – 3).

It is plausible that gang members may have stronger adherence to the convict code, which enables them to maintain a persona of toughness while remaining socially distant from correctional officers (Mitchell, Fahmy, Pyrooz, & Decker, 2017). Also, gang membership is associated with misconduct and victimization while incarcerated (Griffin

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<sup>5</sup> All factor analyses involved principal factor and promax rotation.

& Hepburn, 2006; Mears et al., 2013; Wolff et al., 2009a). To control for these associations, current *gang membership* (coded 1) was created and dichotomously coded.<sup>6</sup> Eleven percent of the sample identified as a current gang member, which is slightly lower than estimates from Pyrooz and Mitchell (2018). They revealed that 15.4% of the correctional population nationally is classified as a gang affiliate, with 10% of that population being a confirmed gang member.

Scholars have theorized that beliefs and behaviors associated with the code of the street and convict code are similar (Mitchell et al., 2017). Therefore, six questions from Stewart and Simons (2006) were used to measure the *code of the street*. Possible responses ranged from *strongly disagree* (coded 0) to *strongly agree* (coded 4), and no items were reverse coded (see Table B.2). All items loaded onto one-factor (loadings = 0.61 to 0.70) with an acceptable degree of reliability ( $\alpha = 0.81$ ; IIC = 0.58; SRMR = 0.04; CD = 0.82). To measure the code of the street, a mean scale was created with higher numbers representing greater adherence. The average for this scale was 1.99 ( $SD = 0.85$ ) with responses ranging from 0 to 4.

***Prison context.*** Deprivations are assumed to be the greatest in maximum security prisons, resulting in an increased need for the convict code (Sykes, 1958). To account for differences in custody levels, dichotomous indicators were created. Seven percent of the sample was classified as a *trustee* (coded 1), 80% of the sample was identified as *general population* (coded 1), 9% was classified as *other* (reference), and 3% was identified as *restrictive custody* (coded 1), which included administrative segregation. Exposure to

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<sup>6</sup> Self-reported gang membership can be a reliable and valid measure of gang association for street and prison samples (Decker, Pyrooz, Sweeden, & Moule, 2014; Pyrooz, Decker, & Owens, 2018).

violence while incarcerated may magnify a person's reliance on toughness and the convict code as a means to survive (Sykes, 1958; Trammell, 2012). To account for these variations, a summative variable was created from four items to measure *exposure to violence* within the last six months. Each question had a lead-in "during this incarceration have you seen another inmate . . .," if respondents answered "yes" then they were asked how many times in the last six months they saw . . . This was a continuous variable (see Table B.3), where higher numbers indicated more exposure to violence. Due to the skewed nature of the variable, estimates were divided by 100 to decrease the scale of the variable. On average, respondents reported experiencing 0.06 violent incidents within the six months before the interview ( $SD = 0.24$ ; Range 0 – 5.40).

The convict code stresses social distance from and distrust of correction officers (Ricciardelli, 2014a; Sykes, 1958; Trammell, 2009, 2012). As a result, individuals who perceive correctional policies as unfair may have a stronger adherence to the convict code and vice-versa—increased procedural justice resulting in lower adherence. To measure procedural justice of correctional officers, items were adapted from the work of Tyler and Jackson (2014) and Reisig and Mesko (2009). For *procedural justice of correctional officers*, responses to seven questions ranged from *never* (coded 0) to *always* (coded 3). The one-factor construct had loadings that ranged from 0.56 to 0.80 (see Table B.4). Items were averaged to create a scale with higher numbers representing increased

perceptions of procedural justice ( $\alpha = 0.89$ ; IIC = 0.30; SRMR = 0.03; CD = 0.91). The average score for procedural justice was 1.11 ( $SD = 0.58$ , Range 0 – 3).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Consensus does not exist regarding the measurement or temporal ordering of procedural justice and its related concepts such as legitimacy and legal cynicism (Gau, 2011; Henderson, Wells, Maguire, & Gray, 2010; Maguire, 2018). A complete analysis of the measurement models for construct is outside of the purview of this dissertation (see Spooner, 2018 for a complete analysis).

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics (N = 802)*

	<i>M/%</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max
<i>Background</i>				
Age	40.22	12.10	18.50	73.26
Race/ethnicity				
White	33.07		0.00	1.00
Black	27.29		0.00	1.00
Multi-racial	7.88		0.00	1.00
Other	1.12		0.00	1.00
Latino	30.64		0.00	1.00
Education				
Less than high school	53.14		0.00	1.00
High school	27.82		0.00	1.00
Higher education	19.04		0.00	1.00
Married	22.38		0.00	1.00
Total incarcerations	1.84	1.22	1.00	9.00
Incarceration length (years-ln)	1.36	0.76	0.04	3.58
Incarcerating offense				
Violent	39.43		0.00	1.00
Property	18.90		0.00	1.00
Drugs	14.87		0.00	1.00
Other	26.80		0.00	1.00
<i>Attitudes/Associations</i>				
Self-esteem	2.12	0.53	0.40	3.00
Low self-control	1.38	0.76	0.00	4.00
Social support	2.33	0.73	0.00	3.00
Peer influence	0.77	0.68	0.00	3.00
Gang membership	10.55		0.00	1.00
Code of the street	1.99	0.85	0.00	4.00
<i>Prison Context</i>				
Custody level				
Trustee	7.42		0.00	1.00
General population	80.05		0.00	1.00
Other	9.21		0.00	1.00
Restrictive	3.32		0.00	1.00
Prison visits	0.57	0.72	0.00	5.00
Prison work	73.90		0.00	1.00
Procedural justice - CO	1.11	0.58	0.00	3.00
Exposure to violence	0.06	0.24	0.00	5.40

*Note.* Weighted estimates. CO = correctional officer.

**Analytic strategies.** Two separate analyses were used to answer Research question 1—is the convict code a multi-dimensional construct? Analysis 1 involved exploratory factor analyses to determine the number of factors that existed within the 16 convict code questions. This process began with a principal factor analysis, using promax rotation. Factor selection was then determined using multiple criteria (e.g., eigenvalues, scree plot, parallel analysis plot, and structure matrices). Based on the findings from these exploratory analyses, the appropriate structure of the convict code factors was proposed. Analysis 2 relied on confirmatory factor analyses to validate the proposed factors. Using structural equation modeling in Stata, two separate models were estimated. Based on model fit statistics (i.e., SRMR and coefficients of determination), the psychometric properties of each factor were determined. These processes resulted in a validated construct of the convict code, which was necessary to execute the next analysis. Multivariate ordinary least squares regressions (Lewis-Beck, 1980) were used to explore which variables were associated with adherence to the convict code, the purpose of Research question 2.

## **Objective 2**

The purpose of Objective 2 was to determine how the convict code was associated with violent behaviors and experiences. Research question 3 explored the association between the convict code and violent misconduct; whereas, Research question 4 evaluated the association between the convict code and violent victimization.

**Dependent variables.** The dependent variable for Research question 3 was violent misconduct. To measure *violent misconduct* (see Table 4), each question had a lead-in statement, “during this incarceration have you . . . ” if respondents answered

“yes” then they were asked how many times this occurred in the last six months.<sup>8</sup>

Continuous responses ranged from 0 to 374 with respondents reporting an average of 2.77 violent misconducts within the last six months ( $SD = 23.29$ ). Continuous responses to the nine items were reduced into a dichotomous indicator and 23% of the sample had engaged in violent misconduct within the six months before the interview.

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<sup>8</sup> Violent misconduct and violent victimization were measured within the six months before the administration of the survey for two reasons. First, to limit recall bias with behaviors that happened too far in the past (Singleton & Straits, 2010). Second, to minimize temporal ordering issues since current attitudes were assessed and associated with behaviors occurring in the past. Relying on estimates of misconduct or victimization throughout their entire incarceration would magnify temporal ordering issues and introduce additional bias.

Table 4

*Violent Misconduct Questions*


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Have you used a weapon or force to try to get money or things from people?
[IF YES] How many times has this happened in the last six months?
Have you attacked a correctional officer with a weapon?
[IF YES] How many times has this happened in the last six months?
Have you hit or struck a correctional officer without a weapon, such as your fists?
[IF YES] How many times has this happened in the last six months?
Have you attacked another inmate with a weapon?
[IF YES] As part of a group, how many times has this happened in the last six months?
[IF YES] By yourself, how many times has this happened in the last six months?
Have you hit, kicked, slapped, or bit another inmate?
[IF YES] As part of a group, how many times has this happened in the last six months?
[IF YES] By yourself, how many times has this happened in the last six months?
Have you threatened to hurt someone?
[IF YES] How many times has this happened in the last six months?
Have you had or attempted to have sexual relations with someone against their will?
[IF YES] How many times has this happened in the last six months?

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*Note.*  $M = 23\%$ . Response options: lead-in: *no* = 0, *yes* = 1; question = continuous.

The dependent variable for Research question 4 was violent victimization. To measure *violent victimization* (see Table 5 for specifics), eight questions were used. Each question had a lead-in, “during this incarceration has another inmate . . .” if respondents answered “yes” then they were asked how many times this occurred in the six months before the interview. Respondents reported 3.98 violent victimizations within the last six months ( $SD = 50.99$ ), ranging from 0 to 1080. These estimates were dichotomized, with



25% of the sample experiencing a violent victimization within the six months before the interview.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Sweeten (2012) suggested that variety scores are most appropriate to account for variety and severity of criminal offending for community samples. It is unclear if offending measures can be created for prison samples in the same way they are created for community samples. Therefore, this research relied on dichotomous indicators, which have also been used in prior research (Griffin & Hepburn, 2006; Lahm, 2009; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2008; Tewksbury, Connor, & Denney, 2014; Wolff, Shi, & Siegel, 2009a; Wooldredge, 1994). The rationale for the use of dichotomous estimates follows. First, the purpose of this research was to determine whether or not a person had engaged in violent misconduct or had been victimized. The severity and extent of those experiences are not in question. Second, a specific type of misconduct and victimization (i.e., violent) is measured; therefore, the items included did not range across multiple types (e.g., drug and property) of behaviors or experiences. Third, at the time of the interview, many respondents verbalized that they did not want to do anything that would jeopardize their release, so reports may underestimate the amount of misconduct and victimization that occurs throughout an incarceration. Variation in responses to individual items was assessed. Over 72% of respondents self-reported no misconduct and 75% of respondents self-reported no victimization; 16% reported one type of misconduct and 14% reported one type of victimization; 7% engaged in two types of misconduct and 6% experienced two types of victimization; 3% reported three types of misconduct or victimization; 1% reported four types of misconduct or victimization; 0.37% reported five types of misconduct and 0.25% experienced five types of victimization; and 0.37% reported six types of misconduct. Based on these estimates, it is evident that the dispersion above one is limited, so dichotomous estimates were suitable.

Table 5

*Violent Victimization Questions*


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Has another inmate threatened to hurt you with a weapon?
[IF YES] In the last six months, how many times has this happened?
Has another inmate threatened to hurt you without a weapon?
[IF YES] In the last six months, how many times has this happened?
Has a group of people physically attacked you with a weapon?
[IF YES] In the last six months, how many times has this happened?
Has another inmate physically attacked you with a weapon?
[IF YES] In the last six months, how many times has this happened?
Has a group of people hit you with their fists, kicked you, slapped or bit you?
[IF YES] In the last six months, how many times has this happened?
Has another inmate hit you with his fist, kicked you, slapped or bit you?
[IF YES] In the last six months, how many times has this happened?
Has someone had or attempted to have sexual relations with you against your will?
[IF YES] In the last six months, how many times has this happened?
Has another inmate used a weapon or force to try to get money or things from you?
[IF YES] In the last six months, how many times has this happened?

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*Note.*  $M = 25\%$ . Response options: lead-in: no = 0, yes = 1; question = count.

**Independent variables.** The key independent variables for these research questions were the *convict code* factors, which were created in Research question 1.

**Controls.** Some control variables for these research questions were previously explained. Additional controls unique to violent misconduct and victimization are detailed below.

**Background characteristics.** Researchers have determined that individuals with higher levels of education are less likely to engage in prison misconduct (Cao et al., 1997; Celinska & Sung, 2014; Drury & DeLisi, 2010; Griffin & Hepburn, 2006; Hewitt, Poole, & Regoli, 1984; Rocheleau, 2013). However, the association between levels of education and victimization has been inconsistent or non-significant (Kuo et al., 2014; Lahm, 2009; Pare & Logan, 2011; Teasdale et al., 2016). Therefore, educational levels six months before incarceration were included in the models. Education was measured by

three dichotomous variables and included *less than high school degree* (coded 1), *high school degree* (reference), and *higher education* (coded 1), which included partial college or specialized training, college graduate, and graduate school training. Fifty-three percent of the sample had less than a high school degree, which is consistent with prison samples (Coley & Barton, 2006; Harlow, 2003). Moreover, 28% of the sample had received a high school degree, and 19% of the sample had completed some type of higher education.

Bonds, both criminal and pro-social, have been associated with prison misconduct and experiences of victimization. For example, researchers have asserted that inmates who are married engage in less violent prison misconduct (Celinska & Sung, 2014; Jiang et al., 2005; Jiang & Winfree, 2006), and that marriage can be associated with either decreases or increases in victimization (Teasdale et al., 2016; Wooldredge, 1994). Therefore, *marriage* (coded 1) was measured using a dichotomous indicator. In this sample, 22% of respondents were married within the six months before their incarceration. Additional control variables, which have been previously detailed include *age, black, white, multi-racial, Latino, other, prior incarcerations, incarceration length, violent crime, property crime, drug crime, and other crime*.

***Attitudes and associations.*** Self-control has been linked to involvement in criminal behaviors, violent prison misconduct, and pre- and post-incarceration anti-social behaviors (DeLisi et al., 2003; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Malouf et al., 2014; Pratt & Cullen, 2000). Moreover, self-control has been reported to associate with experiences of victimization (Kerley et al., 2009; Pratt, Turanovic, Fox, & Wright, 2014). Therefore, this analysis controlled for levels of *low self-control*. Thirteen items from the brief self-control scale were used (Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004). Responses ranged from

*strongly disagree* (coded 0) to *strongly agree* (coded 4), and four items were reverse coded. For the one-factor model, loadings ranged from 0.43 to 0.62, and the scale had an acceptable degree of reliability ( $\alpha = 0.80$ ; IIC = 0.46; SRMR = 0.05; CD = 0.81). Items were averaged to create a scale where higher numbers represented higher levels of low self-control. The average low self-control for the sample was 1.46 ( $SD = 0.75$ ), but estimates ranged from 0 to 4 (see Table B.5).

Having strong social support from family members has been linked to decreases in violent prison misconduct (Mears et al., 2013), although the utility of social support in coping with victimization experiences in prison remains unclear (Listwan et al., 2010). Therefore, *social support* was created using three items from the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988) and five items from the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI) study (Lattimore & Visser, 2011). Responses ranged from *strongly disagree* (coded 0) to *strongly agree* (coded 3). Loadings ranged from 0.80 to 0.89 and the scale had a high degree of reliability ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ; IIC = 0.43; SRMR = 0.02; CD = 0.96). Items were averaged to create a scale where higher numbers represented more social support (see Table B.6).

It is also important to control for negative peer influence, given the association between peers and criminal behavior or misconduct throughout the life-course (Giordano, Cernkovich, & Holland, 2003; Pratt et al., 2010). Although the association between peers and victimization is more commonly studied within communities, this association is still worth evaluating within the prison context (Wooldredge, 1994). Consequently, a variable was created to measure the amount of *negative peer influence*, where higher estimates indicated more peers who engaged in anti-social behaviors. On average, respondents

reported that some of their friends engaged in anti-social tendencies ( $M = 0.77$ ;  $SD = 0.68$ ), but the entire range of responses (i.e., from *none of them* to *all of them*) were provided (see B.7). Previously explained controls for attitudes and associations included *gang membership* and *the code of the street*.

***Prison context.*** Deprivations experienced while incarcerated may be diminished through prison visitation, although scholars have revealed inconsistent associations between visitation and violent misconduct and victimization (Hensley et al., 2002; Jiang & Winfree, 2006; McShane & Williams, 1990; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2008; Tewksbury & Connor, 2012; Tewksbury et al., 2014; Wooldredge, 1994, 1998). Therefore, *prison visitation* was used as a control. Respondents were asked if they were allowed to receive visits within the six months before their interview. Those answering “yes” were then asked how frequently their family or friends visited. Possible responses ranged from *never* (coded 0) to *daily* (coded 5), where higher numbers represented more frequent visitation. Within the sample, respondents rarely received visits ( $M = 0.57$ ;  $SD = 0.72$ ), although some respondents reported receiving visits almost daily from family or friends. Moreover, working while incarcerated allows the time to pass, it can often provide a skill, but it also changes the routine activities of individuals, and may potentially be associated with increases in violent misconduct and victimization (Celinska & Sung, 2014; Steiner et al., 2014; Teasdale et al., 2016; Wooldredge & Steiner, 2013). Therefore, *prison work* was coded as 1 for 74% of inmates who had a prison job within the six months prior to the interview. Controls, which were previously detailed, included *trustee*, *general population*, *restrictive*, *procedural justice of correctional officers*, and *exposure to*

*violence*. Additionally, for only the victimization models, prison misconduct was used as a control (see Table B.8 for a complete list of all control variables).

**Analytic strategies.** The analysis proceeded by first exploring the bivariate associations between the convict code, important correlates, and violent misconduct and victimization. Then, multivariate models were estimated to determine if any bivariate associations remained once controlling for important correlates. Given the dichotomous nature of the dependent variables, logistic regressions were used. For both dependent variables, Model 1 was a baseline model and explored the association between the convict code and outcome variables. Model 2 was used to evaluate the association between the convict code and violent misconduct and victimization, net of control variables.

### **Missing Data**

Before proceeding with analyses, it was important to evaluate the prevalence of missing data, for which a series of steps were required. Two types of missing data analyses were conducted. First, missing data was assessed for all items before scale construction. If a participant was missing data for less than 50% of the items within the scale, then the participant's scale mean score replaced all missing data points for that participant. As illustrated in Table 6, the self-esteem scale consisted of five items. One participant was missing data on 2 items, which equated to 40% of the scale items missing for that participant. Because less than 50% of the items were missing for this participant, his mean score for self-esteem scale replaced missing data points. In another illustration—social support consisted of eight items—four participants were missing data on eight of the items. This equated to 100% of the scale items missing for those participants. Since

more than 50% of the responses were missing, this scale was coded as missing for those participants. A *t*-test comparison was conducted for all scales with mean replacements, to determine if the replaced estimates were significantly different from the non-replaced estimates. As demonstrated in Table 6, the scales with replaced means were not significantly different from the non-mean replaced scales. These non-significant findings demonstrated that mean replacement did not significantly alter the data.

Table 6

*Missing Data on Scales*

Scales	Number of Items in Scale	Number of Respondents	Missing Items	Percent Missing	<i>t</i> -test
Self-esteem	5	1	2	40.00	*
Code of the street	6	1	1	16.67	*
Procedural justice - COs	7	2	1	14.29	0.68, ns
		1	2	28.57	
Low self-control	13	6	1	7.69	-1.69, ns
		3	5	38.46	
Social support	8	5	1	12.50	0.97, ns
		1	3	37.50	
		1	6	75.00	
		4	8	100.00	

*Note.* CO = correction officer. \* *t*-test could not be computed because only data for one person was replaced.

The second type of missing data analysis was conducted on the entire dataset, including controls. First, the missing data patterns were graphed for all variables. The patterns appeared to be mostly random. Second, according to Hertel's (1976) threshold, to use listwise deletion variables should have no more than 15% missing data. This criterion was satisfied because no variable had more than 0.62% missing, and missing data only existed for 11 cases or 1% of the data. Third, I determined that separate variance *t*-tests to compare the differences in means for items within and without missing data were not necessary, because less than 5% of the data were missing for all variables.

The fourth and final step involved Little's Missing Completely at Random test (Little, 1988). This test was conducted to determine whether a multiple imputation approach was appropriate to address missing data. Little's MCAR test was non-significant ( $\chi^2 (176, N = 802) = 113.01, p = ns$ ), indicating that multiple imputation was not an appropriate strategy to address missing data. Therefore, listwise deletion was acceptable. To maximize the number of responses within each research objective, two different sample sizes were used for this dissertation. The sample size for the construct validation within Objective 1 was 799. Whereas, the sample size for the ordinary least squares regressions (objective 1) and logistic regressions (Objective 2) was 791, given some control variables had missing data.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Research Objective 1

**Research question 1.** The first question of this study determined if the convict code is a multi-dimensional construct. To answer this question, two separate analyses were used. First, exploratory factor analyses were used to determine if the questions developed in this study accurately measured the convict code. Second, confirmatory factor analyses were used to assess the psychometric properties of the convict code and determined if the convict code was a singular or multi-dimensional construct.

*Analysis 1: Exploratory factor analysis.* Seven exploratory analyses were used to determine the amount of variation between the 16 questions measuring the convict code (see Table 2). As a first step, it was important to determine if any portion of the variance within the convict code questions was caused by an underlying factor. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test (Cerny & Kaiser, 1977; Kaiser, 1974) determined that an underlying construct existed within the 16 convict code questions. Moreover, the pattern correlations among the variables were compact and suitable for factor analysis, KMO = 0.873 (Field, 2006).

The second step was necessary to assess if the questions within the convict code were related. To do so, a Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Snedecor & Cochran, 1989) was conducted and confirmed that the matrix underlying the convict code questions was not an identity matrix (i.e., unrelated), but instead some relationship was apparent between the variables ( $\chi^2 = (120, n = 799) = 3021.17, p = 0.00$ ). Based on the findings from Step 1 and Step 2, I considered it likely that an underlying construct exists within the 16 convict code questions, so the third step was to conduct a factor analysis.

The third step concerned the importance prior to estimating a factor analysis of considering: (a) the type of factor analysis used; and (b) the type of rotation used. To address the first consideration, I present a brief overview of the most common types of factor analyses. A principal component factor analysis (PCA) assumes that a common factor exists among the items, and this method is commonly used as a factor reduction technique (Brown, 2014). PCA attempts to account for all of the variance or covariance, rather than just the portion of the variance that the items share (Acock, 2013). In other words, PCA measures the variance in the observed measures, rather than explaining the correlations among the items, and it assumes that the error in the variance is zero (Brown, 2014).

Contrary to PCA, a principal factor (PF) analysis determines how well the correlations among the indicators predict the pattern in the input correlation matrix (Brown, 2014). Moreover, this procedure is commonly relied upon when trying to predict a latent variable. Although Velicer and Jackson (1990) suggest that the differences between PF and PCA are minimal, differences for the models in this dissertation existed. Therefore, the decision between PCA and PF was carefully considered, and a PF model was used because this technique determines how well the correlations among the variables predict a latent outcome—which was the purpose of this analysis.

The second consideration of a factor analysis involves rotation. Rotating factor analyses is important because this procedure rotates the axes, so that variables can maximally load onto factors (Field, 2009). To determine which type of rotation is appropriate, Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) suggested starting with an oblique rotation and then evaluating the correlations among factors. Based on this guidance, the

evaluation showed 57% of the interitem correlations exceeded 0.32, meaning that 10% or more overlap appeared in variance between items. Because of the overlap in the correlations between items, an oblique rotation method was determined as most appropriate.

The fourth step in a factor analysis is factor selection. For this study, that meant determining how many factors existed within the 16 convict code questions. It is important to note, that factor selection cannot be solely determined by one indicator; rather, it is necessary to consider multiple indices, which included: (a) the commonly relied upon eigenvalues; (b) a scree plot; (c) a parallel analysis plot; (d) factor plots; and (e) factor loading and structure patterns.

A promax rotation produced one eigenvalue greater than one (3.90) and this factor accounted for 81% of the total variance. The remainder of the eigenvalues were below 0.80. According to the Kaiser-Guttman rule (Kaiser, 1991), eigenvalues greater than one suggest a nontrivial latent variable.

When using a scree plot to determine the number of factors within a construct, it is important to look for the point of inflection or where the plotted eigenvalues begin to level off (Brown, 2014). To determine the point of inflection, a horizontal and vertical line is drawn through the plotted points (see Figure 1 below). Based on the scree plot (see Figure 1), I determined four factors within the 16 items. This conclusion was based on the minimal changes in the slope, which appear following the point of inflection.

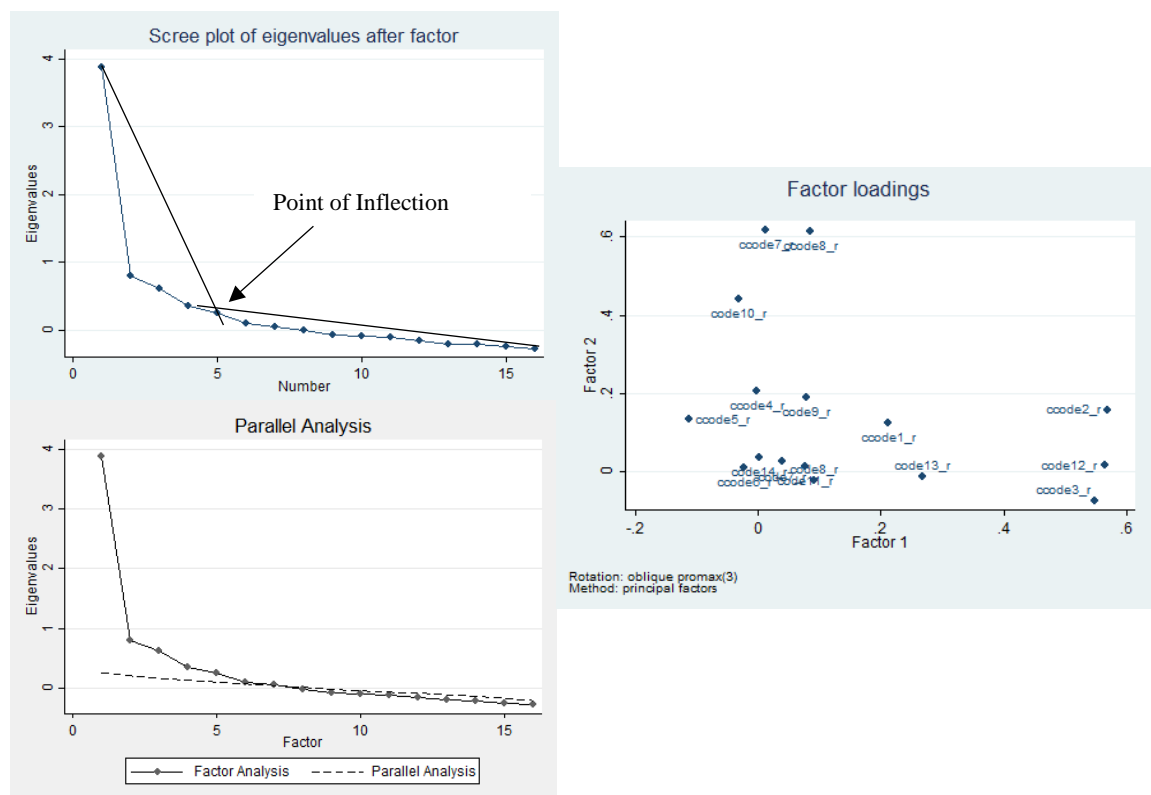


Figure 1. Factor selection indices.

Also presented in Figure 1 is the parallel analysis test. This is another means of determining how many factors exist, by identifying how many points are above the parallel analysis line. According to this figure, five points were above the line, although the distance between the line and Plots 4 and 5 was minimal. Based on this visualization, potentially five factors existed within the convict code.

A factor loadings plot was also used to visually determine how the items clustered into factors within the convict code. Based on this diagram (see Figure 1 above), it appeared that the convict code contained four, or potentially five clusters of variables. Cluster 1 starts in the lower left quadrant, a cluster of variables around (0, 0). Cluster 2 appears as a cluster of variables in the lower right quadrant. Cluster 3 appears toward the top left quadrant, some items clustering, although loosely. Clusters 1 through 3 were

more pronounced; however, Clusters 4 and 5 were harder to visualize. Cluster 4 appeared around the y value of 0.2 and x values, ranging from 0 to 0.3, forming an inverted U-shaped pattern. However, it appeared that another pattern may also have accounted for those indicators. Cluster 5 can be viewed by separating Cluster 4 into two factors, where the items at the x value 0.2 cluster to form one factor, and items above the y value of 0.2 cluster to form another. Based on these clusters, I determined the construct contained four or potentially five factors.

Most of the indices previously presented for factor selection have been arbitrary, except for the eigenvalue estimate. However, Table 7 illustrates the pattern and structure matrix, along with the uniqueness of indicators. The promax rotated factor loadings for each item represent the items *contribution* to the existing factor, whereas the structure matrix determines the *correlation* between the item and each oblique factor. Based on this pattern, four distinct factors appeared, and four items (i.e., “stay out of trouble but nobody is going to push you around and get away with it,” “show other inmates that you are dependable and that you will keep your word,” “do not trust anyone in prison, even fellow inmates,” and “do your time and not complain about things”) load on none of the factors.

For example, “do your time and never let staff know that anything is getting you down, never talk with prison staff about personal problems,” and “never get too friendly with the correctional officers because they will want you to betray your fellow inmates,” all loaded onto Factor 1 with factor loadings ranging from 0.55 to 0.57. Factor 2’s loadings ranged from 0.44 to 0.62, and included items such as “show strength and toughness at all times,” “never show fear,” and “defend your reputation at all times.”

Factor 3 consisted of three items (“keep to yourself as much as possible,” “mind your own business and pretend like you don’t see or hear what is going on around you,” and “do not leak information to a correctional officer about an inmate”). Loadings for these items ranged from 0.62 to 0.36.<sup>10</sup> Finally, Factor 4 included “do not help prison staff when they need it,” “be loyal to inmates and not loyal to the prison staff,” and “do not help other inmates if they are in trouble or hurt;” the factor loadings for these items ranged from 0.67 to 0.46.

The structure matrix (also presented in Table 7) shows the correlations between the item and the factor. The purpose of this matrix was to determine if certain items cross-loaded or highly loaded onto multiple factors. For all factors, each item had the highest correlation with the factor onto which it loaded. This finding suggests that items did not load onto multiple factors. For example, the correlation between “never show fear” and Factor 2 was 0.68, the factor that this item loaded onto. That same item and correlations with Factors 1, 3, and 4 ranged from 0.40 to 0.23, suggesting that this item has the highest loading for Factor 2 and did not cross-load onto other factors. Based on these estimates, it appeared that no items were highly correlated with multiple factors.

Finally, the uniqueness for each item (displayed in Table 7) as an estimate represents the percentage of the factor not explained by the variable. Typically estimates

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<sup>10</sup> Although this item had a factor loading that was below the traditional standard of 0.40 (Yong & Pearce, 2013), it was retained for three reasons. First, with rounding, this item meets the standard of 0.40; second, removing this item would leave factor 3 with only two questions, which would make forming a reliable construct more difficult (Yong & Pearce, 2013); third and most importantly, it is necessary to evaluate the relationship between the item and the size of the sample when evaluating factor loadings (Stevens, 2012). For example, Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) determined that a factor loading would need to reach 0.32 to be statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) in a sample of 300. Given the current study had over 800 participants, a factor loading of 0.38 is above this criterion.

larger than 0.60 suggest either measurement error, or that the variable excels in predicting only a specific factor. Uniqueness estimates ranged from 0.53 (i.e., “defend your reputation at all costs”) to 0.76 (i.e., “show other inmates that you are dependable and that you will keep your word”).

Table 7

*Rotated Pattern and Structure Matrix for the Convict Code*

	Pattern Matrix				Structure Matrix				Uniq.
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F1	F2	F3	F4	
It is important to...									
never talk with prison staff about personal problems.	0.57	0.02	0.06	0.16	0.64	0.33	0.44	0.38	0.57
do your time and never let the staff know that anything is getting you down.	0.56	0.16	-0.07	0.01	0.64	0.46	0.39	0.32	0.56
never get too friendly with the CO's because they will want you to betray your fellow inmates.	0.55	-0.07	0.04	0.11	0.61	0.30	0.39	0.38	0.61
never show fear.	0.09	0.62	0.03	-0.05	0.40	0.68	0.37	0.23	0.53
show strength and toughness at all times.	0.01	0.61	0.07	-0.01	0.36	0.65	0.37	0.24	0.58
defend your reputation at all costs.	-0.04	0.44	0.02	0.13	0.35	0.63	0.36	0.41	0.53
keep to yourself as much as possible.	0.09	0.01	0.62	-0.12	0.41	0.30	0.63	0.16	0.59
mind your own business and pretend like you don't see or hear what is going on around you.	-0.13	0.13	0.45	0.10	0.28	0.38	0.53	0.31	0.65
not leak information to a correctional officer about an inmate.	0.05	0.02	0.36	0.28	0.37	0.35	0.50	0.46	0.62
stay out of trouble but nobody is going to push you around and get away with it.	0.02	0.03	0.34	0.10	0.36	0.40	0.49	0.38	0.66
do your time and not complain about things.	0.26	-0.01	0.28	-0.13	0.38	0.27	0.44	0.12	0.72
do not help prison staff when they need it.	0.09	-0.02	-0.01	0.67	0.35	0.19	0.28	0.66	0.54
be loyal to inmates and not loyal to prison staff.	0.08	0.19	-0.15	0.48	0.32	0.39	0.20	0.57	0.60
do not help other inmates if they are in trouble or hurt.	-0.02	0.01	0.03	0.46	0.18	0.04	0.19	0.38	0.72
do not trust anyone in prison, even fellow inmates.	0.23	0.11	0.21	-0.03	0.48	0.35	0.44	0.25	0.65
show other inmates that you are dependable and that you will keep your word.	-0.01	0.21	-0.05	-0.08	0.09	0.34	0.07	0.10	0.76

*Note.* Weighted estimates. CO = correctional officer. Uniq. = uniqueness.



The previous indices provided much evidence for use in determining the appropriate number of factors within the convict code. To recap the findings, based solely on eigenvalues larger than one, only one factor existed. However, when evaluating the scree plot and factor and matrix structure, four factors existed. Similarly, the cluster plot suggests that either four or five factors existed. Based on all of the exploratory items presented above, four seemed the most common factor structure, suggesting that the convict code comprises four factors.

In addition to the factor selection criteria, the items measuring the convict code can be combined into four substantively intuitive factors as well (see Table 8). Factor 1 represents *social distance* between correctional staff and inmates. This factor focuses on the prevention of vulnerable relationships with prison staff in order to preserve the distance that exists between inmates and staff. Also, this factor demonstrates that inmates will work hard to maintain their distance from the staff by not sharing any personal information. As illustrated by Caldwell (1956), “the code prohibits fraternization with [officers] or other prison personnel” (p. 655), and Factor 1 appeared to tap directly into that belief. *Masculinity*, the second factor, highlights much of the previous work on the code that values strength, toughness, and fear (Ricciardelli, 2014a; Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Trammell, 2009, 2012). Moreover, Sykes (1958) noted, “the inmate population’s views of fortitude as an ideal involves a kind of “toughness” which is linked to the masculine mannerisms” (p. 101). Norms of toughness are embodied within this factor. *Invisibility*, the third factor comprised the tenets of the code that encourage inmates to keep to themselves, not worry about what is going on around them, and to never snitch. As a participant in Ricciardelli’s (2014a) study explained, “no looking at stuff that you

shouldn't be, don't listen to anything you shouldn't be listening to, and don't say nothing you shouldn't be saying" (p. 13). By adhering to these tenets within Factor 3, inmates limit their ability to know about any inappropriate behaviors happening within the walls by keeping to themselves and minding their own business. But, if those behaviors are observed, the third item within this factor reminds inmates to never share that information or not to snitch—one of the most sacred tenets within the convict code (Sykes, 1956a). Fourth, the *strategic survival* factor alludes to a need for strategic survival within the prison because no one, not inmates or correctional staff, is going to help anyone. Therefore, inmates are responsible for their own survival, but still understand where their loyalties lie. They are loyal to inmates, but that does not mean that other inmates will help them in a time of need; everyone has to fend for themselves. As respondents in Ricciardelli's (2014a) study noted, "inmates believed 'everyone is at risk'; (Jeremy) and 'no one feels safe in prison' (Bill)" (p. 9).

Table 8

*Proposed Factors*

	Proposed Factor
It is important to...	
never talk with prison staff about personal problems.	
do your time and never let the staff know that anything is getting you down	Social distance
never get too friendly with the correctional officers because they will want you to betray your fellow inmates.	
never show fear.	
show strength and toughness at all times.	Masculinity
defend your reputation at all costs.	
keep to yourself as much as possible.	
mind your own business and pretend like you don't see or hear what is going on around you.	Invisibility
not leak information to a correctional officer about an inmate.	
do not help prison staff when they need it.	
be loyal to inmates and not loyal to prison staff.	Strategic survival
do not help other inmates if they are in trouble or hurt.	

***Analysis 2: Confirmatory factor analysis.*** The first analysis identified how many factors existed within the 16 convict code items. Findings suggested that four factors existed—social distance, masculinity, invisibility, and strategic survival. The second analysis used confirmatory factor analysis to validate the psychometric properties of the four convict code factors. This was done using two separate models: (a) a simultaneous four-factor model, and (b) a one-factor model.

***Four-factor model.*** The factor loadings presented in Table 7 were simultaneously estimated. In other words, the estimates for each factor were determined based on a singular factor analysis that included four factors. To determine if the factor loadings change based on separate estimation, separated factor loadings were determined for each

factor (see Table 9). Factor loadings and reliability estimates—Cronbach's alpha and interitem correlation—were also determined.<sup>11</sup>

For the social distance factor, three items with factor loadings from 0.60 to 0.61, were included. This factor had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.69 and the interitem correlation was 0.42, both of which were within acceptable ranges. For Factor 2—masculinity—the factor loadings ranged from 0.60 to 0.65; Factor 2 had an interitem correlation of 0.45, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.71. For this factor, the alpha and interitem correlation estimates were considered acceptable. The factor loadings for invisibility—Factor 3—ranged from 0.49 to 0.53. The Cronbach's alpha for this item was 0.59 and interitem correlation was 0.32. For this factor, the alpha was slightly low; however, the interitem correlation was well within appropriate standards. Finally, the Factor 4—strategic survival—had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.57, with factor loadings from 0.44 to 0.63, and an interitem correlation of 0.31. Similar to Factor 3, the alpha reliability estimate for Factor 4 was low, although the interitem correlation was within appropriate ranges.

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<sup>11</sup>A Chronbach's (1951) alpha reports internal consistency and indicates how closely items are related in a group. Appropriate alpha's range from 0.70 and higher (Kline, 2000; Nunnally, 1978). An interitem correlation (IIC) is another means of measuring reliability and signifies the extent to which items are related. Appropriate mean estimates range from 0.15 to 0.50 based on the characteristics of the scale (Clark and Watson, 1995).

Table 9

*Factor Loadings for Each Convict Code Factors, Separately Estimated*

	Social Distance	Masculinity	Invisibility	Strategic Survival
It is important to...				
do your time and never let the staff know that anything is getting you down.	0.60			
never talk with prison staff about personal problems.	0.61			
never get too friendly with the COs because they will want you to betray your fellow inmates.	0.60			
show strength and toughness at all times.		0.65		
never show fear.		0.65		
defend your reputation at all costs.		0.60		
keep to yourself as much as possible.			0.53	
mind your own business and pretend like you don't see or hear what is going on around you.			0.52	
not leak information to a correctional officer about an inmate.			0.49	
do not help prison staff when they need it.				0.63
be loyal to inmates and not loyal to prison staff.				0.48
do not help other inmates if they are in trouble or hurt.				0.44
Interitem correlation	0.42	0.45	0.32	0.31
Alpha	0.69	0.71	0.59	0.57

*Note.* Weighted estimates. CO = correctional officer.

Prior to running the confirmatory factor analyses using SEM in Stata, the normality of the data was checked, and the proposed models were identified. First, normality was assessed. No variables presented issues with skewness or kurtosis. All estimates were well within +/-2, the acceptable standard (Field, 2009). Second, the models were identified. Model identification determines the degrees of freedom within a model. Identification was based on the number of known predictors in the model compared to the number of freely estimated parameters in the model (Brown, 2014). Under-identified models have more free parameters than known parameters, resulting in

negative degrees of freedom and an inability to estimate the model. Conversely, just-identified model have no degrees of freedom, but will estimate the model by providing a non-unique fit. Finally, an over-identified model has positive degrees of freedom and has more known than unknown parameters. When using SEM, the ideal situation is to have an over-identified model, which was the case for the four-factor model. This model had 78 items in the variance-covariance matrix and 24 freely-estimated parameters, making it appropriate for producing a unique outcome.

Within SEM models, it is important to determine goodness of fit, which indicates how well the current model fits the data (Brown, 2014). To determine the goodness of fit, two indicators are assessed.<sup>12</sup> The standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR) determines how closely the model is to reproducing each correlation with  $< 0.06$ , indicating good fit, and  $< 0.08$  representing acceptable fit (Hu & Bentler, 1998, 1999). The coefficient of determination (CD) is interpreted as an  $R^2$  for the model and demonstrates the amount of variance in the construct, which is explained by the items. No specific cut-point exists for this estimate, although higher estimates demonstrate that the model accounts for a larger amount of the variance (Acock, 2013).

Table 10 displays the model summary statistics for the weighted models. Coefficients were all significant, with a  $p < 0.001$ , meaning that all indicators were significantly correlated with the appropriate latent factor. Additionally, the model fit

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<sup>12</sup> The model fit indices available for weighted versus unweighted models are different. For unweighted models, a variety of estimates are available. Those include the RMSEA, CFI, TLI, SRMR, and CD. However, for weighted models only the SRMR and CD are available through Stata. Because this analysis relies on weighted estimates, only weighted model fit statistics are presented. Unweighted models can be viewed in Table B.9 and Table B.10.

indices suggested acceptable fit.<sup>13</sup> The SRMR (0.05) indicating this model fit the data well and the CD indicated that the current model accounted for 97% of the variance in the construct.<sup>14</sup> Overall, the four-factor model was confirmed using SEM and appeared to fit the data well. Even so, it was important to see if other models might also fit the data.

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<sup>13</sup> A debate exists within criminology and social sciences at large regarding the use of modifications to SEM models. At times, the use of modifications without a theoretical grounding—commonly called specification searches—can lead to models being over-specified and statistically fitting—opposed to being theoretically appropriate (MacCallum, 1986). For example, MacCallum (1986) asserted that the use of modification indices commonly produces a more appropriate fitting model for the population data, but that those improvements reduce the likelihood that the model will fit the actual data. The use of modifications also challenges the fundamental purpose of exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. The purpose of construct validation is to explore the data to determine if and how the items relate to the construct. The goal is not to perfectly predict the construct, which could occur using respecification. As Brown (2014) noted, “by pursuing respecifications of the initial model, one has moved out of a confirmatory factor analysis framework” (p. 106). The goal of this dissertation was produce a construct which can be used by future researchers. Because this was the first study of its kind and is the foundation for exploring the convict code quantitatively, modifications were not used.

<sup>14</sup> An unweighted SEM analysis also confirmed that this model fit the data well based on fit statistics (see Table B.9).

Table 10

*Model Fit Statistics for Four-Factor Confirmatory Factor Analysis (n = 799)*

	b	(SE)	Z
Factor 1: Social Distance			
Do your time	0.66***	(0.04)	15.88
Never talk with prison staff	0.66***	(0.04)	16.67
Never get too friendly with correctional officers	0.63***	(0.04)	14.17
Factor 2: Masculinity			
Strength and toughness	0.68***	(0.04)	16.74
Never show fear	0.70***	(0.04)	17.16
Defend your reputation	0.64***	(0.04)	15.12
Factor 3: Invisibility			
Keep to yourself	0.53***	(0.05)	10.51
Mind your own business	0.56***	(0.06)	8.88
Do not leak information	0.60***	(0.04)	13.53
Factor 4: Strategic Survival			
Do not help prison staff	0.74***	(0.08)	9.62
Be loyal to inmates	0.56***	(0.08)	7.37
Do not help other inmates	0.41***	(0.06)	6.92
Model Fit			
SRMR	0.05		
Coefficient of determination	0.97		

*Note.* Weighted estimates. Standardized coefficients presented. \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

*One-factor model.* To produce a more parsimonious model, a one-factor model was estimated. A principal factor analysis with promax rotation was used to force all items to load on one factor. This model was over-identified with 105 items in the variance-covariance matrix and 28 freely-estimated parameters. As demonstrated in Table 11, factor loadings ranged from 0.22 to 0.60. Two items (“show other inmates that you are dependable and that you will keep your word” and “do not help other inmates if they are in trouble or hurt”) were removed from the future analyses, due to low factor loadings. The one-factor model had a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.83 and an interitem correlation of 0.26, both within acceptable standards.



Table 11

*Factor Loadings for One-Factor Construct*

	Convict Code
It is important to...	
not trust anyone in prison, even fellow inmates.	0.49
do your time and never let the staff know that anything is getting you down.	0.60
never get too friendly with the correctional officers because they will want you to betray your fellow inmates.	0.53
show other inmates that you are dependable and that you will keep your word. *	0.22
mind your own business and pretend like you don't see or hear what is going on around you.	0.49
do not help other inmates if they are in trouble or hurt. *	0.23
show strength and toughness at all times.	0.54
never show fear.	0.57
not leak information to a correctional officer about an inmate.	0.53
do not help prison staff when they need it.	0.45
be loyal to inmates and not loyal to prison staff.	0.48
defend your reputation at all costs.	0.60
keep to yourself as much as possible.	0.48
never talk with prison staff about personal problems.	0.56
do your time and not complain about things.	0.40
stay out of trouble but nobody is going to push you around and get away with it.	0.54
Cronbach's alpha	0.83
Interitem correlation	0.26

*Note.* Weighted estimates. \* Removed from future analyses due to low factor loadings.

Similar to the four-factor model, the fit statistics for the unweighted-model are presented in Table 12. The coefficients were all significantly correlated with the latent factor ( $p < 0.001$ ). Model fit indices demonstrated that the model had a relatively poor fit. Although the SRMR (0.06) estimate was on the verge of a good fit, the CD indicated that

the model only accounted for 84% of the variance within the construct.<sup>15</sup>

Table 12

*Model Fit Statistics for One-Factor Confirmatory Factor Analysis (n = 799)*

	Model 1		
	b	(SE)	Z
Do not trust anyone	0.49***	(0.04)	11.53
Getting you down	0.60***	(0.04)	15.38
Never get too friendly with correctional officers	0.53***	(0.04)	12.51
Mind your business	0.49***	(0.05)	9.45
Strength and toughness	0.54***	(0.04)	13.71
Never show fear	0.57***	(0.05)	12.29
Do not leak information	0.52***	(0.04)	12.60
Do not help prison staff	0.42***	(0.05)	9.04
Be loyal to inmates	0.46***	(0.04)	10.67
Defend reputation	0.59***	(0.04)	16.08
Keep to yourself	0.47***	(0.05)	9.99
Never talk with prison staff	0.51***	(0.04)	13.75
Do not complain	0.41***	(0.05)	8.10
Stay out of trouble	0.54***	(0.04)	12.50
Model fit			
SRMR	0.06		
CD	0.84		

*Note.* Weighted estimates. Standardized coefficients presented. \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

In comparing the four-factor and one-factor model, it became evident, by model fit indices, that the four-factor model fit the data more appropriately. The SRMR statistic was lower and the CD substantively higher for the four-factor model. Based on this comparison, the 16 items measuring the convict code tapped into four distinct factors; therefore, the remainder of this study evaluated the convict code as four factors, including: social distance, masculinity, invisibility, and strategic survival.

<sup>15</sup> An unweighted SEM analysis also confirmed that this model did not fit the data well based on fit statistics (see Table B.10).

It is plausible that certain questions unequally contributed to a particular factor, making it important to create a construct that accounted for that variation (Acock, 2013). Based on the four-factor confirmatory analysis, four convict code factors were created (see Table 13) using predicted factor scores, based on the coefficient for each item as the weight for each factor (Acock, 2013). Higher estimates revealed a stronger adherence to each factor of the convict code. Each factor had a mean of 0 with estimates ranging from -1.57 to 2.18.

Table 13

*Descriptive Statistics for Convict Code Scales (N = 802)*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max
Social distance	0.00	0.77	-2.20	1.40
Masculinity	0.00	0.79	-2.24	1.48
Invisibility	0.00	0.70	-2.31	1.01
Strategic survival	0.00	0.71	-1.57	2.18

*Note.* Weighted estimates.

**Research question 2.** The first research question within Objective 1 was used to explore the convict code. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were employed to validate the convict code as a multi-dimensional, four-factor construct. Research question 2 used the validated convict code construct to evaluate which correlates (e.g., background characteristics, attitudes and associations, and prison contextual factors) were associated with the factors of the convict code. The convict code factors—social distance, masculinity, invisibility, and strategic survival—were used as dependent variables in multiple ordinary least squares regression analyses.

Prior to presenting the findings from the multivariate analyses, it was important to assess the variables for issues related to multicollinearity. To do so, the bivariate

correlations were calculated (see Tables B.11 through B.13). None of the correlations were too high, which would suggest multicollinearity. Additionally, the variance inflation factor (Range = 2.37 – 1.03;  $M = 1.40$ ) and tolerance (Range = 0.42 – 0.97) statistics indicated no issues with multicollinearity.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the sections below begin with the details of the bivariate associations between the correlates and the convict code factors, then include details of the findings from four separate ordinary least squares regressions.

For the first factor—social distance—Latino ( $r = 0.14, p < 0.01$ ), less than a high school education ( $r = 0.09, p < 0.01$ ), low self-control ( $r = 0.17, p < 0.01$ ), peer influence ( $r = 0.13, p < 0.01$ ), gang membership ( $r = 0.12, p < 0.01$ ), code of the street ( $r = 0.38, p < 0.01$ ), restrictive classification ( $r = 0.08, p < 0.05$ ), and exposure to violence ( $r = 0.12, p < 0.01$ ) all exhibited a positive and significant association. Conversely, age ( $r = -0.14, p < 0.01$ ), higher education ( $r = -0.10, p < 0.01$ ), total incarcerations ( $r = -0.09, p < 0.01$ ), incarceration length ( $r = -0.10, p < 0.01$ ), self-esteem ( $r = -0.08, p < 0.05$ ), and procedural justice ( $r = -0.26, p < 0.01$ ) were all negatively associated with adherence to social distance. Collectively these findings demonstrated numerous variables as associated with social distance at the bivariate level. The following section assesses correlates of social distance when controlling for other known predictors.

Six variables were significantly associated with adherence to social distance (see Table 14). First, compared to whites, Latinos had stronger levels of adherence to the social distance factor ( $b = 0.21, p = 0.02$ ). Second, contrary to prior research (Schwartz,

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<sup>16</sup> Variance inflation factor and tolerance (1/VIF) statistics assess multicollinearity and determine if one item is strongly predictive of another item. Concerning variance inflation factor statistics are greater than 10 and tolerance statistics less than 0.20 indicate a potential bias within the model (Bowerman & O’Connell, 1990a; Field, 2009; Menard, 1995; Myers, 1990; O’Brien, 2007).

1971), as the number of total incarcerations ( $b = -0.11, p = 0.01$ ) and incarceration length ( $b = -0.10, p = 0.03$ ) increased, adherence weakened. Third, stronger adherence to the code of the street was associated with stronger adherence to the social distance factor ( $b = 0.34, p = 0.00$ ). Consistent with prior research, the prison environment is an important correlate of social distance (Akers et al., 1977; Schwartz, 1973; Sykes, 1956b; Thomas & Foster, 1972; Thomas & Poole, 1975; Wellford, 1967). That is, higher levels of perceptions of procedural justice towards correctional officers were associated with weaker adherence ( $b = -0.18, p = 0.00$ ). Whereas, higher levels of exposure to violence were marginally associated with stronger adherence to the social distance factor ( $b = 0.10, p = 0.00$ ).

At the bivariate level, many significant correlates for social distance remained significant when evaluating the second factor—masculinity. For example, Latino ( $r = 0.07, p < 0.05$ ), “other” race ( $r = 0.08, p < 0.05$ ), property offense ( $r = 0.11, p < 0.01$ ), low self-control ( $r = 0.22, p < 0.01$ ), peer influence ( $r = 0.12, p < 0.01$ ), gang membership ( $r = 0.16, p < 0.01$ ), code of the street ( $r = 0.59, p < 0.01$ ), restrictive classification ( $r = 0.10, p < 0.01$ ), prison visitation ( $r = 0.08, p < 0.05$ ), and exposure to violence ( $r = 0.10, p < 0.01$ ) were all positive and significantly associated with the masculinity factor. However, age ( $r = -0.24, p < 0.01$ ), higher education ( $r = -0.10, p < 0.01$ ), being married ( $r = -0.12, p < 0.01$ ), incarceration length ( $r = -0.10, p < 0.01$ ), and procedural justice ( $r = -0.08, p < 0.05$ ) were all negatively associated with adherence to masculinity.

Many of the bivariate associations were no longer significant, once controlled for other correlates through a multivariate model. In fact, only three variables were

significantly associated with the masculinity factor. Inmates who identified as an “other” race ( $b = 0.61, p = 0.03$ ) had stronger adherence to the masculinity factor than those who identified as white. Additionally, higher levels of self-esteem ( $b = 0.10, p = 0.01$ ) and adherence to the code of the street ( $b = 0.63, p = 0.00$ ) were associated with stronger adherence to the masculinity factor.

Table 14

*Ordinary Least Squares Regression Analyses for Factors of the Convict Code*

	Social Distance ( <i>n</i> = 791)			Masculinity ( <i>n</i> = 791)		
	<i>b</i>	(SE)	<i>p</i> -value	<i>b</i>	(SE)	<i>p</i> -value
<i>Background</i>						
Age	0.08	(0.04)	0.06	-0.03	(0.04)	0.44
Race/ethnicity <sup>a, b</sup>						
Black	-0.02	(0.10)	0.85	0.06	(0.10)	0.51
Multi-racial	-0.17	(0.18)	0.36	0.23	(0.16)	0.14
Other	0.03	(0.11)	0.79	<b>0.61</b>	<b>(0.27)</b>	<b>0.03</b>
Latino	<b>0.21</b>	<b>(0.09)</b>	<b>0.02</b>	0.15	(0.08)	0.08
Total incarcerations <sup>c</sup>	<b>-0.11</b>	<b>(0.04)</b>	<b>0.01</b>	-0.01	(0.04)	0.80
Incarceration length (years- ln) <sup>c</sup>	<b>-0.10</b>	<b>(0.05)</b>	<b>0.03</b>	-0.06	(0.05)	0.18
Incarcerating offense <sup>a, c, d</sup>						
Property	0.06	(0.12)	0.61	0.12	(0.10)	0.23
Drugs	-0.07	(0.12)	0.54	-0.10	(0.12)	0.41
Other	-0.12	(0.11)	0.26	-0.03	(0.10)	0.74
<i>Attitudes/Associations</i>						
Self-esteem	0.02	(0.04)	0.57	<b>0.10</b>	<b>(0.04)</b>	<b>0.01</b>
Gang membership <sup>a</sup>	0.10	(0.14)	0.47	0.06	(0.10)	0.52
Code of the street	<b>0.34</b>	<b>(0.05)</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>(0.04)</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<i>Prison Context</i>						
Custody level <sup>a, e</sup>						
Trustee	-0.23	(0.21)	0.29	-0.22	(0.19)	0.25
General population	-0.17	(0.14)	0.22	-0.23	(0.13)	0.08
Restrictive	-0.13	(0.22)	0.57	-0.34	(0.18)	0.06
Procedural justice-CO	<b>-0.18</b>	<b>(0.04)</b>	<b>0.00</b>	0.06	(0.04)	0.14
Exposure to violence	<b>0.10</b>	<b>(0.03)</b>	<b>0.00</b>	0.03	(0.02)	0.17
Constant	0.10	(0.16)	0.52	0.08	(0.14)	0.60
F-statistic (18,772)	8.82		0.00	21.08		0.00
R <sup>2</sup>	0.22			0.39		
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.20			0.38		

*Note.* Weighted estimates. All continuous variables are standardized. CO = correctional officer. <sup>a</sup>Dichotomous. <sup>b</sup>Reference group = white. <sup>c</sup>TDCJ official data. <sup>d</sup>Reference group = violent. <sup>e</sup>Reference group = other.

At the bivariate level, multi-racial ( $r = 0.07$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), property offense ( $r = 0.13$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), low self-control ( $r = 0.20$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), peer influence ( $r = 0.11$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), gang membership ( $r = 0.16$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), code of the street ( $r = 0.37$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), restrictive classification ( $r = 0.12$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), prison visitation ( $r = 0.09$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and exposure to

violence ( $r = 0.09$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were all significant and positive correlates with invisibility—the third convict code factor. In contrast age ( $r = -0.22$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), being married ( $r = -0.07$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), incarceration length ( $r = -0.09$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and procedural justice ( $r = -0.12$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were all negatively associated with adherence to masculinity. All but one of these bivariate effects were negated when using multivariate models. For the invisibility factor (Table 15), only the code of the street was positively associated with stronger adherence ( $b = 0.34$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ).

For the fourth factor—strategic survival—many significant correlates appeared at the bivariate level. Those variables with positive associations included less than a high school education ( $r = 0.14$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), property offense ( $r = 0.08$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), drug offense ( $r = 0.11$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), low self-control ( $r = 0.30$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), peer influence ( $r = 0.22$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), gang membership ( $r = 0.23$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), code of the street ( $r = 0.40$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), restrictive classification ( $r = 0.14$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and exposure to violence ( $r = 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Negative correlations were found between strategic survival and age ( $r = -0.25$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), being married ( $r = -0.08$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), incarceration length ( $r = -0.09$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), other offense ( $r = -0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), self-esteem ( $r = -0.10$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), social support ( $r = -0.14$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), general population classification ( $r = -0.07$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), prison work ( $r = -0.08$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and procedural justice ( $r = -0.39$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

At the multivariate level, many bivariate associations were no longer significant. For example, no background variables were significant; however, gang membership was associated with stronger adherence to the strategic survival factor ( $b = 0.36$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ). Also, adherence to the code of the street was associated with stronger adherence to this factor ( $b = 0.27$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ). And finally, for prison contextual factors, as perceptions of



procedural justice towards correctional officers increased, adherence to the strategic survival factor weakened ( $b = -0.29, p = 0.00$ ).

Table 15

*Ordinary Least Squares Regression Analyses for Factors of the Convict Code*

	Invisibility ( $n = 791$ )			Strategic Survival ( $n = 791$ )		
	b	(SE)	p-value	b	(SE)	p-value
<i>Background</i>						
Age	-0.05	(0.05)	0.28	-0.04	(0.04)	0.42
Race/ethnicity <sup>a, b</sup>						
Black	-0.04	(0.12)	0.76	0.00	(0.09)	0.97
Multi-racial	0.22	(0.16)	0.18	-0.08	(0.15)	0.58
Other	0.21	(0.21)	0.32	0.44	(0.29)	0.13
Latino	0.01	(0.10)	0.93	-0.04	(0.09)	0.68
Total incarcerations <sup>c</sup>	-0.03	(0.04)	0.47	-0.06	(0.04)	0.12
Incarceration length (years-log) <sup>c</sup>	-0.08	(0.05)	0.11	-0.05	(0.04)	0.24
Incarcerating offense <sup>a, c, d</sup>						
Property	0.21	(0.12)	0.08	0.07	(0.11)	0.50
Drugs	0.05	(0.13)	0.71	0.13	(0.12)	0.30
Other	-0.08	(0.11)	0.43	-0.09	(0.10)	0.37
<i>Attitudes/Associations</i>						
Self-esteem	0.04	(0.05)	0.40	-0.02	(0.04)	0.71
Gang membership <sup>a</sup>	0.14	(0.12)	0.26	<b>0.36</b>	<b>(0.11)</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Code of the street	<b>0.34</b>	<b>(0.05)</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.27</b>	<b>(0.05)</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<i>Prison Context</i>						
Custody level <sup>a, e</sup>						
Trustee	0.13	(0.21)	0.53	-0.17	(0.18)	0.33
General population	-0.03	(0.14)	0.84	-0.24	(0.13)	0.06
Restrictive	0.21	(0.22)	0.33	0.02	(0.24)	0.95
Procedural justice-CO	-0.02	(0.04)	0.65	<b>-0.29</b>	<b>(0.04)</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Exposure to violence	0.06	(0.04)	0.15	0.04	(0.04)	0.31
Constant	-0.12	(0.17)	0.48	0.15	(0.14)	0.29
F-statistic (18,772)	6.12		0.00	16.19		0.00
R <sup>2</sup>	0.16			0.30		
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.18			0.28		

*Note.* Weighted estimates. All continuous variables are standardized. CO = correctional officer. <sup>a</sup>Dichotomous. <sup>b</sup>Reference group = white. <sup>c</sup>TDCJ official data. <sup>d</sup>Reference group = violent. <sup>e</sup>Reference group = other.

## Research Objective 2

**Research question 3.** Research question 3 determined if the four factors of the convict code were significantly associated with violent misconduct. As demonstrated in Table 4, 23% of individuals had engaged in violent misconduct within the six months of their release. Bivariate correlations are presented in Tables B.11 through B.13 and variance inflation factors ( $M = 1.40$ ; Range = 2.37 – 1.03) and tolerance (Range = 0.42 – 0.97) statistics were all within appropriate ranges, suggesting no issues with multicollinearity.

Before estimating multivariate models, the bivariate correlations between the variables and violent misconduct were assessed (see Tables B.11 through B.13). All convict code factors were significantly associated with violent misconduct. Correlations ranged from 0.10 ( $p < 0.01$ ) for social distance to 0.29 ( $p < 0.01$ ) for strategic survival. Other important correlates also existed. Violent misconduct was positively associated with victimization ( $r = 0.58, p < 0.01$ ), multi-racial ( $r = 0.08, p < 0.05$ ), property offense ( $r = 0.07, p < 0.05$ ), other offense ( $r = 0.08, p < 0.05$ ), low self-control ( $r = 0.23, p < 0.01$ ), peer influence ( $r = 0.23, p < 0.01$ ), gang membership ( $r = 0.34, p < 0.01$ ), code of the street ( $r = 0.31, p < 0.01$ ), restrictive classification ( $r = 0.12, p < 0.01$ ), and exposure to violence ( $r = 0.23, p < 0.01$ ). Negative associations existed for age ( $r = -0.28, p < 0.01$ ), higher education ( $r = -0.09, p < 0.05$ ), married ( $r = -0.11, p < 0.01$ ), other offense ( $r = -0.08, p < 0.05$ ), self-esteem ( $r = -0.11, p < 0.01$ ), and procedural justice ( $r = -0.15, p < 0.01$ ). To determine if these bivariate associations remained in multivariate models, two models were estimated using logistic regression. The findings from Model 1 can be found in Table 16. In the baseline model, three of the convict code factors were

significantly associated with violent misconduct. As adherence to the masculinity ( $b = 0.30, p = 0.03$ ), invisibility ( $b = 0.29, p = 0.04$ ), and strategic survival ( $b = 0.67, p = 0.00$ ) factors strengthened, the odds of violent misconduct increased anywhere from 33% to 95%. These findings established that a relationship exists between some factors of the convict code and violent misconduct.

In Model 2, after controlling for all other pertinent variables, only one convict code factor remained significant. As strategic survival strengthened, the odds of engaging in violent misconduct increased by 75% ( $b = 0.56, p = 0.00$ ). Also, some control variables were significant predictors of the odds of violent misconduct. Consistent with previous studies (for example, Steiner et al., 2014), as people aged the odds of engaging in violent misconduct decreased ( $b = -0.41, p = 0.03$ ). Also, those who identified as an “other” race ( $b = -2.60, p = 0.02$ ) had decreased odds of engaging in violent misconduct, relative to whites. As negative peer influence increased, the odds of engaging in violent misconduct also increased ( $b = 0.47, p = 0.00$ ). The code of the street variable was also associated with an increased odds of violence ( $b = 1.17, p = 0.01$ ), which has been documented in prior research (Mears et al., 2013). Consistent with prior scholars who have found a victim/offender overlap (Toman, 2017), experiencing a victimization increased the odds of engaging in misconduct by 91% ( $b = 2.80, p = 0.00$ ). And finally, increases in exposure to violence, increased the odds of engaging in violent misconduct ( $b = 0.65, p = 0.00$ ).

Table 16

*Logistic Regression Analysis for Violent Misconduct*

	Model 1 ( <i>n</i> = 791)				Model 2 ( <i>n</i> = 791)			
	b	(SE)	Exp(b)	<i>p</i> -value	b	(SE)	Exp(b)	<i>p</i> -value
<i>Convict code factors</i>								
Social distance	-0.26	(0.14)	0.77	0.06	-0.20	(0.18)	0.82	0.27
Masculinity	<b>0.30</b>	<b>(0.13)</b>	<b>1.34</b>	<b>0.03</b>	0.00	(0.20)	1.00	0.98
Invisibility	<b>0.29</b>	<b>(0.14)</b>	<b>1.33</b>	<b>0.04</b>	0.11	(0.17)	1.12	0.51
Strategic survival	<b>0.67</b>	<b>(0.12)</b>	<b>1.95</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.56</b>	<b>(0.16)</b>	<b>1.75</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<i>Background</i>								
Age	--	--	--	--	<b>-0.41</b>	<b>(0.19)</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>0.03</b>
Race/ethnicity <sup>a, b</sup>								
Black	--	--	--	--	-0.19	(0.36)	0.82	0.59
Multi-racial	--	--	--	--	0.07	(0.56)	1.07	0.90
Other	--	--	--	--	<b>-2.60</b>	<b>(1.09)</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>0.02</b>
Latino	--	--	--	--	-0.68	(0.36)	0.51	0.06
Education <sup>a, c</sup>								
Less than high school	--	--	--	--	-0.63	(0.34)	0.53	0.07
Higher education	--	--	--	--	-0.17	(0.43)	0.84	0.69
Married <sup>a</sup>	--	--	--	--	-0.13	(0.33)	0.88	0.69
Total incarcerations <sup>d</sup>	--	--	--	--	0.16	(0.17)	1.17	0.34
Incarceration length <sup>d</sup> (years-ln)	--	--	--	--	0.15	(0.19)	1.16	0.45
Incarcerating offense <sup>a, d, e</sup>								
Property	--	--	--	--	-0.08	(0.42)	0.92	0.85
Drugs	--	--	--	--	0.24	(0.47)	1.27	0.62
Other	--	--	--	--	0.15	(0.40)	1.16	0.71
<i>Attitudes/Associations</i>								
Self-esteem	--	--	--	--	-0.20	(0.16)	0.82	0.21
Low self-control	--	--	--	--	-0.06	(0.19)	0.94	0.75
Social support	--	--	--	--	0.07	(0.15)	1.07	0.65
Peer influence	--	--	--	--	<b>0.47</b>	<b>(0.15)</b>	<b>1.60</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Gang membership <sup>a</sup>	--	--	--	--	<b>1.17</b>	<b>(0.44)</b>	<b>3.21</b>	<b>0.01</b>
Code of street	--	--	--	--	0.33	(0.18)	1.39	0.07
<i>Prison Context</i>								
Victimization					<b>2.80</b>	<b>(0.30)</b>	<b>16.44</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Custody level <sup>a, f</sup>								
Trustee	--	--	--	--	-0.06	(0.73)	0.94	0.93
General population	--	--	--	--	-0.13	(0.52)	0.88	0.80
Restrictive	--	--	--	--	0.30	(0.86)	1.35	0.73
Prison visitation	--	--	--	--	-0.10	(0.15)	0.91	0.53
Prison work <sup>a</sup>	--	--	--	--	0.02	(0.32)	1.02	0.95
Procedural justice-CO	--	--	--	--	0.08	(0.15)	1.08	0.60
Exposure to violence	--	--	--	--	<b>0.65</b>	<b>(0.17)</b>	<b>1.91</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Constant	-1.25	(0.11)	0.29	0.00	-1.80	(0.57)	0.17	0.00
R <sup>2</sup> <sub>MCF</sub>	0.10				0.44			
χ <sup>2</sup> (df)	56.10(4)			0.00	188.05(31)			0.00
-2 Log Likelihood	-388.45				-241.34			

*Note.* Weighted estimates. All continuous variables are standardized. CO = correctional officer. <sup>a</sup>Dichotomous. <sup>b</sup>Reference group = white. <sup>c</sup>Reference group = high school degree. <sup>d</sup>TDCJ official data. <sup>e</sup>Reference group = violent. <sup>f</sup>Reference group = other.

**Research question 4.** As shown in Table 5, 25% of participants had been violently victimized within the six months of their release. To assess multicollinearity,

bivariate correlations between the convict code factors, controls, and violent victimization are presented in Table B.11 through B.13. Variance inflation factor estimates ranged from 2.51 to 1.07 ( $M = 1.51$ ) and tolerance estimates were within appropriate ranges (Range = 0.40 – 0.94). Collectively, these estimates demonstrated that no issues with multicollinearity existed.

To determine if any convict code factors were associated with self-reports of violent victimization, first bivariate associations were evaluated (see Tables B.11 through B.13). Positive and significant correlations existed for three convict code factors—masculinity ( $r = 0.13, p < 0.01$ ), invisibility ( $r = 0.17, p < 0.01$ ), and strategic survival ( $r = 0.16, p < 0.01$ ). Other correlates also had significant and positive associations: misconduct ( $r = 0.58, p < 0.01$ ), less than a high school education ( $r = 0.10, p < 0.01$ ), property offense ( $r = 0.09, p < 0.05$ ), low self-control ( $r = 0.21, p < 0.01$ ), peer influence ( $r = 0.11, p < 0.01$ ), gang membership ( $r = 0.23, p < 0.01$ ), code of the street ( $r = 0.24, p < 0.01$ ), restrictive classification ( $r = 0.07, p < 0.01$ ), and exposure to violence ( $r = 0.17, p < 0.01$ ). Conversely, negative associations with violent victimization existed for age ( $r = -0.21, p < 0.01$ ), higher education ( $r = -0.07, p < 0.05$ ), married ( $r = -0.09, p < 0.01$ ), other offense ( $r = -0.08, p < 0.05$ ), self-esteem ( $r = -0.13, p < 0.01$ ), and procedural justice ( $r = -0.13, p < 0.01$ ). These bivariate associations were evaluated at the multivariate level using two logistic regression models.

Only the invisibility and strategic survival factors were significantly associated with violent victimization in the baseline, Model 1 (Table 17). As adherence to the invisibility ( $b = 0.33, p = 0.01$ ) and strategic survival ( $b = 0.29, p = 0.01$ ) factors strengthened, the odds of violent victimization increased by 39% and 33% respectively.

Once controlled for theoretically important predictors, only the association between strategic survival and violent misconduct remained. As adherence to the strategic survival factor strengthened, the odds of violent victimization decreased by 29% ( $b = -0.35, p = 0.02$ ).<sup>17</sup> Two significant effects for control variables are also worth noting. Increases in negative peer influence decreased the odds of violent victimization ( $b = -0.26, p = 0.05$ ). Consistent with prior research revealing an overlap between victims and offenders (Gaes & McGuire, 1985; Jennings et al., 2010; Toman, 2017; Wooldredge & Steiner, 2013; Wright, 1991), engaging in violent misconduct within six months of release substantially increased the odds of experiencing a violent victimization ( $b = 2.84, p = 0.00$ ).

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<sup>17</sup> The direction of the association between strategic survival and violent victimization changed from positive, for bivariate models, to negative, for multivariate models. Because of this findings, a supplemental analysis is included in Appendix C.

Table 17

*Logistic Regression Analysis for Violent Victimization*

	Model 1 (n = 791)				Model 2 (n = 791)			
	b	(SE)	Exp(b)	p-value	b	(SE)	Exp(b)	p-value
<i>Convict code factors</i>								
Social distance	-0.17	(0.13)	0.84	0.19	-0.12	(0.17)	0.89	0.49
Masculinity	0.16	(0.12)	1.17	0.18	-0.11	(0.17)	0.90	0.54
Invisibility	<b>0.33</b>	<b>(0.12)</b>	<b>1.39</b>	<b>0.01</b>	0.23	(0.14)	1.26	0.11
Strategic survival	<b>0.29</b>	<b>(0.11)</b>	<b>1.33</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>-0.35</b>	<b>(0.14)</b>	<b>0.71</b>	<b>0.02</b>
<i>Background</i>								
Age	--	--	--	--	-0.10	(0.17)	0.90	0.54
Race/ethnicity <sup>a, b</sup>								
Black	--	--	--	--	-0.50	(0.36)	0.60	0.16
Multi-racial	--	--	--	--	-0.12	(0.44)	0.89	0.78
Other	--	--	--	--	0.96	(1.00)	2.61	0.34
Latino	--	--	--	--	-0.49	(0.35)	0.61	0.16
Education <sup>a, c</sup>								
Less than high school	--	--	--	--	0.61	(0.33)	1.84	0.06
Higher education	--	--	--	--	0.29	(0.44)	1.34	0.50
Married <sup>a</sup>	--	--	--	--	-0.10	(0.33)	0.91	0.77
Total incarcerations <sup>d</sup>	--	--	--	--	0.04	(0.17)	1.04	0.80
Incarceration length (years-ln) <sup>d</sup>	--	--	--	--	-0.11	(0.16)	0.90	0.52
Incarcerating offense <sup>a, d, e</sup>								
Property	--	--	--	--	-0.02	(0.36)	0.98	0.96
Drugs	--	--	--	--	-0.22	(0.41)	0.80	0.58
Other	--	--	--	--	-0.47	(0.38)	0.62	0.22
<i>Attitudes/Associations</i>								
Self-esteem	--	--	--	--	-0.17	(0.14)	0.85	0.23
Low self-control	--	--	--	--	0.29	(0.18)	1.33	0.12
Social support	--	--	--	--	0.02	(0.17)	1.02	0.93
Peer influence	--	--	--	--	<b>-0.26</b>	<b>(0.13)</b>	<b>0.77</b>	<b>0.05</b>
Gang membership <sup>a</sup>	--	--	--	--	0.38	(0.37)	1.46	0.31
Code of street	--	--	--	--	0.22	(0.17)	1.25	0.20
<i>Prison Context</i>								
Violent misconduct					<b>2.84</b>	<b>(0.30)</b>	<b>17.06</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Custody level <sup>a, f</sup>								
Trustee	--	--	--	--	-0.21	(0.72)	0.81	0.77
General population	--	--	--	--	-0.03	(0.53)	0.97	0.96
Restrictive	--	--	--	--	-0.77	(0.78)	0.46	0.32
Prison visitation	--	--	--	--	0.02	(0.12)	1.02	0.89
Prison work <sup>a</sup>	--	--	--	--	-0.04	(0.29)	0.96	0.89
Procedural justice-CO	--	--	--	--	-0.23	(0.14)	0.80	0.11
Exposure to violence	--	--	--	--	0.30	(0.20)	1.35	0.14
Constant	-1.09	(0.10)	0.33	0.00	-2.01	(0.66)	0.13	0.00
R <sup>2</sup> <sub>MCF</sub>	0.04				0.33			
$\chi^2$ (df)	23.03(4)			0.00	177.50(31)			0.00
-2 Log Likelihood	-427.76				-299.15			

*Note.* Weighted estimates. All continuous variables are standardized. CO = correctional officer. <sup>a</sup>Dichotomous. <sup>b</sup>Reference group = white. <sup>c</sup>Reference group = high school degree. <sup>d</sup>TDCJ official data. <sup>e</sup>Reference group = violent. <sup>f</sup>Reference group = other.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Studies of the “inner life of the prison ha[ve] almost disappeared as an object of [i]nquiry, and we have relatively little sociological knowledge about the everyday social structure, values, and practices of the modern prison” (Crewe, 2005, p. 178). This statement remains true today. Therefore, in this dissertation I reexamined prison culture by quantitatively evaluating the convict code. The purpose of this dissertation was two-fold: first, to determine if the convict code is a multi-dimensional construct and what variables are associated with adherence to the code, and second, to determine how the convict code was associated with violence, including misconduct and victimization. In doing so, data from the LoneStar Project were used. The study presented in this dissertation contributes to the existing literature by using a large sample size of Texas prisoners and numerous questions to systematically explore the dimensionality of the convict code quantitatively and assess its effects on key outcomes.

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, key findings from the analyses are discussed. Then, the theoretical and empirical contributions from this research are explored. Next, limitations of this dissertation and directions for future researchers are provided. Finally, a discussion of policy implications from this research is presented.

#### **Key Findings**

Three key findings are drawn from this work: (a) the convict code is a multi-dimensional construct comprised of four factors (i.e., social distance, masculinity, invisibility, strategic survival); (b) adherence to factors of the convict code was consistently influenced by the code of the street and some prison contextual factors (i.e.,



procedural justice, and exposure to violence), but race/ethnicity, total incarcerations, incarceration length, self-esteem, and gang membership also mattered; and (c) only one factor of the convict code (strategic survival) was associated with violent misconduct and victimization. These findings are explained below (see Table B.14 for a review of findings).

The first finding from this dissertation was that exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses revealed the convict code as a multi-dimensional construct. The 16 items created to measure the convict code aligned with four distinct factors. Estimates used by prior scholars often measured only one or two dimensions of the convict code. For example, Wheeler's (1961) five vignettes measured inmate alliances and anti-staff sentiments. Moreover, the items created by Thomas and Foster (1972) mainly measured inmate alliance and anti-staff sentiments, with only one item measuring alienation and one item designed to measure the constant need for survival in prison. Contrary to prior operationalizations, findings from this study indicated the convict code consists of four factors.

The *social distance* factor focuses on separation between correctional staff and inmates. The convict code is influenced by hostile relationships, coercion, and a power differential between correctional officers and inmates (Hayner & Ash, 1940; Liebling & Arnold, 2012; Sykes, 1956c). As such, the social distance factor focuses on preserving the distance that exists between inmates and staff. The importance of this factor has been demonstrated throughout prior convict code research. As Ohlin (1956) asserted, the main tenet of this code forbids any type of supportive or nonexploitative liaison with prison officials. It seeks to confer high status and prestige on those inmates who stand most

clearly in opposition to the administration” (p. 28). Maintaining social distance may help to prevent vulnerable relationships with prison staff. When adhering to this factor inmates should not share any personal information with correctional officers. As illustrated by Caldwell (1956), “the code prohibits fraternization with [officers] or other prison personnel” (p. 655); this factor appears to tap directly into that belief.

The *masculinity* factor refers to a reliance on strength, toughness, and defending your reputation is necessary in prison. This finding had been supported by much of the previous research on the convict code (Bronson, 2006; Crewe, 2009; Ricciardelli, 2014a; Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Trammell, 2009, 2012). Norms of toughness are embodied within this factor; inmates are expected to show strength and have no fear. In adhering to this factor, inmates should be ready to engage in violence at any time (Ricciardelli, 2014a). Even more important than using violence may be the maintenance of a violent reputation, which suggests that inmates would not be afraid to engage in violence should a situation require it (Bronson, 2006; Crewe, 2014; Trammell, 2012). As a respondent in Bronson’s (2006) research stated, “everyone needs to look like they are ready to use violence. It's how you carry yourself” (p. 66). The ability to use violence and “carry yourself” is directly linked to impression management (Bronson, 2006). “Prisoners do not have much (e.g., ‘basically you're left with just your word’ (Cory), and if one is not dependable their word has no value)” (Ricciardelli, 2014a, p. 11). That is, an inmate’s reputation is the one thing that he can control, and this convict code factor embodies the importance of maintaining individual reputation and toughness.

The *invisibility* factor comprises tenets of the code that encourage inmates to keep to themselves, not to worry about what is going on around them, and to never snitch. All

three of these items combine to form norms that encourage inmates to be “invisible” throughout their incarceration. As a participant in Cloward’s (1960) study asserted, “the best way is to keep to yourself. I just go my own way. In other words, keeping out of trouble was defined as keeping away from other inmates” (p. 24). By adhering to the invisibility factor, inmates limit their ability to know about any inappropriate behaviors happening within the walls, which decreases the amount of problems that they can cause for others (Crewe, 2009). But, if illicit or inappropriate behaviors are observed by the inmate, the third item within this factor reminds inmates to never share that information. Do not snitch—which is one of the most sacred tenets within the convict code—is embodied within this factor (Sykes, 1956a).<sup>18</sup> Thus, invisibility is an important factor of the convict code, in that inmates who do their own time tend to stay out of trouble (Bronson, 2006).

Finally, the *strategic survival* factor alluded to a mindset and to perceptions of how to act in the prison environment. As one respondent in Ricciardelli’s (2014a) study reported, “inmates believed ‘everyone is at risk’ (Jeremy) and ‘no one feels safe in prison’ (Bill)” (p. 9). As this factor suggests a need for strategic survival exists within the prison because of the belief or knowledge that inmates or correctional staff will not help anyone. This sentiment is emulated in a quote from a participant in Ricciardelli’s (2014a) study, “prisoners knew that they could not be ‘helpers’ (Robby)”. When asked what would happen if they provided assistance to a person in trouble or who is hurt, parolees unanimously responded that they too would be stabbed, attacked or even killed” (p. 14).

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<sup>18</sup> Although some researchers have demonstrated that the “don’t snitch” culture is diminishing in prisons, this item was included within this factor (Crewe, 2005). A specific exploration of snitching culture is outside of the scope of this dissertation, but the association between “do not snitch” and the convict code needs further research.

As suggested by this factor, inmates are responsible for their own survival, but must be strategic in that they understand where their loyalties lie. They are loyal to inmates, but this may not guarantee that other inmates will help them in a time of need, because everyone has to defend themselves.

The second important finding from this study was that adherence to the factors of the convict code was consistently associated with the code of the street and some prison contextual factors (e.g., procedural justice and exposure to violence), but race/ethnicity, total incarcerations, incarceration length, self-esteem, and gang membership also mattered. Stronger beliefs in the code of the street were consistently associated with increased adherence to all convict code factors. Prior scholars have asserted that the convict code and code of the street consist of similar norms, tenets, and behaviors (Mitchell et al., 2017). The code of the street embodies defiance against formal control agencies, the use of violence and toughness, autonomy and never snitching, and the need to defend and maintain your reputation (Anderson, 1999). All of these norms can be found within the factors of the convict code. For example, defiance from social control agencies could influence levels of social distance toward correctional officers. The masculinity factor embodies the use of violence and toughness, both common in the code of the street.

Additionally, the code of the street was most strongly correlated with this convict code factor. Beliefs about autonomy and never snitching on the street could translate to the invisibility factor. And finally, strategic survival is necessary in prison, just as those adhering to the code of the street have to defend themselves. Thus, this current study confirmed that, with over 600,000 people going into and out of prisons yearly (Carson,

2018), street culture remains an important correlate of prison culture for inmates preparing for release.

Adherence to the factors of social distance and strategic survival was influenced by some prison contextual factors: procedural justice and exposure to violence. This finding was not surprising given that many scholars attribute the need for the convict code to a hostile prison environment (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Hayner & Ash, 1940; McCorkle & Korn, 1954; Ohlin, 1956). Perceptions of procedural justice were associated with weaker adherence to the social distance and strategic survival factors. This finding suggests that when correctional procedures are fair and just, inmates are less likely to be socially distant, more likely to communicate with staff, less likely to feel the need to live in a constant state of survival, and most importantly—adherence to the convict code is weakened.

Another important correlate of adherence was exposure to violence, which was only associated with stronger adherence to the social distance factor. It is possible that individuals who are exposed to higher levels of violence maintain greater social distance with correctional staff, as a means of preventing conversations that could result in questions surrounding incidents. The importance of violence within prison should not be overlooked. As a respondent in Ricciardelli's (2014a) study reported, "violence was always—always present. There was underlying violence everywhere" (p. 9).

Although the code of the street and prison contextual effects were most consistently associated with adherence to factors of the convict code, race/ethnicity, total incarcerations, and incarceration length, self-esteem, and gang membership were also significant correlates. As demonstrated by racial and ethnic effects, not all individuals

adhere to the code equally. Despite the strong association between the code of the street and identifying as black (Taylor, Esbensen, Brick, & Freng, 2010), adherence to the convict code was indistinguishable between blacks and whites. Instead, those who identified their race as “other” had stronger adherence to the masculinity factor (relative to whites), while those who identified as Latino also had stronger adherence to the social distance factor. Two potential explanations account for these variations. Historically, strong racial divisions have existed within Texas prisons (Crouch & Marquart, 1989; Pelz et al., 1991; Perkinson, 2010). Those who identified their race as “other” included: (a) Native Americans, (b) Asians, and (c) Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders. Given that 32% of TDCJ’s population is white, 34% is black, and 34% is Latino (Texas Department of Criminal Justice, 2017), these “other” racial groups may have to exert higher levels of masculinity and toughness as a means to protect themselves from dominant racial groups. Also, researchers have reported that Latinos have less favorable views of the criminal justice system and correctional agencies (Carter, 1983). These perceptions are influenced by their culture, which may affect their stronger adherence to the social distance factor.

Schwartz (1971) reported that, as the total number of incarcerations increased for an inmate, adherence to the convict code strengthened. The opposite relationship was confirmed in this dissertation—more incarcerations and longer incarceration lengths were associated with weakened adherence to the social distance factor. It is plausible that individuals who have been incarcerated many times, or who have longer sentences, have stronger connections in prison. They may be more willing to help prison staff because they are familiar with the environment and have come to terms with their own incarceration (Crewe, Hulley, & Wright, 2017). As Kreager et al. (2017) asserted,

experienced inmates had more capital in prison and could get things done, which may be why their social distance toward correctional officers is weakened.

Another important correlate of the convict code was self-esteem. Higher levels of self-esteem were associated with stronger adherence only to the masculinity factor. Potentially men who have higher levels of self-esteem are more likely to show strength and toughness, never show fear, and defend their reputation. Moreover, men with high levels of self-esteem may be less likely to cower when faced with controversy; instead, they stand up and defend themselves, knowing that they deserve respect (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996; Trammell, 2012).

The final significant correlate was gang membership. Self-reported prison gang membership was significantly associated with stronger adherence to the strategic survival factor. A fundamental premise of gangs is collective action (Decker, 1996). Therefore, it was surprising that gang members were more likely to adhere to the survival factor, because one of the questions for this factor emphasized individualism and alienation. However, the measurement of this factor fails to account for in-group versus out-group loyalties, which may explain why gang members had stronger adherence to the strategic survival factor (Coser, 1956; Hadden & Lester, 1978; McCallion, 2007). Gang members may not be willing to help “other” inmates because they consider “other” inmates as part of the out group. The survival factor places an emphasis on living in a defensive state and in a constant need for survival. Gang membership has been consistently associated with increases in offending (Pyrooz, Turanovic, Decker, & Wu, 2016). Therefore, gang members may adhere more strongly than non-gang members to the survival factor because they live in a constant state of survival and defense.

In the third important finding from this study only one factor of the convict code (strategic survival) was associated with violent behaviors and experiences. Stronger adherence to the strategic survival factor was significantly associated with an increase in the odds of violent misconduct and a decrease in odds of violent victimization. Sykes (1958) has noted that, “it is not solitude that plagues the prisoner, but life *en masse*” (p. 4). Sykes was referring to the unavoidable surroundings filled with noise, guardianship, reactive people, violence, and hostility—all ever-present in prison. This type of environment makes some people paranoid—which may strengthen adherence to the strategic survival factor. When adhering to the survival factor, individuals’ believe that no one will look out for them, thus are defensive and have to stand up for themselves. Therefore, inmates take matters into their own hands and, as a result, may be in a heightened state of strategic survival and engage in violent misconduct. Although adherence to the survival factor resulted in an increase in misconduct, this heightened state of strategic survival diminished experiences of victimization, a finding contrary to the victim/offender overlap. This divergent finding may be because in prison, “inmates who fight send a message to others that they were prepared to use violence, and, therefore would be difficult to exploit” (Bronson, 2006, p. 68). Therefore, other inmates avoid people who adhere strongly to the strategic survival factor, because they see these individuals are not afraid to use violence. In another illustration, Kuo and colleagues (2014) confirmed that individuals who were willing to fight back experienced fewer victimizations in prison. In an environment where toughness and the use of violence are the norm, adhering to the strategic survival factor was associated with a decrease in victimization.



The main focus of Objective 2 was to explore the association between the convict code and violent misconduct and victimization, although it is important to note that other control variables were significant correlates of misconduct and victimization. Significant background characteristics included age and education. As people aged the odds of engaging in violent misconduct decreased. This finding is consistent with prior research, and found in over 73% of the studies included in a systematic review on prison misconduct (Steiner et al., 2014). Also, those who identified their race as “other” adhered more strongly than whites to the masculinity factor of the convict code, which embodies toughness, never showing fear, and maintaining one’s reputation. Therefore, it was surprising that those who identified their race as “other” had decreased odds of engaging in violent misconduct. Asserting toughness and creating a reputation in prison are done as a means of showing other inmates no fear in the use of violence, should a situation arise (Bronson, 2006; Trammell, 2012). Potentially, those who identified their race as “other” rely on masculinity to assert their toughness and maintain a reputation of violence, which ultimately decreases the need to engage in violent misconduct while incarcerated.

Two variables measuring associations were significant predictors of violent behaviors and experiences. Negative peer influence was an important correlate—associated with an increase in odds of violent misconduct and a decrease in odds of victimization. Negative peer associations are not commonly studied among incarcerated samples because everyone within the prison can be identified as a “criminal” (Visher, 2017). However, scholars have suggested the importance of evaluating peer networks when researching reentry experiences. For example, Boman and Mowen (2017) determined that criminal peers had a strong influence on inmates’ reentry success and

substance abuse. Moreover, Taxman (2017) asserted that risk and needs-assessment tools do not fully capture the influence of criminal peers. While these scholars demonstrated the importance of evaluating criminal peers upon reentry, others have confirmed that inmate networks are also important while incarcerated. Notably, Kreager et al., (2016) suggested that by researching inmate networks, scholars would be able to better predict behaviors and understand experiences while incarcerated. Findings from this current study confirmed that peer networks are important, and scholars should begin to account for social networks when evaluating prison misconduct and victimization.

Prior scholars have confirmed that gang membership was associated with increased violent misconduct and victimization while incarcerated (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007; Griffin & Hepburn, 2006; Mears et al., 2013; Morris et al., 2010; Tewksbury et al., 2014; Wolff, Shi, & Siegel, 2009a); however, those associations were only partially supported in these data. Gang membership was associated with an increase in misconduct, but no significant association was found for victimization. Potentially, gang members within this sample engaged in more misconduct than non-gang members, but their gang status may protect them from experiencing violent victimizations.

Exposure to violence and involvement in violent misconduct or victimization were important predictors of violent behaviors and experiences. Consistent with prior research (Gaes & McGuire, 1985; Jennings et al., 2010; Toman, 2017; Wooldredge & Steiner, 2013; Wright, 1991), support for the victim/offender overlap was reported in this study. Those who engaged in violent misconduct were 16 times more likely to report a victimization, and those who had experienced a victimization were 17 times more likely to report engaging in misconduct. Within the sample, 16% of respondents had reported a

misconduct and victimization within the six months before release. Finally, exposure to violence was associated with increased odds of engaging in violent misconduct, but was not significantly associated with victimization. Prior studies have acknowledged that exposure to high-risk environments associates with prison misconduct (Steiner et al., 2014), but because these two factors are often intertwined, the directionality of this relationship remains unclear.

### **Theoretical and Empirical Contributions**

Based on the findings from this study, a number of theoretical and empirical contributions can be made. Thus, this section proceeds as follows. First, the theoretical contributions from this study—as they relate to the convict code—are detailed. Then, empirical implications of the convict code are discussed.

Theoretically, the main contribution of this study was to confirm that the convict code still exists. Simon (2000) called for researchers to determine how the convict code has changed throughout mass incarceration. In terms of how the code has changed, I have not precisely answered that question in this dissertation, but partially confirm that throughout mass incarceration and diverse changes in inmate populations, the code still exists. This study thus supports calls for a reemergence of convict code research, necessary to link prison culture to experiences while incarcerated and upon reentry.

Empirically, the convict code—an abstract cultural element—can be measured. Findings from this study revealed that the convict code can be quantified and that it forms a complex construct comprised of four specific factors. Each factor is important to the dimensionality of the convict code because the correlates of each factor varied. For example, identifying as Latino was only associated with strengthened adherence to the

social distance factor, where identifying their race as “other” was only significantly associated with stronger adherence to the masculinity factor. Also, gang membership was only associated with strengthened adherence to the strategic survival factor, whereas none of the correlates—with the exception of the code of the street—were associated with the invisibility factor.

In addition to the varying of correlates in each factor, each also had different associations with violent behaviors and experiences. Only strategic survival was associated with violent misconduct and victimization. The remaining factors—social distance, masculinity, and invisibility—were all non-significant correlates. Therefore, it is important to dissect the convict code into its respective factors when exploring how prison culture is associated with behaviors and experiences. If the convict code is treated as a singular construct, the dimensionality of the culture and its implications may not be fully discernable.

Although not the first attempt to measure the convict code, this study was the most comprehensive and methodologically rigorous attempt to date. Hopefully, these quantitative indicators of the convict code will help to create a resurgence of scholarship in this area. Similar to the work of the code of the street, researchers from the Family and Community Health Study quantified principles from the code of the street in their longitudinal data collection of 900 African American families, in Georgia and Iowa. Since the creation of the code of the street items in the FACHS data, other scholars have implemented the same or similar questions into their data collections (e.g., Gang Resistance Education and Training Program; Mobile Youth Study; Seattle Neighborhoods and Crime Survey; and Study of Peers, Activities and Neighborhoods).

Following the quantification of the code of the street indicators, over 22 quantitative studies have been published on the code of the street, its correlates, and implications for in-prison misconduct, and violence and victimization in the community (Baron, 2017; Mears et al., 2013; Stewart et al., 2006; Stewart & Simons, 2006, 2010). Hopefully, research on the convict code will emulate a similar trajectory now that quantitative indicators have been created and validated.

Adding the convict code indicators to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) surveys could result in systematic and wide-spread data collection on the convict code across U.S. prisons. Two widely used BJS datasets are of particular interest: the National Inmate Survey (Bureau of Justice Statistics, n.d.-a) and the Survey of Inmates in State Correctional Facilities (Bureau of Justice Statistics, n.d.-b). Both datasets collect a range of items related to inmate behaviors, not limited to misconduct, victimization, social support, and drug addiction; however, they do not measure prison culture. Expanding the BJS's statistical profile to include convict code items could broaden the influence of prison culture into other realms of the criminal justice system, such as reentry planning, treatment selection, and community corrections. Data from both these areas would be of prime interest to researchers and correctional administrators who use BJS data.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

This study provided a foundation to quantitatively measure the convict code. However, the study had a number of limitations, and refinements to the convict code measures are needed to ensure this construct is generalizable to populations outside of Texas. First, the study solely focused on violent misconduct and victimization, because of the theorized link between the convict code and violence. However, it is important to

evaluate how the convict code is associated with different outcomes. A natural extension could include other types of misconduct (e.g., property or drug) and victimization (e.g., sexual or property). However, a broader evaluation of this work would embody outcomes outside of misconduct and victimization. For example, scholars have suggested that health may be associated with the convict code (Choudhry, Armstrong, & Dregan, 2018). Therefore, it is plausible to assume that inmates who adhere more strongly to the strategic survival factor remain in a constant state of defense that increases feelings of anxiety or paranoia, which manifest into health conditions while incarcerated and upon release. Additionally, for this study I was not able to measure macro-level variation and the influence of the prison environment on the convict code. Because the convict code is strongly influenced by the prison environment, future studies should evaluate the impact of macro-level factors (e.g., prison crowding and prison security level) on adherence. And finally, future research should explore the association between convict code and levels of human agency necessary for changes in behavior (e.g., readiness for change, locus of control, and self-efficacy). Scholars have acknowledged stronger adherence to the convict code as associated with a decreased likelihood of participation in treatment communities (Peat & Winfree, 1992). Therefore, stronger adherence to the convict code may prohibit personal transformations necessary in moving toward pro-social behaviors.

Second, in this study I did not fully capture rational calculations or situational variation in adherence to the convict code. It is important to recognize that a host of factors affect inmate behavior. As previously alluded to, rationality is important when evaluating adherence to the convict code. When collecting the data on the convict code items, many respondents said, “I would strongly agree to that question if [e.g., that was a

close friend; that was an older inmate; that was a fellow gang member].” These statements alluded to inmate’s rationally choosing to adhere to the convict code based on situation variation. In measuring some situational variation of the convict code using interviews, scholars have confirmed that in certain circumstances inmates outwardly deny the code if appealing to a higher authority (i.e., their family, their self, or religion), downplay the situation, or have matured (Copes et al., 2013). Also, Anderson (1999) discussed variations in street culture adherence as part of code switching. Ultimately, inner-city youth switch between cultural schemas depending on their current needs and the utility of that culture. For example, in school, “decent” kids will code-switch—away from their street culture, which values violence, respect, and honor—to a pro-social culture that values education, goal attainment, and legitimate success. However, upon walking home from school—or hanging out in the neighborhood—children and young adults switch codes—back to the street culture to survive. Rationality and variation is fully captured in qualitative data, but quantitative estimates and the data used in this dissertation, do not measure deviations in adherence or reasons for those variations. Consequently, scholars should incorporate vignettes to measure situational variation in adherence to the convict code. For example, one vignette might be, “You will be released from prison on parole in six days. An inmate approaches you aggressively and wants to fight. What would you do?”

Third, in the study, I was not able to confirm if a larger criminal culture existed within prisons that encompasses the code of the street and convict code. In prior work, scholars have called for researchers “to more effectively evaluate the construct validity of these codes and focus on the convergent and discriminant validity of the code of the

street and the convict code to determine if these constructs are indeed unique and distinct” (Mitchell et al., 2017, p. 1214). Through this study I confirmed that the code of the street was an important correlate of the convict code; therefore, scholars should use exploratory and confirmatory analyses to determine if the convict code and code of the street are empirically distinct constructs.<sup>19</sup>

Fourth, this study was conducted with male inmates in Texas, only days prior to their release; therefore, the findings are not generalizable to all correctional populations. Consequently, scholars should assess correlates and implications of the convict code using various samples and populations. For example, the convict code operates differently in some countries and also with female prisoners. Moreover, researchers have determined that adherence to the convict code is lowest at the beginning and end of one’s incarceration (Wheeler, 1961). Additionally, Sykes (1958) asserted that maximum security prisons would have the most deprivations, resulting in the greatest need for convict code adherence. And finally, this study relied on a release cohort; Crewe et al., (2017) acknowledged that lifers adapt to prison culture differently than those who will be released. Therefore, it is not only important to have variation in samples—with regards to

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<sup>19</sup> Post-hoc analyses were estimated to explore the psychometric properties between the code of the street and convict code. Using a principal factor analysis with promax rotation, six distinct factors existed. That is, each of the four convict code factors remained—social distance, masculinity, invisibility, and strategic survival—but two additional factors measured all of the code of the street indicators. Factor 1 emulated toughness in prison (i.e., “people will take advantage of you if you do not show them how tough you are” and “sometimes you need to threaten people to get them to treat you fairly”). Factor 2 measured the use of violence (i.e., “in prison if someone uses violence against you, it is important you use violence against them to get even” and “in prison if someone disrespects you, it is important you use physical force to teach them a lesson”). This six-factor model was confirmed using structural equation modeling and fit the data well (SRMR = 0.04; CD = 0.10). Although just exploratory, it appears that the convict code and code of the street are unique constructs and measure different elements of culture.



states, countries, and gender—it is also critical to measure the code at various times throughout an incarceration term, with release and life cohorts, and in different prison settings, to determine if the convict code changes based on the population in question.

Fifth, a limitation of this research was my inability to draw causal conclusions because of the cross-sectionality of the data. Although scholars have demonstrated that beliefs of street culture are stable throughout emerging adulthood (Moule, Burt, Stewart, & Simons, 2015), the current measures of the convict code within this study cannot account for life-course trajectories, thus are conservative—only measuring beliefs at one point in time. With longitudinal data, researchers may find that the convict code is relatively time stable—similar to the code of the street—or they may find that adherence fluctuates based on various factors. Longitudinal data would also help scholars to explore any cyclical associations. For example, experiences of victimization may strengthen adherence to the strategic survival factor, which may increase the likelihood of misconduct and victimization—ultimately starting the cycle again. With proper temporal ordering, researchers will be able to ensure that the convict code is predictive of—not merely associated with—behaviors. Additionally, I did not directly measure the implications of the convict code upon reentry because this question was beyond the scope of this study. It is plausible that adherence to the convict code is associated with reentry success. For example, stronger adherence to the strategic survival factor was directly related to violent misconduct and victimization while incarcerated. Likewise, misconduct and victimization in prison have been linked to recidivism upon release (Duwe & Clark, 2011; Listwan, Sullivan, Agnew, Cullen, & Colvin, 2013). Moreover, some scholars have asserted that prison culture is exported to the community upon release through prisonized

“old heads” (Stuart & Miller, 2017). Prisonized “old heads” work to maintain a prison-like environment in the free world. Consequently, individuals within these environments experience more challenges upon reentering because they cannot disassociate from prison culture. Through involvement in misconduct, experiences of victimization, and the exportation of culture to the community, it is likely that adherence to the convict code may be associated with reentry success or challenges; however, longitudinal data is necessary to explore this association.

Sixth and finally, in this dissertation, I did not fully explore mediating effects across all models. As demonstrated by Appendix C, it is likely that the association between the strategic survival and violent victimization is mediated by involvement in violent misconduct. Researchers should explore how other correlates may mediate or moderate the associations between culture and important behaviors and experiences while incarcerated.

### **Policy Implications**

This was the most comprehensive study to date to evaluate the convict code. As a result, implications directly drawn from this work should be made with caution, given that replication of the findings is necessary. Should patterns emerge across studies, the section below outlines policy implications that might be generated from this research.

Only one factor of the convict code (strategic survival) was associated with violent behaviors or experiences in prison. This means, that 75% of the prison culture has no negative impact on prison violence for inmates within six months of their release. The findings from this perspectives lead one to question whether attempts should be made to change prison culture if its association with misconduct or victimization is insignificant.

Based on this analysis, attempts to change prison culture should focus only on changing the need for strategic survival, since stronger adherence to this factor was associated with increased violent misconduct, net of control variables.

The policy implications presented below are attempts to change culture within prisons, specifically focusing on the strategic survival factor. Changing culture can be difficult and for reform efforts to be successful they require buy-in from all parties involved in the correctional system—from executive directors down to the inmates incarcerated. The policy implications below provide ways in which adherence to strategic survival can be weakened, by (a) improving the prison environment, (b) increasing procedurally just and legitimate operations, (c) incorporating measures of the convict code into risk assessments, and (d) targeting programs at criminal cultures—specifically the convict code.

The first policy implication centers on modifying the prison environment to decrease inmate need for living in a constant state of strategic survival. Prison life centers around isolation, hostility, and powerlessness, which strongly influence adherence to the convict code (Clemmer, 1940; Cloward, 1960; Garland, 2001; Hayner & Ash, 1939; Sykes, 1956c, 1958). Therefore, it is likely that changes in prison operations could alter the need for survival in prison and decrease the need for a convict code.

As Pratt (2008a, 2008b) thoroughly detailed, Scandinavian countries have been identified for their exceptionalism in terms of low crime rates and humane prison experiences. For these countries the *primary* purpose of incarceration is the loss of liberty—and not punishment; therefore, only some of their policies resemble those of U.S. prisons, for example, security checks and locked entrances. However, Scandinavian

prison conditions lie in stark contrast to those of western prisons (e.g., Scandinavian prisons are well kept, amenities and services are provided by the state, the food is delicious, conjugal visits are encouraged, inmates may leave the prison, and some inmates are employed outside the unit). Rules and sanctions for inappropriate behavior exist, nonetheless, and more secure housing units are reserved for violators. Collectively, these prison environments foster a unique culture.

Because the United States and Scandinavian countries differ so much in terms of crime rates and punishment policies, one must ask if this type of model could be implemented in the U.S. Sharma (2015) asserted that implementing the Scandinavian model would be ineffective in U.S. prisons because of the United States' reliance on capitalism, the prevalence of inequality and crime, and immigration differences between the United States and Scandinavian countries. However, Pratt (2008b) suggested otherwise, noting that the implications for penal policies extend beyond Scandinavian countries.

After visiting prisons in Norway, North Dakota prison administrators realized their penal policies were hurting people unnecessarily, and they returned home to implement a more humane prison environment—what they termed, “The Farm” (Slater, 2017). At “The Farm,” inmates live in portable modular units and prison services are designed to emulate the free world. Inmates can have day passes, go shopping, wear civilian clothing, and even participate in a work release program. Solitary confinement remains in use to isolate inmates who enact behaviors that endanger others, although administrators are working to decrease any reliance on restrictive housing placement. Though Scandinavian exceptionalism may be unique (Pratt & Eriksson, 2011),

evaluations of North Dakota's model will shed light on the utility of humane prison management approaches. Consequently, changes in prison environments could be made to foster more humane prison experiences and conditions, which ultimately affect adherence to and the need for strategic survival while incarcerated.

This approach would be just one attempt to explore how changing prison culture affects behaviors and experiences; however, systematic exploration of prison culture could occur if indicators of the convict code were incorporated into BJS's data collections. Gathering systematic and wide-spread data on prison culture would allow administrators and scholars to explore how culture varies by prison and if variations in culture differentially affect prison experiences.

Recognizing that completely changing a prison environment, its philosophy, and its procedures may be challenging or unfeasible for states or administrators, the second policy implication from this research is more practical and accessible for prison administrators: increasing perceptions of procedural justice within prisons, which would ultimately affect adherence to the strategic survival factor. In this study I showed increases in perceptions of procedural justice associated with weakened adherence to the social distance and survival factors, of which strategic survival is most concerning, given its associations with violent misconduct.

Evaluating perceptions of procedural justice in correctional populations forms an emerging area of scholarship. Much of this research is based on Tyler's (1990) process-based model, which confirmed interactions perceived as unjust have a direct and indirect effect on future behaviors, including offending. According to Tyler (1990), aspects of procedural justice include "neutrality, lack of bias, honesty, efforts to be fair, politeness,

and respect” (p. 7) Specifically, within the area of corrections, scholars have recognized the importance of procedural justice, and have confirmed that fairness and respect are central to achieving and maintaining order in prison (Bottoms, 1999; Liebling, 2004; Sparks & Bottoms, 1995; Tyler, 2010). Perceptions of procedural justice are associated with prison disorder (Liebling, 2004), prison misconduct (Beijersbergen, Dirkzwager, Eichelsheim, Van der Laan, & Nieuwbeerta, 2015; Reisig & Mesko, 2009), justifications of violence (Butler & Maruna, 2009), and anger (Beijersbergen et al., 2015). To accomplish increases in procedural justice, current procedures need not be changed, but simply adjusted in the way they are implemented. For example, Kempany and Kaiser (2016) argue that perceptions of legitimacy could be viewed as a criminogenic need, and that risk-need-responsivity tools should be adapted to include perceptions of procedural justice.

Within prisons, security and safety are first priorities. Issues of fairness arise when policies and procedures are unknown, when procedures are not followed consistently by officers, or are unreliably applied between inmates. Therefore, creating procedurally just courses of action do not mean that inmates simply get what they want (Sparks & Bottoms, 1995). Instead, the goal should be “treating people with dignity and respect, giving [inmates] a voice during encounters, being neutral in decision making, and conveying trustworthy motives” (Mazerolle, Bennett, Davis, Sargeant, & Manning, 2013, p. 8). Small changes could be implemented where inmates are allowed to provide input on their housing assignments, programming options, or even work assignments. Moreover, fostering an open dialogue between inmates and staff may help to decrease the feelings of isolation and need for strategic survival while incarcerated.

The third policy implication attempts to change prison culture by identifying inmates with strong adherence to the convict code—specifically the strategic survival factor—and targeting those individuals for programming. In doing so, the items used to measure strategic survival could be included into risk and needs assessments. These assessments might be given when entering prison, throughout a sentence, and when preparing for release, which could help to identify individuals who have stronger adherence to the convict code.

The risk-need-responsivity model (Andrews & Bonta, 1994) has been most widely adopted by practitioners, and effective in identifying treatment strategies based on inmates' risks and needs (Gendreau, Little, & Goggin, 1996). Within the RNR model, risk factors are dynamic or static (Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2006). Static factors are time invariant and include items such as age, race, and criminal history. Dynamic factors—which are often targeted for interventions—can change over time and involve attitudes, beliefs, values, rationalizations, and identities. Parallels can be drawn between dynamic risk factors and the convict code, in that the convict code is also made up of attitudes, beliefs, values, and rationalizations. Therefore, measures of the convict code—specifically the strategic survival factor—might be incorporated into risk assessments, given throughout an inmate's incarceration, to account for cultural influences on behavior. Incorporating these measures could help to target limited treatment programs and interventions to those inmates with the highest adherence to the convict code. Should adherence to the strategic survival factor also impact behaviors longitudinally, it would be important to account for this factor within community corrections treatment programming and risk assessment tools.

The fourth and final policy implication aims to change prison culture through targeted treatment interventions. If prison staff are better able to identify individuals with stronger adherence to the convict code, prison staff might more precisely target programming based on the convict code as a criminogenic risk factor. Currently, there are very few programs designed to change prison culture; however, these types of programs may be helpful in reducing adherence to the convict code and decreasing prison misconduct.

One program involves a prisoner-led initiative, which works to decrease the impact of street culture in prison by changing narratives surrounding crime, violence, and inmate distrust. The Lifers Public Safety Steering Committee (2004) in Graterford Prison in Pennsylvania comprises inmates who are part of LIFERS, Inc. (Long Incarcerated Fraternity Engaging Release Studies)—all of whom are serving life terms for the crimes they committed. That the committee includes only incarcerated individuals is no coincidence; the committee believes that programming provided by incarcerated individuals will encourage other inmates to participate in the program and help inmates to adhere to the program's teachings. The LIFERS also think it is, "logically inconsistent . . . to expect a reduction in crime simply by galvanizing law enforcement, legislators, and a few select community groups, while excluding those deemed to be criminal elements from the process" (Lifers Public Safety Steering Committee of the State Correctional Institution, 2004, p. 51S).<sup>20</sup> Based on their vantage point, LIFERS feel that inmates often fail at reentry because criminal culture is so deeply ingrained into their behaviors and

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<sup>20</sup> A manuscript, authored by The Lifers Public Safety Steering Committee, was published in *The Prison Journal*. I also learned about the program and publication from the founder of LIFERS Inc. during an *Inside Out* training at Graterford prison.



beliefs. This program offers a unique perspective to remedy such obstacles, centering on transformational thinking, a heightened awareness of value systems, and acceptance that beliefs and values have created the present circumstances. The LIFERS created a training summit, which integrates members from the public with inmates, and the summit includes: (a) “develop[ing] . . . a working relationship between prisoners and the community to significantly reduce the nature and number of crimes and violence, (b) enhancing awareness of the circumstances by which violent crimes occur by identifying behaviors and attitudes that predispose individuals to commit criminal acts, (c) developing prevention and intervention strategies aimed at reducing youth crime and violence, and (d) exploring and developing meaningful ways in which conscientious prisoners can make meaningful contributions to the outside” (Lifers Public Safety Steering Committee of the State Correctional Institution, 2004, p. 54S).

The work of LIFERS has led to additional initiatives centered on changing criminal cultures, including: A Community Offender Restoration Project; Proceed: A behavioral program; Deal-Me-Out: A program to end drug dealing. Other national movements have emerged (e.g., Just Leadership USA), where individuals directly impacted by the criminal justice system lead reform efforts. To date, no evaluations of these programs have been published, but this would be necessary to determine program fidelity and effectiveness.

Programming within prison is often limited, ineffective, or non-existent (Lawrence, Mears, Dubin, & Travis, 2002). Typically, programs are centered on criminogenic risk factors including anti-social behaviors, criminal thinking, education or work, and substance abuse (Taylor, 2017). Notably lacking from this list of programs are

initiatives geared toward the convict code. Sykes (1958) asserted, “any attempt to reform the prison system which ignores the social system of the prison is . . . futile” (p. 134). Therefore, prisoner-led initiatives, which focus on the convict code and code of the street, could be very beneficial to correctional officials and inmates alike. These programs could be effective in changing prison behaviors and experiences, while serving a joint purpose: (a) increasing agency among the inmates, and (b) providing affordable options for prison programming. As members of LIFERS suggest, to have those closest to the problem working toward the solution is vital.

### **Conclusion**

Through this research I have demonstrated that theoretical and empirical contributions, and policy implications, might be generated from research on the convict code. These findings revealed (a) the convict code as a multi-dimensional construct that includes four factors (social distance, masculinity, invisibility, strategic survival); (b) adherence to factors of the convict code as consistently influenced by the code of the street and some prison contextual factors (e.g., procedural justice and exposure to violence), but race/ethnicity, total incarcerations, incarceration length, and self-esteem also matter; and (c) only one factor of the convict code (strategic survival) was associated with violent misconduct and victimization. In this study, I asserted culture as critical to prison experiences and predictive of violence. Ignoring the importance of the convict code could result in ineffective criminal justice system management strategies and approaches. As Bryne et al., (2005) indicated, “without close attention to institutional culture, we suspect that the latest wave of prison reform initiatives . . . will not be successful, in large part because they will not be implemented as designed” (p. 27).

Therefore, it is important to think about the impact of the convict code when implementing correctional programs and policies. This research forms just a beginning of an emerging body of literature that might further predict and determine the importance of the convict code, in its salient impact on both experiences while incarcerated and upon reentry.

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## APPENDIX A

Many scholars have confirmed that the convict code exists in international prisons and in female prison. The sections below provide an overview of the research on the convict code within international prisons and for female inmates.

Three scholars have asserted that the convict code operates in a relatively similar fashion to the code within U.S. prisons. For example, in a Canadian prison, Ricciardelli (2014a) reported that some U.S. centric tenets remain (i.e. 'never rat on a con' and don't get friendly with the staff; I won't see you, don't see me and shut up already; and be fearless or at least act tough), but some prominent norms that are not commonly reported in U.S. prisons included, be dependable (not loyal) and follow daily behavior rules (e.g., no eye contact) or else. Based on her research, it is not clear if the changes in the convict code are specific to Canadian prisons or due to changes in the prison culture as a whole. Also, Crewe (2009) reported that the convict code in England prisons was focused on loyalty, sincerity and respect, and minding ones business; but, that it was also important to uphold high standards of personal hygiene. In Israel, Einat and Einat (2000) confirmed that the convict code was centered on loyalty and not snitching. This population also had argot expressions, which were unique to the prison environment. Based on this research, the convict code in Israel prisons and U.S. prisons consisted of similar tenets.

Other scholars have reported unique features of the convict code based on the country of origin. Evaluating the convict code in Nigeria, Onojeharho and Bloom (1986) acknowledged that the code was much different from that of the U.S. Contrary to the constant oversight and hostile relationships within the U.S. prisons, inmates in Nigerian prisons were allowed to operate unobstructed and unmonitored, provided inmates obeyed

the regulations. The inmate environment created in a family-like bond among inmates, given the deprivations experienced within the prison. Instead of minding their own business, inmates came together to support one another. Although inmates still reported feeling lonely, their convict code was highly contextualized by their environment and was centered on not swearing, stealing, committing sodomy, or taking two cups of water. In Polish jails, Kaminiski (2003) studied the games prisoners play as they related to prison culture and social order. More than 70% of the population was part of an inmate social order with a unique argot and norms that governed behaviors. What was unique about this research is how the social order was created. Upon entering the jail, a new inmate is tested through numerous violent and nonviolent games, which ultimately determine their rank within the jail as a grypman, sucker, or fag. In Kaminiski's research, each decision point was meticulously outlined in a linear process (see p. 1950) and that level of precision has yet to be documented in U.S. prison culture.

When evaluating the convict code from an international perspective, only two scholars used comparative analyses. Winfree and colleagues (2002) compared prisonization between a prison in New Mexico and one in New Zealand. They indicated that inmates in New Mexico had more positive perceptions of correctional officers, than those in New Zealand. Additionally, New Zealand inmates were less trusting of correctional staff. In another international evaluation, Akers and colleagues (1977) explored prisonization in the United States, Mexico, England, West Germany, and Spain. They confirmed that regardless of the country, a convict code existed and included anti-staff sentiments.

The amount of research focused on gendered variations in the convict code is much smaller. Trammel (2012) explored prison culture and the convict code for both males and females. She confirmed that compared to men, women were more likely to denounce violence, feel stigmatized by prison staff, and adhere to prescribed gender norms. Women frequently solved problems without the use of violence, but they used rumors and gossip as a method of social control, where men were more likely to rely on violence. Comparing inmate code adherence between males and females, Tittle (1969) revealed that females had more friends in prison, they were less likely to avoid contact with correctional officers, and they had more acceptance for snitching. Females also were less likely to organize into social roles, where primary group orientation was much more common for males.

Based on the summary of international and gender-specific convict code adherence, it is likely that the U.S. and male centric conceptualization of the convict code do not equally apply across geographies or genders. Instead, researchers should continue to evaluate how the convict code changes based not only on geographies and genders, but by individual differences, the prison context, and changes in the social environment.

## APPENDIX B

Table B.1

### *Factor Loadings for Self-Esteem Scale*

	Loading
Overall, you are satisfied with yourself.	0.48
You feel you do not have much to be proud of. *	0.65
You feel useless at times. *	0.72
All in all, you often feel like a failure. *	0.77
You have a positive attitude about yourself.	0.62
Alpha	0.79
Interitem correlation	0.22
SRMR	0.04
CD	0.83

*Note.* Weighted estimates. \* Reverse coded.  $M = 2.12$ ;  $SD = 0.53$ ; Range = 0.40 – 3.

Response options: *strongly disagree* = 0, *disagree* = 1, *agree* = 2; *strongly agree* = 3.

Table B.2

### *Factor Loadings for Code of the Street Scale*

In prison...	Loading
when someone disrespects you, it is important that you use physical force or aggression to teach him or her not to disrespect you.	0.67
if someone uses violence against you, it is important that you use violence against him or her to get even.	0.63
people will take advantage of you if you don't let them know how tough you are.	0.70
sometimes you need to threaten people in order to get them to treat you fairly.	0.61
it is important to show others that you cannot be intimidated.	0.61
people tend to respect a person who is tough and aggressive.	0.63
Alpha	0.81
Interitem correlation	0.58
SRMR	0.04
CD	0.82

*Note.* Weighted estimates.  $M = 1.99$ ;  $SD = 0.85$ ; Range = 0 – 4. Response options: *strongly disagree* = 0, *disagree* = 1, *neutral* = 2; *agree* = 3; *strongly agree* = 4.

Table B.3

*Exposure to Violence Index*


---

*During this incarceration...*

Have you seen another inmate pull a weapon on someone?

[IF YES] In the last six months, how many times has this happened?

Have you seen another inmate injured in a fight?

[IF YES] In the last six months, how many times has this happened?

Have you seen a riot or an uncontrolled fight among a large group of inmates?

[IF YES] In the last six months, how many times has this happened?

Has an inmate close to you committed suicide?

[IF YES] How many of your friends have committed suicide?

---

*Note.* Weighted estimates.  $M = 0.06$ ;  $SD = 0.24$ ; Range = 0 – 5.40. Response options: lead-in = *no/yes*; question = continuous.

.



Table B.4

*Factor Loadings for Procedural Justice of Correctional Officer Scales*

	Loading
<i>Procedural justice</i>	
How often to correctional officers...	
give inmates a chance to tell their side of the story before they make decisions?	0.56
treat inmates fairly?	0.76
respect inmate's rights?	0.80
make decisions that are good for everyone in the prison?	0.77
clearly explain the reasons for their actions and decisions?	0.67
treat inmates with dignity and respect?	0.80
try to do what is best for inmates?	0.80
Alpha	0.89
Interitem correlation	0.30
SRMR	0.03
CD	0.91

*Note.* Weighted estimates. \* Reverse coded. Procedural justice:  $M = 1.11$ ;  $SD = 0.23$ ; Range = 0 – 3. Response options: *never* = 0, *sometimes* = 1, *most of the time* = 2, *always* = 3.

Table B.5

*Factor Loadings for Low Self-Control Scale*

	Loading
You are good at resisting temptation. *	0.47
You have a hard time breaking bad habits.	0.54
You are lazy.	0.36
You say inappropriate things.	0.43
You do certain things that are bad for you if they are fun.	0.62
You refuse things that are bad for you. *	0.46
You wish you had more self-discipline.	0.39
Pleasure and fun sometimes keeps you from getting work done.	0.46
You have trouble concentrating.	0.55
You are able to work effectively toward long-term goals. *	0.54
Sometimes you can't stop yourself from doing something, even if you know it is wrong.	0.46
You often act without thinking through all the alternatives.	0.62
You have iron self-discipline.	0.56
Alpha	0.80
Interitem correlation	0.46
SRMR	0.05
CD	0.81

*Note.* Weighted estimates. \* Reverse coded.  $M = 1.38$ ;  $SD = 0.76$ ; Range = 0 – 4. Response options: *not at all like you* = 0, *a little bit like you* = 1, *somewhat like you* = 2; *more so like you* = 3, *very much like you* = 4.

Table B.6

*Factor Loading for Social Support Scale*

	Loading
You have someone in your family who...	
is willing to help you make decisions.	0.86
really tries to help you.	0.89
can give you the emotional help and support you need.	0.86
You have someone in your family who would...	
provide help or advice on finding a place to live.	0.89
provide help or advice on finding a job.	0.90
provide support for dealing with a substance abuse problem.	0.80
provide transportation to work or other appointments if needed.	0.83
provide financial support.	0.81
Alpha	0.83
Interitem correlation	0.53
SRMR	0.01
CD	0.94

*Note.* Weighted estimates.  $M = 2.39$ ;  $SD = 0.76$ ; Range = 0 – 3. Response options: *strongly disagree* = 0, *disagree* = 1, *agree* = 2, *strongly agree* = 3.

Table B.7

*Negative Peer Influence Index*

<i>In the last six months, how many of your current close friends...</i>
are employed? *
can you hang out with and know that you will not get in trouble? *
have physically assaulted someone?
have committed a theft?
have sold illegal drugs?

*Note.* \* Reverse coded.  $M = 0.77$ ;  $SD = 0.68$ ; Range = 0 – 3. Response options 0 = *none of them*, 1 = *some of them*, 2 = *most of them*; 3 = *all of them*.

Table B.8

*Summary of Variables for Each Research Question*

	1	2	3	4
Dependent variable				
Convict code	X	X	--	--
Violent misconduct	--	--	X	--
Violent victimization	--	--	--	X
Independent variable				
Convict code	--	--	X	X
Controls				
Background				
Age	--	X	X	X
Race/Ethnicity (white, black, multi-racial, other, Latino)	--	X	X	X
Education (Less than high school, high school, graduate education)	--	--	X	X
Married	--	--	X	X
Total incarcerations	--	X	X	X
Incarceration length (years-log)	--	X	X	X
Incarcerating offense (violent, property, drug, other)	--	X	X	X
Attitudes/Associations				
Self-esteem	--	X	X	--
Low self-control	--	--	X	--
Social support	--	--	X	--
Negative peer influence	--	--	X	--
Gang membership	--	X	X	X
Code of the street	--	X	X	X
Prison Context				
Violent victimization	--	--	X	--
Violent misconduct	--	--	--	X
Custody level (trustee, general population, other, restrictive)	--	X	X	X
Prison work	--	--	X	X
Prison visitation	--	--	X	X
Procedural justice of correctional officers	--	X	X	X
Exposure to violence	--	X	X	X

Table B.9

*Model Fit for Four-Factor Confirmatory Factor Analysis (n = 799)*

	b	(SE)	Z
Factor 1: Social Distance			
Do your time	0.71***	(0.03)	27.10
Never talk with prison staff	0.65***	(0.03)	23.45
Never get too friendly with COs	0.64***	(0.03)	23.12
Factor 2: Masculinity			
Strength and toughness	0.67***	(0.03)	24.02
Never show fear	0.68***	(0.03)	24.60
Defend your reputation	0.64***	(0.03)	21.78
Factor 3: Invisibility			
Keep to yourself	0.49***	(0.04)	13.62
Mind your own business	0.60***	(0.03)	18.19
Do not leak information	0.60***	(0.03)	18.41
Factor 4: Survival			
Do not help prison staff	0.71***	(0.04)	17.70
Be loyal to inmates	0.64***	(0.04)	16.50
Do not help other inmates	0.34***	(0.04)	8.28
Model fit			
RMSEA	0.06		
CFI	0.93		
TLI	0.90		
$\chi^2(df)$	203.77***(66)		
SRMR	0.04		
CD	0.97		

*Note.* Unweighted estimates. Standardized coefficients presented. CO = correctional officer. \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Table B.10

*Model Fit Statistics for One-Factor Confirmatory Factor Analysis (n = 799)*

	b	Model 1 (SE)	Z
Do not trust anyone	0.46***	(0.03)	14.74
Getting you down	0.63***	(0.03)	25.10
Never get too friendly with COs	0.56***	(0.03)	19.77
Mind your business	0.52***	(0.03)	17.90
Strength and toughness	0.54***	(0.03)	19.01
Never show fear	0.56***	(0.03)	19.98
Do not leak information	0.52***	(0.03)	17.74
Do not help prison staff	0.43***	(0.03)	13.14
Be loyal to inmates	0.49***	(0.03)	16.12
Defend reputation	0.58***	(0.03)	21.43
Keep to yourself	0.46***	(0.03)	14.59
Never talk with prison staff	0.58***	(0.03)	21.36
Do not complain	0.43***	(0.03)	13.24
Stay out of trouble	0.57***	(0.03)	20.48
Model fit			
RMSEA	0.09		
CFI	0.81		
TLI	0.78		
$\chi^2(df)$	579.36***(91)		
SRMR	0.06		
CD	0.85		

*Note.* Unweighted estimates. Standardized coefficients presented. CO = correctional officer. \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Table B.11

*Correlation Matrix*

	Soc. Dist	Masc.	Invis.	S.Sur.	Misconduct	Victim.	Age	Black	M. Racial	Other	Latino
Social distance	1.00										
Masculinity	0.43***	1.00									
Invisibility	0.42***	0.43***	1.00								
Strategic survival	0.40***	0.28***	0.31***	1.00							
Misconduct	0.10***	0.18***	0.19***	0.29***	1.00						
Victimization	0.06	0.13***	0.17***	0.16***	0.58***	1.00					
Age	-0.14***	-0.24***	-0.22***	-0.25***	-0.28***	-0.21***	1.00				
Black <sup>a</sup>	-0.07	-0.033	-0.05	-0.03	-0.03	-0.05	0.01	1.00			
Multi-racial <sup>a</sup>	-0.06	0.055	0.07**	-0.01	0.08**	0.06	-0.04	-0.18***	1.00		
Other <sup>a</sup>	0.01	0.08**	0.03	0.06	-0.05	0.03	-0.03	-0.07	-0.03	1.00	
Latino <sup>a</sup>	0.14***	0.07**	0.02	0.03	-0.06	-0.07	-0.09**	-0.41***	-0.19***	-0.07**	1.00
Less than hs. <sup>b</sup>	0.09***	0.05	0.04	0.14***	0.05	0.10***	-0.17***	-0.01	0.01	0.02	0.15***
Higher education <sup>b</sup>	-0.10***	-0.10***	-0.05	-0.06	-0.09**	-0.07**	0.17***	-0.03	0.06	0.05	-0.09***
Married	-0.03	-0.12***	-0.07**	-0.10***	-0.11***	-0.09**	0.20***	-0.09**	-0.03	0.00	0.05
Total incarcerations	-0.09***	-0.03	-0.05	-0.08**	-0.04	-0.01	0.28***	0.14***	-0.05	-0.04	-0.03
Inc. length (years- ln)	-0.10***	-0.10***	-0.09**	-0.09**	-0.05	-0.05	0.28***	0.07**	0.05	-0.02	-0.11***
Property <sup>c</sup>	0.06	0.11***	0.13***	0.08**	0.07**	0.09**	-0.09***	0.06	0.03	0.00	-0.09***
Drugs <sup>c</sup>	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.11***	0.08**	0.04	-0.07	-0.02	-0.06	0.02	0.09***
Other <sup>c</sup>	-0.04	-0.04	-0.08**	-0.10**	-0.08**	-0.08**	0.10***	-0.12***	-0.06	-0.01	0.10***
Self-esteem	-0.08**	-0.03	-0.02	-0.10***	-0.11***	-0.13***	-0.12***	0.06	0.09***	-0.02	-0.07**
Low self-control	0.17***	0.22***	0.20***	0.30***	0.23***	0.21***	-0.18***	-0.08**	-0.05	0.08**	-0.01
Social support	-0.04	0.03	-0.02	-0.14***	-0.01	-0.02	-0.24***	0.09**	-0.05	0.03	0.09**
Peer influence	0.12***	0.12***	0.11***	0.22***	0.23***	0.11***	-0.20***	-0.02	-0.08**	0.01	0.07**
Gang membership	0.12***	0.16***	0.16***	0.23***	0.34***	0.23***	-0.27***	-0.03	0.11***	-0.03	0.05
Code of the street	0.38***	0.59***	0.37***	0.40***	0.31***	0.24***	-0.27***	-0.04	0.00	0.03	0.06
Trustee <sup>d</sup>	-0.06	-0.04	0.02	-0.01	-0.04	-0.02	0.01	-0.03	0.04	-0.03	-0.08**
General population <sup>d</sup>	-0.03	-0.05	-0.06	-0.07**	0.02	0.02	-0.02	0.07**	-0.02	0.05	-0.03
Restrictive <sup>d</sup>	0.08**	0.10***	0.12***	0.14***	0.12***	0.07**	-0.06	-0.05	0.06	-0.02	0.03
Prison visit	-0.01	0.08**	0.09***	-0.04	0.01	0.01	-0.20***	0.01	-0.04	0.03	0.05
Prison work	-0.04	-0.03	-0.05	-0.08**	-0.05	-0.04	-0.04	-0.02	-0.04	0.01	0.02
Procedural justice-CO	-0.26***	-0.08**	-0.12***	-0.39***	-0.15***	-0.13***	0.23***	0.01	0.02	0.01	-0.01
Exposure to violence	0.12***	0.10***	0.09***	0.10***	0.23***	0.17***	-0.16***	0.02	-0.03	0.01	0.01

Note. Weighted estimates. CO = correctional officer. <sup>a</sup>Reference group = white. <sup>b</sup>Reference group = high school education. <sup>c</sup>Reference group = violent. <sup>d</sup>Reference group = other. \*\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table B.12

*Correlation Matrix Continued*

	Less hs.	High.Ed.	Married	Tot. Inc.	Inc. Len.	Property	Drugs	Other	Self-esteem	L. Self-Con.	Soc. Supp.
Less than hs. <sup>b</sup>	1.00										
Higher education <sup>b</sup>	-0.52***	1.00									
Married	-0.06	0.07**	1.00								
Total incarcerations	0.06	-0.04	0.03	1.00							
Inc. length (years- ln)	0.06	-0.03	0.02	-0.14***	1.00						
Property <sup>c</sup>	0.06	-0.04	-0.03	0.11***	-0.13***	1.00					
Drugs <sup>c</sup>	0.06	-0.03	-0.06	0.17***	-0.13***	-0.20***	1.00				
Other <sup>c</sup>	-0.10***	0.02	0.06	0.05	-0.25***	-0.29***	-0.25***	1.00			
Self-esteem	-0.12***	0.08**	0.06	-0.15***	-0.05	-0.08**	0.00	0.04	1.00		
Low self-control	0.09***	-0.14***	-0.10***	0.10***	-0.16***	0.13***	0.07**	0.01	-0.39***	1.00	
Social support	-0.01	-0.05	0.12***	-0.16***	0.13***	-0.07	0.03	0.01	0.23***	-0.13***	1.00
Peer influence	0.14***	-0.12***	-0.03	-0.01	-0.11***	0.02	0.13***	-0.11***	-0.14***	0.28***	-0.08**
Gang membership	0.12***	-0.12***	-0.07**	-0.08**	-0.02	0.06	0.08**	-0.11***	-0.01	0.16***	0.06
Code of the street	0.18***	-0.17***	-0.21***	-0.01	0.00	0.09**	0.08**	-0.09**	-0.23***	0.39***	-0.05
Trustee <sup>d</sup>	0.01	-0.03	0.00	0.07	-0.11***	0.10***	-0.03	0.11***	0.05	-0.06	-0.07**
General population <sup>d</sup>	0.01	-0.02	-0.02	-0.09**	0.21***	-0.08**	0.01	-0.17***	-0.02	-0.02	0.07**
Restrictive <sup>d</sup>	0.14***	-0.08**	-0.07	-0.04	0.15***	0.05	-0.01	-0.08**	-0.08**	0.14***	-0.05
Prison work	-0.04	0.07**	0.14***	-0.12***	-0.05	-0.01	0.03	0.02	0.10***	-0.12***	0.30***
Prison visitation	-0.03	-0.01	0.05	0.01	0.02	-0.03	0.03	0.07	0.08**	-0.03	0.17***
Procedural justice- CO	-0.10***	0.06	0.09***	0.05	0.04	-0.01	-0.06	0.03	0.12***	-0.19***	0.10***
Exposure to violence	-0.01	-0.05	-0.04	-0.06	-0.09**	0.00	0.06	0.03	0.06	0.03	-0.03

Note. Weighted estimates. CO = correctional officer. <sup>b</sup>Reference group = high school education. <sup>c</sup>Reference group = violent. <sup>d</sup>Reference group = other. \*\*  $p < 0.05$   
\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$



Table B.13

*Correlation Matrix Continued*

	Peer Inf.	Gang Mem.	Code. Strt.	Trustee	Gen. Pop.	Restrictive	Work	Visit	Proc. Just.	Expos. Viol.
Peer influence	1.00									
Gang membership	0.17***	1.00								
Code of the street	0.23***	0.22***	1.00							
Trustee <sup>d</sup>	-0.06	-0.02	-0.09**	1.00						
General population <sup>d</sup>	0.13***	-0.03	0.00	-0.57***	1.00					
Restrictive <sup>d</sup>	-0.03	0.22***	0.21***	-0.05	-0.37***	1.00				
Prison work	0.01	0.06	0.00	0.04	-0.03	-0.10***	1.00			
Prison visitation	0.01	-0.10***	-0.04	0.15***	0.13***	-0.28***	0.10***	1.00		
Procedural justice-CO	-0.15***	-0.09***	-0.24***	-0.01	-0.01	-0.04	0.00	-0.05	1.00	
Exposure to violence	0.11***	0.10***	0.11***	-0.05	0.07	-0.02	0.08**	-0.05	-0.06	1.00

*Note.* Weighted estimates. CO = correctional officer. <sup>d</sup>Reference group = other. \*\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table B.14

*Summary of Findings*

	F1	F1	F3	F4	Misconduct	Victimization
<i>Convict code factors</i>						
Social distance					ns	ns
Masculinity					ns	ns
Invisibility					ns	ns
Strategic survival					+	-
<i>Background</i>						
Age	ns	ns	ns	ns	-	ns
Race/ethnicity <sup>a</sup>						
Black	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Multi-racial	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Other	ns	+	ns	ns	-	ns
Latino	+	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Education <sup>b</sup>						
Less than high school					ns	ns
Higher education					ns	ns
Married					ns	ns
Total incarcerations	-	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Incarceration length (years- log)	-	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Incarcerating offense <sup>c</sup>						
Property	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Drugs	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Other	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
<i>Attitudes/Associations</i>						
Self-esteem	ns	+	ns	ns	ns	ns
Low self-control					ns	ns
Social support					ns	ns
Peer influence					+	-
Gang membership	ns	ns	ns	+	+	ns
Code of the street	+	+	+	+	ns	ns
<i>Prison Context</i>						
Violent victimization					+	
Violent misconduct						+
Custody level <sup>d</sup>						
Trustee	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
General population	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Restrictive	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Prison visitation					ns	ns
Prison work					ns	ns
Procedural justice-CO	-	ns	ns	-	ns	ns
Exposure to violence	+	ns	ns	ns	+	ns

*Note.* CO = correctional officer. F1 = social distance. F2 = masculinity. F3 = invisibility. F4 = strategic survival. ns = non-significant. - = negative association. + = positive association. Greyed area = not included in model. <sup>a</sup>Reference group = white. <sup>b</sup>Reference group = high school degree. <sup>c</sup>Reference group = violent. <sup>d</sup>Reference group = other.

## APPENDIX C

The association between strategic survival and violent victimization was positive for bivariate correlations and in the first multivariate model. However, once important controls were introduced (model 2), the positive association changed to a negative association. Given this change in direction, a supplemental analysis was conducted to evaluate mediating or suppressing effects.

To explore mediating effects, control variables were entered into the logistic regression model one-by-one. The positive effect between strategic survival and victimization switched to negative when adding the code of the street or violent misconduct. Simple mediation analyses were conducted for the code of the street and violent misconduct (Baron & Kenny, 1986). As demonstrated in Figure C.1, the code of the street fully mediated the association between strategic survival and violent victimization.

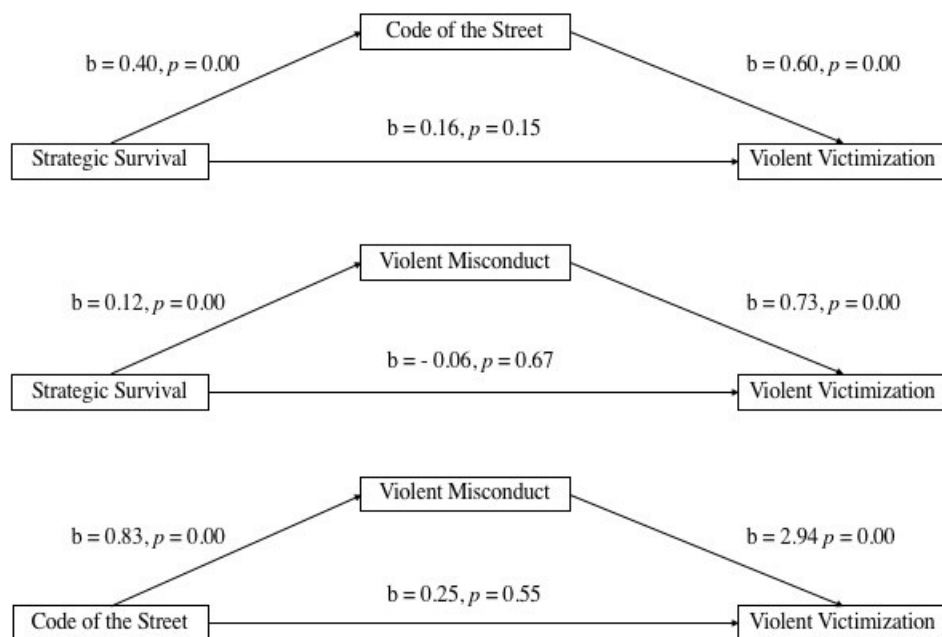


Figure C.1. Simple mediation models.

Also, violent misconduct fully mediated the association between strategic survival and violent victimization. When violent misconduct and the code of the street were assessed together for mediating effects, violent misconduct fully mediated the association between the code of the street and violent victimization. Collectively, these findings suggest that violent misconduct may be an important mediator in the association between the convict code and violent victimization.

Because the association between strategic survival and violent victimization changed from positive to negative, suppression effects were also explored (Field, 2009). To do so, backward stepwise regression models were estimated and specified to keep variables in the model when significance levels reached 0.05. Based on this model, only misconduct ( $b = 2.83, p = 0.00$ ) and low self-control ( $b = 0.31, p = 0.02$ ) were significant predictors of violent victimization. Stepwise regression models are helpful to explore significant associations; however, these models are solely based on statistical significance and do not account for theoretical importance (Field, 2009; Menard, 2010). The variables included in model 2 of Table 17 are incorporated based on theoretical importance. Each of those predictors have been associated with violent victimization in prior studies; therefore, they are important controls to account for when exploring violent victimization. The logistic regression model and the stepwise regression present conflicting findings and render further exploration to fully determine the association between the convict code factors and violent victimization.

## VITA

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### EDUCATION

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- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 2018 | Ph.D., <i>Criminal Justice</i> , Sam Houston State University (expected)<br><u>Working title:</u> <i>The Convict Code Revisited: An Examination of Prison Culture and Its Association with Violent Misconduct and Violent Victimization</i><br>Committee: Melinda Tasca (Chair), Erin Orrick, Lisa Muftic, and David Pyrooz (Outside Reader) |
| 2011 | M.S., <i>Criminal Justice Administration</i> , North Dakota State University<br><u>Thesis:</u> <i>The effects of formal and informal labeling on later self-reported non-violent and violent delinquency</i>   |
| 2009 | B.S., <i>Criminal Justice and Psychology</i> , North Dakota State University   |

### ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

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- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| 2017-Present | Graduate Research Fellow for Criminal Justice Statistics<br>Bureau of Justice Statistics                         |
| 2013-2016    | Graduate Research Assistant<br>Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology, Sam Houston State University      |
| 2011-2013    | Adjunct Faculty<br>Department of Social Science-Criminal Justice, Upper Iowa University-Madison Wisconsin Campus |
| 2011-2013    | Wisconsin Department of Health Services<br>Children's Long-Term Support Project Coordinator/Data Analyst         |
| 2009-2011    | Teaching Assistant<br>Department of Criminal Justice, North Dakota State University                              |
| 2011         | Athletic Academic Assistant Advisor<br>Athletic Academic Affairs, North Dakota State University                  |
| 2010         | Graduate Assistant<br>Department of Criminal Justice, North Dakota State University                              |

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

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- Corrections
- Subculture
- Inequality
- Communities and crime

## PUBLICATIONS

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### *Articles in Peer-Reviewed Journals*

- 2018      **Mitchell, M. M.** Spooner, K., Wu, J., Pyrooz, D.C., & Decker, S. H. Survey Research with Gang and Non-Gang Members in Prison: Operational Lessons from the LoneStar Project. *Trends in Organized Crime* (Forthcoming)
- 2018      Randa, R. & **Mitchell, M. M.** Fear of victimization at school: Looking through the racialized lens. *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice* (Forthcoming)
- 2017      **Mitchell, M. M.**, Fahmy, C., Pyrooz, D. C., & Decker, S. H. (2017). Criminal crews, codes, and contexts: Differences and similarities across the code of the street, convict code, street gangs, and prison gangs. *Deviant Behavior*, 38(10), 1197–1222.
- 2016      **Mitchell, M. M.**, Spooner, K., Jia, D., & Zhang, Y. The effect of prison visitation on reentry success: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 47, 74–83.

### *Chapters in Edited Volumes*

- 2018      Pyrooz, D. C., & **Mitchell, M. M.** Hard time: Gang members in total institutions. In B. M. Huebner & N. A. Frost (Eds.), *The collateral consequences of sentencing and punishment decisions*. New York, NY: Routledge. (Forthcoming)
- 2015      Pyrooz, D. C., & **Mitchell, M. M.** Little gang research, big gang research. In S. H. Decker & D. C. Pyrooz (Eds.), *The Handbook of Gangs* (pp. 28–58). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

### *Technical Reports*

- 2015      Randa, R., **Mitchell, M. M.**, & Brady, P. *Bullying and the fear of victimization*. Huntsville, TX: Crime Victims' Institute.

### *Chapters*

- 2016      **Mitchell, M. M.**, & Pyrooz, D. C. (2016). Gang membership. In W. G. Jennings, G. E. Higgins, M. M. Maldonado-Molina, & D. N. Khey (Eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Crime and Punishment*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.
- 2015      Pyrooz, D. C., & **Mitchell, M. M.** Prison gangs and subculture. In R. Wright (Ed.), *Oxford Bibliographies*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

*Book Reviews and Forums*

- 2017 Fahmy, C. & **Mitchell, M.M.** From working on a grant to chasing grants: Graduate student experiences with funded research. *The Criminologist*, 42(5).
- 2016 **Mitchell, M. M.** Book review: Community criminology: Fundamentals of spatial and temporal scaling, ecological indicators, and selectivity bias. *Criminal Justice Review*, 41(2), 236–238.

**WORK UNDER REVIEW**


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Pyrooz, D.C., & **Mitchell, M. M.** Gang Affiliation and Restrictive Housing: Findings from a Survey of State Prison Systems in the United States.

**Mitchell, M. M.**, Armstrong, G., & Armstrong, T. Disproportionate school disciplinary responses: An exploration of prisonization and minority threat hypothesis among black, Hispanic and Native American students.

**Mitchell, M. M.**, Brinser, K., & Jai, D. Hope is around the corner: Determining the effect of neighborhood revitalization on crime through an evaluation of Houston HOPE.

**CURRENT PROJECTS**


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Fahmy, C., Clark, K., **Mitchell, M. M.**, Pyrooz, D.C., & Decker, S. H. From the prison to the street: Finding gang and non-gang members in the free world.

**Mitchell, M. M.**, Wells, J., & Crandall, K. Gentrifying or gentrified: Neighborhood crime rates and calls for service in revitalizing areas.

**Mitchell, M. M.** Gang life: More than drugs, violence, and crime.

**Mitchell, M. M.** & Naito, M. E. Three strikes you're out... nope, one strike now: A national evaluation of zero-tolerance school policies.

**GRANTS AND SPONSORED RESEARCH***External Awards*

- 2017-Present *The Evolution of the Convict Code throughout Mass Incarceration: The Influence of Subculture on Misconduct, Victimization, and Offender Attitudes.* **PI: Meghan Mitchell**; Supervisor: Melinda Tasca.  
Funded by the Bureau of Justice Statistics Graduate Research Fellowship for Criminal Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice (2016-R2-CX-0024) \$45,000.
- 2017-Present *The Evolution of the Convict Code throughout Mass Incarceration: The Influence of Subculture on Misconduct, Victimization, and Offender Attitudes.* **PI: Meghan Mitchell**; Supervisor: Melinda Tasca.  
Funded by the Charles Koch Foundation, Dissertation Research Grant \$5,000.

*Project Management and Involvement*

- 2015-2018     *Gangs on the street, gangs in prison: Their nature, interrelationship, control, and re-entry.* PI: Scott Decker; Co-PI: David Pyrooz; **Role: Project Manager.** Funded by the National Institute of Justice, Research on Gangs and Gang Violence (2014-MU-CX-0111). \$840,807
- 2017            *Measuring the Effects of Correctional Officer Stress on the Well-Being of the Individual Officer and the Prison Workplace and Developing a Practical Index of Correctional Officer Stress for Use by Correctional Agencies.* PI: John Hepburn; SHSU Site Coordinator: Melinda Tasca, Co-Coordinator: H. Daniel Butler; **Role: Interviewer.** Funded by the National Institute of Justice National Institute of Justice (2014-IJ-CX-0026) \$666,268
- 2010            *Organizational Efforts for Persons with Mental Illnesses.* PI: Thomas McDonald; **Role: Research Assistant.** Sponsored by the Fargo Police Department and North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services.
- 2010-2011     *President's Council on Alcohol and other Drugs Abuse Prevention.* PI: Kevin Thompson; Co-PI: Sarah Browning; **Role: Research Assistant.** Sponsored by the North Dakota State University President's Council

**HONORS, AWARDS, AND SCHOLARSHIPS**

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- 2017            Sam Houston State University: General Graduate Studies Scholarship (\$1,000)
- 2017            Sam Houston State University: Teaching Assistant Certification Series (TACS) (\$500)
- 2016            Association of Doctoral Programs in Criminology and Criminal Justice (ADPCCJ) Fellowship (\$2,700)
- 2016            Sam Houston State University Graduate Studies Scholarship (\$500)
- 2015            Association of Doctoral Programs in Criminology and Criminal Justice (ADPCCJ) Fellowship (\$2,700)
- 2015            Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences: Doctoral Summit Student Participant
- 2015            Sam Houston State University: Academic Success Center- Excellence in Writing
- 2015            Sam Houston State University Graduate Studies Scholarship (\$500)
- 2014            Association of Doctoral Programs in Criminology and Criminal Justice (ADPCCJ) Fellowship (\$2,025)
- 2014            Sam Houston State University Graduate Studies Scholarship (\$500)
- 2013            Association of Doctoral Programs in Criminology and Criminal Justice (ADPCCJ) Fellowship (\$675)
- 2013            University of Wisconsin- Madison: Honorary Fellow



## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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### *Courses Taught*

- Senior Project Capstone
- Juvenile Justice
- Victimology
- Introduction to Criminal Justice
- Criminology
- Applied Research Methods Laboratory

### *Areas of Teaching Interest*

- Corrections
- Race and Crime
- Statistics
- Research Methods
- Social Deviance
- Communities and Crime

### *Guest Lectures*

2017	Sam Houston State University- Critical theories
2016	Zhejiang Police College (Hangzhou, China)- Introduction to Criminal Justice
2016	Sam Houston State University- Residential treatment facilities
2016	Sam Houston State University- Critical theories
2015	Sam Houston State University- Critical theories
2015	Sam Houston State University- Validity, reliability, and scale development
2015	Sam Houston State University- Research design
2015	Sam Houston State University- Life incarcerated
2014	Sam Houston State University- Prison vs. street gangs
2014	Sam Houston State University- Gangs and the web
2014	Sam Houston State University- Gang databases

## SERVICE

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### *Professional*

#### Manuscript Reviewer

- *Justice Quarterly, Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, Journal of Criminal Justice, Criminal Justice Review, Journal of School Violence, Journal of Criminal Justice Education*

### *University*

2015-2016	Sam Houston State University Graduate Student Organization- Vice President Doctoral Students
2014-2015	Sam Houston State University Graduate Student Organization- Vice President Doctoral Students
2014-2015	Sam Houston State University academic peer mentor
2008-2011	North Dakota State University Complaint Resolution Board

### *Community*

2012-2013	Nehemiah Corporation: Center for Racial Justice and Reconciliation research volunteer
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## PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

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### *Chair and Discussant*

- 2016 American Society of Criminology session chair/discussant: "Individual and Family Impacts of Incarceration"
- 2015 Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences session chair/discussant: "Policing: Calls for Service and Technology"
- 2014 American Society of Criminology session chair/discussant: "Disparities in Treatment of Youth"
- 2013 American Society of Criminology session chair/discussant: "Policing special populations"
- 2011 American Society of Criminology session chair/discussant: "Gender and class differences in juvenile delinquency and criminal behavior"

### *Paper Presentations*

- 2018 Mitchell, M. M. *Cultural implications of inmate behavior: Evaluating the association between the convict code and inmate misconduct*. Presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, New Orleans, LA.
- 2017 **Mitchell, M. M.** *Measuring the convict code: Evaluating the construct using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis*. Presented at the American Society of Criminology, Philadelphia, PA.
- Mitchell, M. M.**, Spooner, K., Wu, J., Pyrooz, D.C., Decker, S. H. Interviewing gang members in prison: Operational lessons from the LoneStar Project. Presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, Kansas City, MO.
- Fahmy, C., Clark, K., **Mitchell, M. M.**, Pyrooz, D.C., Decker, S. H. From the prison to the street: Finding gang and non-gang members in the free world. Presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, Kansas City, MO.
- 2016 **Mitchell, M. M.**, Spooner, K., Jia, D., & Zhang, Y. *The effect of prison visitation on reentry success: A meta-analysis*. Presented at the American Society of Criminology, New Orleans, LA.  
 \*\*Also presented at Sam Houston State University 3MT (Minute Thesis)
- Mitchell, M. M.**, Brinser, K., & Jia, D. *HOPE is around the corner: Determining the effect of neighborhood revitalization on crime*. Presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, Denver, CO.
- Mitchell, M. M.**, Fahmy, C., Pyrooz, D. C., & Decker, S. H. *Code of the street, convict code, street gangs, and prison gangs: Differences and similarities in offender subcultures*. Presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, Denver, CO.
- 2015 **Mitchell, M. M.** *Gang life: More than drugs, violence, and crime*. Presented at the American Society of Criminology, Washington, DC.

- Mitchell, M. M.** *Neighborhood crime and police calls for service in gentrifying areas.* Presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, Orlando, FL. \*\*Also presented at Sam Houston State University Graduate Research Symposium
- 2014 **Mitchell, M. M.,** Armstrong, G. S., & Armstrong, T. *Racial threat hypothesis and school discipline: Restorative or punitive treatment of Native American students.* Presented at the American Society of Criminology, San Francisco, CA.  
\*\*Also presented at Sam Houston State University Graduate Research Symposium
- 2013 **Mitchell, M. M.,** & Browning, S. *Sobriety checkpoints and the university student.* Presented at the American Society of Criminology, Atlanta, GA.
- 2012 Reece, K., & **Mitchell, M. M.** *Racial disparities in the criminal justice system.* Presented at the Nehemiah Center for Justice and Reconciliation, Madison, WI.
- Mitchell, M. M.,** & Browning, S. *The effects of informal and formal labeling on later self-reported non-violent and violent delinquency.* Presented at the American Society of Criminology, Washington, DC.

#### *Poster Presentations*

- 2015 Gravel, J., Valasik, M., Pyrooz, D. C., & **Mitchell, M. M.** *The small world of gang research: "Gangs" of gang scholars in a co-authorship network.* Presented at the American Society of Criminology, Washington, DC.

#### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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- 2018 Presenting Data and Information with Edward Tufte
- 2017 Sam Houston State University: Academic Teaching Conference
- 2016 Sam Houston State University: Academic Teaching Conference
- 2016 ICPSR Workshop: Multi-Level Modeling for Longitudinal and Clustered Data
- 2016 Sam Houston State University: Research and Statistics Workshop
- 2015 Sam Houston State University: LoneStar Project Blaise-CAPI
- 2015 Sam Houston State University: LoneStar Project Interviewing Techniques of Special Populations
- 2015 Sam Houston State University: Survival Analysis
- 2015 Sam Houston State University: STATA Analysis
- 2015 Sam Houston State University: Blackboard Training Certificate
- 2015 Sam Houston State University: Graduate Studies Leadership Conference
- 2015 Sam Houston State University: Online & Teaching Conference
- 2014 Sam Houston State University: Graduate Studies Leadership Conference
- 2014 Sam Houston State University: Academic Teaching Conference
- 2014 Sam Houston State University: Hierarchical Linear Modeling Training
- 2013 Sam Houston State University: Academic Teaching Conference
- 2012 YWCA: Racial Justice Summit
- 2010 American Society of Criminology: Propensity Score Matching Workshop

- 2010 Minnesota State University Moorhead: Designing Online Instruction & Teaching Online Courses
- 2010 North Dakota State University: Multi-Disciplinary Academic Writing
- 2009 North Dakota State University: Introduction to College Teaching
- 2008 North Dakota State University: Bullying Intervention: Adults Stepping In
- 2008 Youth Intervention and Prevention Association: GLBTQ Youth in a System of Care
- 2007 North Dakota State University: Safe Zone Ally Training Step #2: Gender Identity
- 2007 North Dakota State University: Social Justice Workshops: Racism, Classism, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity
- 2006 North Dakota State University: TOCAR (Training Our Campus Against Racism) Part 1
- 2006 North Dakota State University: Safe Zone Ally Training

*Statistical Program Proficiencies*

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|---------|-------|---------------|
| • STATA | • CMA | • Esri ArcGis |
| • SPSS  | • HLM | • Geoda       |
| • AMOS  | • SAS |               |

## **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

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American Society of Criminology  
Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences