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prison is heart disease, followed by cancer, and then AIDS-related causes.

How does the life expectancy of incarcerated inmates compare to non-incarcerated inmates? While whites have on average the highest mortality rates of any racial group examined in both jail and prison, public health researchers have found a seemingly counterintuitive observation when comparing mortality rates of incarcerated and non-incarcerated populations by race. Specifically, Spaulding and colleagues⁷⁰ followed a population of over 23,000 inmates from Georgia for more than 15 years and found that mortality while incarcerated was lower than post-release mortality (for causes of violence and illness). This effect varied by race,

however. It was only African-American men who experienced significantly lower mortality rates while incarcerated compared to non-incarcerated African-American men in their study.

White men had higher mortality rates while incarcerated compared to non-incarcerated white males, when examining causes such as self-inflicted harm and major illnesses. What do these findings suggest about the health challenges of minority populations in American society? Is social class a factor in access to health care? Do these race-based patterns extend to mental health treatment for incarcerated and non-incarcerated populations?

Americans and whites conveyed in arrest figures and assumed to characterize the general behavior patterns of these groups in American society (see Chapter 2).

Many correctional observers say that even with the numerical dominance of African Americans in correctional facilities, they are still at a disadvantage in terms of the allocation of resources. For example, Jim Thomas argues that race operates in prison culture to guide behavior, allocate resources, and elevate white groups to a privileged status even when they are not numerically dominant.⁷¹

Hostility among Released Inmates

Do the deprivations of prison have a lasting effect on the released inmate? Andy Hochstetler, Matt DeLisi, and Travis C. Pratt offer a contemporary look at the feelings of hostility among released male inmates in an effort to understand how the strains of imprisonment affect the mental health of the released offender and potentially the negative impact on his reintegration.⁷² Their results indicate that hostility among released prisoners can be explained well by the released inmate's level of social support. They hypothesize that social support is the key mediating factor between race, age, self-control (control of temper, impulsivity, risk taking, self-centeredness), and perceptions of prison discomfort (sense of deprivation, loss of privacy, boredom, stress, and so on) in predicting low or high levels of hostility. They find that race does not have a directly predictive effect on hostility, but rather that the impact of race is conditioned by social support. These findings suggest that whatever strains exist in the nonwhite released inmate's experiences, they can be mediated by strong social support from family and friends, resulting in less hostility and arguably more chance at successful noncriminal reintegration into society. In a similar vein, the discomfort of prison as a source of post-release hostility can

be at least partially neutralized by the presence of social support. These findings support a long-standing push by criminologists to get policy makers to recognize the importance of social support mechanisms to successful prisoner reentry.⁷³

Prisoner Visitation and Successful Reentry

William Bales and Daniel Mears⁷⁴ have found that visitation while in prison can impact recidivism. Do such visits maintain social capital (see Chapter 3) or provide increased motivation to reoffend?⁷⁵ Moreover, does the impact of visitation on recidivism vary by gender and race? Specifically, their analysis reveals that visitation has a greater impact on reducing recidivism for males than females and that visitation results in greater recidivism reduction for nonwhite prison inmates (predominantly African American in this study) than for white prison inmates.

Race and Religion

Religion often emerges as a source of solidarity among prison inmates and as a mechanism for inmates to adjust to the frustrations of the prison environment. Although religion may be seen as a benign force that increases inmate self-esteem and contributes positively to the chances of rehabilitation once reentering society, religious activities in prison have been met with criticism by correctional officials and accepted only with federal court intervention. Concern arises when religious tenants seem to espouse the supremacy of one racial group over another or seem to support terrorism.

Jacobs argues that the Black Muslim movement in the U.S. prisons was a response to active external proselytizing by the church.⁷⁶ The most influential Muslim movement was the Nation of Islam, founded by Elijah Muhammad. Darlene Conley and Julius Debro point out that although the Nation of Islam was not particularly competitive with Christianity in the nonprison population, "it had special appeal to incarcerated Black males. In contrast to the various religious denominations, which preached religious repentance and submission and obedience to the U.S. justice system . . . the Nation of Islam preached Black pride and resistance to white oppression."⁷⁷ Prison administrators overtly resisted the movement for several years. The American Correctional Association issued a policy statement in 1960 refusing to recognize the legitimacy of the Muslim religion, based on arguments that it was a "cult" that disrupted prison operations. Jacobs notes that "prison officials saw in the Muslims not only a threat to prison authority, but also a broader revolutionary challenge to American society"⁷⁸ that led to challenges of the white correctional authority.

Consequently, prison officials tried to suppress Muslim religious activities by such actions as banning the Koran. This led to lawsuits asserting the Muslim's right to the free exercise of religion. In 1962, however, the U.S. Supreme Court (*Fulwood v. Clemmer*) ordered the District of Columbia Department of Corrections to "stop treating the Muslims differently from other religious groups."⁷⁹ This decision paved the way for the Black Muslim movement to be seen as a

legitimate religion and taken seriously as a vehicle of prison change through such avenues as litigation.

Native American religious groups have also been granted the right to practice their religions by the federal courts. Joel West Williams, author of "Walking the Red Road in the Iron House" asserts that even though religious rights have been recognized since the late 1970s, it is still hard.⁸⁰ Native American tribes number in excess of 550 and there is no one Native American religion. However, some spiritual traditions are common and present challenges to correctional institutions such as length of hair, the use of fire for sweat lodges and tobacco pipes, and the need for sacred objects. One example of the rise and subsequent influence of Native American religious groups can be found in Nebraska. The Native American Cultural and Spiritual Awareness group is composed of Native American inmates who seek to build solidarity and appreciation of Native American values. This group also pursues change in the prison environment through litigation. The element of inmate-on-inmate violence and guard assaults characteristic of other groups are not apparent here.⁸¹

As the direct result of litigation, Native American inmates won the right to have a sweat lodge on prison grounds and medicine men and women visit to perform religious ceremonies. The significance of this concession is that it happened four years before federal legislation dictated the recognition and acceptance of Native American religions.

Other religious movements have come to concern prison officials and social commentators because of their apparent assertions of racial supremacy. The impact of such values in a closed environment like a prison is obvious, but concerns have surfaced that the impact of these subcultures may reach outside prison walls. Are groups emerging that promote tenets of racial hatred under the guise of religions?

The Five Percent and Asatru movements are two groups that have prison officials concerned. The former group is made up of African Americans, and the latter is made up of whites, each emphasizing tenets of racial purity. Currently, six states censor the teachings of the Five Percenters, whereas other states label all followers as gang members. The movement began in Harlem in 1964 and has spread across the country, claiming thousands of followers. Teachings include the rejection of "history, authority, and organized religion" while calling themselves a nation of Gods (men) and Earths (women). Although the group advocates peace and rejects drinking alcohol and using drugs, correctional officials have linked Five Percenters to violence in some state institutions. Similar to the Nation of Islam, their beliefs stress that "blacks were the original beings and must separate from white society."⁸²

The Asatru followers practice a form of pagan religion based on the principles of pre-Christian Nordic traditions. This religion was officially recognized in Iceland in 1972 and professes nine noble virtues, including courage, honor, and perseverance. However, prison officials claim that as this group has grown in popularity in American prisons, so has racial violence. Some critics charge that "while Asatru is a genuine religion to some followers, these modern pagan groups have been a breeding ground for right-wing extremists" and that they attract white supremacists. Some state prison systems have taken steps to ban Asatru groups,

stating security concerns. Some Asatru followers have surfaced in connection with acts of racial violence. Most notably, perhaps, is the case of John William King, a white male convicted of the dragging death of an African-American man in Jasper, Texas. While serving a prison sentence prior to this crime, King is said to have joined an Odinist group, an Asatru variant. From this affiliation he has tattoos depicting an African-American man lynched on a cross and the words "Aryan Pride."⁸³

Given this example of the negative influence of religion on prison inmates, can U.S. prisons be used to radicalize inmates in the name of religion to perform acts of terrorism? Counterterrorism experts have long asked if inmates in U.S. prisons can be radicalized through Native American religions, Buddhism, Hinduism, and "prison Islam" to serve the interests of international terrorist groups (as distinct from the groups discussed above). Mark S. Hamm has researched the issue of "prison radicalization" focusing on U.S. correctional institutions.⁸⁴ In his published findings he discusses the effects of recruitment by charismatic figures of inmates who have little authentic foundation in religious teachings. He documents a number of cases that have transitioned from inmate "radicalization" to "operational terrorism." The first such documented example in the United States was the Sunni Muslims at New Folsom Prison, who were disrupted in 2005 by the FBI as they plotted to attack military installations and Jewish synagogues. Such plots have been found in other California institutions and in Florida. Hamm asserts that as a result of his two-year study that concluded in 2008, the worst examples of operational terrorism emerged from "the 'bottom-up' influence of prisoners themselves, rather than from the 'top-down' influence of prison outsiders."⁸⁵

Moreover, Hamm finds that a charismatic Islam-influenced figure in New Folsom Prison radicalized a small group of former gang members, while at the same time another Muslim inmate headed an effective countermovement of prisoner de-radicalization.

Prison Gangs

Prison gangs (also referred to as security threat groups) are an integral part of understanding the prison environment and the inmate social system. The U.S. Department of Justice describes prison gangs in the following way:

self-perpetuating criminal entities that can continue their operations outside the confines of the penal system. Typically, a prison gang consists of a select group of inmates who have an organized hierarchy and who are governed by an established code of conduct. Prison gangs vary in both organization and composition, from highly structured gangs such as the Aryan Brotherhood and Nuestra Familia to gangs with a less formalized structure such as the Mexican Mafia (La Eme). Prison gangs generally have fewer members than street gangs and OMGs and are structured along racial or ethnic lines. Nationally, prison gangs pose a threat because of their role in the transportation and distribution of narcotics. Prison

gangs are also an important link between drug-trafficking organizations (DTOs), street gangs and OMGs, often brokering the transfer of drugs from DTOs to gangs in many regions. Prison gangs typically are more powerful within state correctional facilities rather than within the federal penal system.⁸⁶

In the 2013 National Gang Report, published by the National Gang Intelligence Center, law enforcement agencies surveyed report that prison gangs are a unique challenge, as they already exist in a confined setting; however, their influence is noticeable in "outside" settings across the country.⁸⁷ Criminal activities can occur in correctional facilities and on the street, committing any crime to further the group's goals. Prison gang criminal activities are reported to include murder, assaults, witness intimidation, and drug trafficking. This activity can occur outside of the prison facility through alliances with street gangs. Communication between incarcerated inmates and street gangs can occur through coded communications, contraband cell phones, defense attorneys, and corrupt prison staff.

Prison gangs were first identified in prisons in the 1950s, in California and Washington states. By the 1960s, prison gangs began to take on the culture of racial supremacy. Within decades, the federal prison system and nearly all state departments of correction could identify a wide range of racial supremacy prison gangs.

The Florida and Texas prison systems offer examples of the variety of prison gangs present in prisons today, many of whom are built on a foundation of racial supremacy. The Florida Department of Corrections documented six major prison gangs: one was white, two were African American, and three were Hispanic.⁸⁸ The Texas prison system documented eight well-established prison gangs: two were white, two were African American, and four were Hispanic. Following are some representative examples.

Aryan Brotherhood

The Aryan Brotherhood is one of the largest prison gangs and is made up of white males. This group originated in 1967 in the San Quentin State Prison in California. They are present in numerous federal and state facilities. Their membership is dominated by inmates with white supremacist and neo-Nazi ideologies. Identifying tattoos/marks include shamrocks, double-lightning bolts, and swastikas. The group is implicated in criminal enterprises in prison (both violence and contraband) and in illegal activities on the outside. This group is thought to be involved in a number of inmate and staff homicides. Although the group maintains economic arrangements with the Mexican Mafia, they are long-time enemies with groups such as the La Nuestra Familia and African-American prison gangs such as the Black Guerilla Family.

The National Gang Intelligence Center identifies additional white supremacist groups under the names of the Arizona Aryan Brotherhood, the Aryan Brotherhood of Texas, Aryan Circle, Ohio Aryan Brotherhood, Soldiers of the Aryan Culture, Universal Aryan Brotherhood, and Dirty White Boys as emerging

in various U.S. prisons and operating around the country. Further, the Anti-Defamation League released a report in 2016 on White Supremacist Gangs in the United States⁸⁹ adding such groups to the white supremacist prison gang list as the Nazi Low Riders, Fourth Reich, White Aryan Resistance, Brotherhood of White Warriors, and Saxon Knights. They identify white supremacist groups in 42 state prison systems and in federal institutions. The ADL report documents actions of white supremacist prison gangs to include burglary rings, identity theft, as well as arson and violence-based hate crimes.

Black Guerilla Family

The Black Guerilla Family (BGF) is made up of African-American males. It was founded in the San Quentin Prison in California in 1966 by a former Black Panther. This group is distinguished by a predominant political ideology: Marxist/Maoist/Leninist communism. Its goals are to struggle to maintain dignity in prison, eradicate racism, and overthrow the U.S. government. Rival gangs are the Aryan Brotherhood, Texas Syndicate, and the Mexican Mafia. However, the group does form alliances with groups such as the Black Liberation Army and black street gangs.

The FBI has worked recently to dismantle the influence of this group with federal racketeering indictments. In 2013, the U.S. Attorney General prosecuted 25 BGF gang⁹⁰ members in Maryland, including 13 Baltimore City Detention Center officers. Officers were part of a conspiracy to provide cell phones to facilitate drug sale operations and money laundering.

Mexican Mafia

The Mexican Mafia (nickname La Eme) was formed in the late 1950s in the youth offenders' facilities of California by former Los Angeles street gang members. The members are male and Mexican American. This group is often identified as the most active gang in the federal prison system. They are described as having a philosophy of ethnic pride and act to control the drug trafficking in the institutions. They have active drug dealing relationships with the Aryan Brotherhood and urban Latino street gangs. They have intense rivalries with the BGF and black street gangs.⁹¹

The NGIC reports that this group influences street gangs by "establishing a code of conduct and requiring street gangs to pay taxes on illegal activities such as drug sales [in the territory they control it] . . . any street subordinate that violates (Le) Eme rules faces persecution while incarcerated."⁹²

Neta

Neta is a gang composed of Puerto Rican members, reportedly established in 1970 in the Rio Pedras Prison, Puerto Rico. Florida correctional personnel characterizes this group as the second largest prison gang in the state, and while it remains secretive, its actions as a cultural organization are a facade for criminal

behavior.⁹³ Members are characterized as strongly patriotic and revolutionary with a philosophy of Puerto Rican independence from American rule. Members usually wear beads that are red, white, and blue (the colors of the Puerto Rican flag). The gang emblem is a heart pierced by two crossing Puerto Rican flags with a shackled right hand with the middle and index fingers crossed. They have entrenched themselves in the drug trade and participate in extortion, and they have been suspected of performing "hits" for other prison gangs.⁹⁴

Texas Syndicate

The Texas Syndicate originated in the California Department of Corrections over 40 years ago. Once released, these individuals returned to Texas and entered the Texas Department of Corrections as the result of continuing criminal activities. The membership is predominately Hispanic, with the occasional acceptance of white inmates. This group is structured along paramilitary lines, has a documented history of prison violence, and will enforce rule breaking with death. A spinoff associated with this group is the predominantly white gang Dirty White Boys.⁹⁵ The State of Texas recently⁹⁶ documented this group working with the Mexican cartel Los Zetas.

Although little information exists on Native American or Asian/Pacific Islander street gangs, criminal justice personnel remain cautious about their emergence as the presence of street gangs or organized crime is a known avenue of prison gang formation. News reports offer indications of Native American prison gangs that are found in Oklahoma and some Canadian prisons. Similarly, Asian/Pacific Islander prison gangs are raising concern in California and Washington states.

One of the management issues associated with dealing with gangs in prison is the tension created by integrating prison populations that prefer to be racially segregated. While self-sought racial segregation is a dominant feature of most residential areas in the United States, there are legal issues that structure such segregation decisions in the prison and jail environment. See "In the Courts: Racial and Ethnic Segregation in Prison: By Law or by Choice?" (Box 9.5) for additional insight into this issue.

Box 9.5 In the Courts: Racial and Ethnic Segregation in Prison: By Law or by Choice?

A series of court decisions have declared *de jure* racial segregation in prisons to be unconstitutional. As late as the 1970s, prisons in the South and even some in states such as Nebraska segregated prisoners according to race as a matter of official policy. Although such policies have been outlawed, inmates often self-segregate along racial and ethnic lines as a matter of choice. Most recently, the racial segregation policies of the California Department of Corrections (DOC) have been under judicial review.

(Continued)

In 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Johnson v. California* ruled that the DOC could not use racial classifications in prison to assign mandatory segregated housing based on race. The DOC was using a race/ethnic-based classification that required mandatory residential segregation for an inmate's stay in the reception center and for the initial pairing (60 days) of the two-inmate room assignment. The DOC argues that this policy prevents violence within facilities because of the extensive nature of race-based security threat groups (gangs such as the Aryan Brotherhood, Mexican Mafia, and BGF). In short, correctional administrators were arguing that "separate, but equal" treatment of inmates was justified to prevent violence among inmates. Administrators note that all racial/ethnic groups are segregated at the initial phases of admission; "the DOC policy further subdivided ethnic groups so that Chinese Americans were separated from Japanese Americans and Northern California Hispanics from Southern California Hispanics." Administrators also noted that no other areas in the facilities were segregated, such as the dining hall and the recreation yards.

The U.S. Supreme Court's opinion striking down this policy was written by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, where she states for the majority that in the implementation of policies such as these "there is simply no way of determining . . . what classifications are in fact motivated by illegitimate notions of racial inferiority or simple racial politics. We therefore apply strict scrutiny to all racial classifications to 'smoke out' illegitimate uses of race by assuring that [government] is pursuing a goal important enough to warrant use of a highly suspect tool."⁹⁷

Justice O'Connor also stated in her opinion that "when government officials are permitted to use race as a proxy for gang membership and violence without demonstrating compelling government interest . . . society as a whole suffers." She further contends that the Federal Bureau of Prisons supports the assertion that "racial integration leads to less violence in institutions and better prepares inmates for reentry into society." The courts' recommendation is that "race-neutral" remedies be pursued to handle the problems associated with inmate violence. Correctional administrators should strive to avoid policies that may breed racial intolerance.

Despite this 2005 ruling, the state of California continued to use a race-based segregation policy in response to riots. Thompson (2014) reports that of the 600 lockdowns imposed by the institutions within the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in typical year, 200 of them were based on the inmates' race, rather than actual evidence of the inmates participating in the riots or even being affiliated with the prison gangs suspected in each situation.⁹⁸ The CDCR argued that the practice of segregating inmates of a particular race after violent episodes in an institution was used to prevent future violence by prison gangs (typically racially homogenous). Inmates argued that it was unfair to segregate all inmates of a particular race, regardless of their actual involvement in riotous behavior, thus, violating their rights under the Fourteenth Amendment. In 2014, as a result of pressure by the U.S. Department of Justice, California agreed to end this race-based segregation policy, replacing it with a point system that can be used to determine if specific individual inmates have committed a disturbance warranting lockdown. Prior participation in riotous behavior and known prison gang affiliation can be taken into account in this new procedure.

Given the clear judicial and executive branch messages that correctional administrators cannot pursue "separate, but equal" policies of race/ethnic-based segregation to reduce prison violence, the issue remains—to what extent should integration be *required* in work, housing, recreation, and education assignments? Should administrators allow inmates to make decisions on the basis of personal preference, even

If these decisions result in self-segregation? Racial tensions are a serious problem in most prisons; forcing white and African-American inmates to share cells, when they are actively hostile to each other, could bring these tensions to a boil. In one instance, a white inmate felt so threatened by the politicized racial atmosphere in his prison that he filed suit asking a federal court to reverse the integration requirement and return to segregation.

However, if correctional administrators bowed to the wishes of inmates on this matter they would create two problems. First, they would be actively promoting racial segregation, which is illegal. Second, they would undermine their own authority by acknowledging that inmates could veto policy they did not like.

What is the best strategy for administrators in this difficult situation? You decide.

Women in Prison

Studies addressing the imprisonment of women are less numerous than those for men, but they are increasing in number. Within this growing body of research, the issue of race is not routinely addressed either. When race is assessed the comparisons are generally limited to African Americans and whites. The evidence is mixed on the issue of whether race effects the adjustment of women to prison life.

Doris L. MacKenzie explains the behaviors (conflicts and misconduct reports) of women in prison on the basis of age and attitudes (anxiety, fear of victimization).⁹⁹ She comments that the four prisons she examined are similar in racial composition, but she does not comment on whether she explored differences by race in relation to attitudes and aggressive behavior. Such research ignores the possibility that race may influence one's perception of prison life, tendencies toward aggression, age of inmate, or length of time in prison. MacKenzie and others do, in later works, address race in the demographic description of the incarcerated women. In a study of one women's prison in Louisiana, for example, they found that nonwhite women were severely overrepresented among all prisoners and even more likely to be serving long sentences. Their findings indicate unique adjustment problems for long-term inmates, but they fail to incorporate race into their explanatory observations about institutional misconduct. This omission seems contrary to the observation that nonwhite women are more likely to have longer sentences.¹⁰⁰ Race has specifically been recognized as a factor in research addressing the issue of sexual deprivation among incarcerated women. Robert G. Leger identifies racial dimensions to several key explanatory factors in the participation of female prisoners in lesbianism.¹⁰¹ First, the demographic information reveals that most lesbian relationships are intraracial and that no distinctions emerged by race in participation in the gay or straight groups. Second, once dividing the group by the characteristics of previous confinements (yes or no) and age at first lesbian experience, the pattern of even representation of whites and African Americans changed. African-American females were overrepresented in the group indicating previous confinement, and the information about age at first arrest indicates that African-American females are more likely to have engaged in their first lesbian act prior to their first arrest.

CONCLUSION

The picture of the American correctional system is most vivid in the colors of black and white, but it also has prominent images of brown. Basic questions such as “Who is in prison?” and “How do individuals survive in prison?” cannot be divorced from the issues of race and ethnicity. The most salient observation about minorities and corrections is the striking overrepresentation of African Americans in prison populations. Explanations for this overrepresentation are complex. Prominent trends today include the decrease in correctional populations since 2007.

The most obvious possibility is that African Americans have higher rates of criminality than other groups, such as whites. This explanation has been challenged by the change in the racial composition of incarcerated populations as seen in Figure 9.2. What explanations account for the increasing percentage of African Americans in the U.S. prison population? Michael Tonry challenges that the stability of African-American arrest rates since the mid-1970s to the explosive African-American incarceration rates of the same period, as a “malign neglect.” He argues that a better explanation may be the racial impact of the “War on Drugs,”¹⁰² while Michelle Alexander argues that prison is the New Jim Crow.¹⁰³

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your position on allowing correctional inmates access to college courses while in prison? How about access to financial aid for college after the sentence is complete? Think of the cost of prison as about \$30,000 a year and consider how education can lead to rehabilitation.
2. In what ways is the indigenous justice paradigm in conflict with the principles of the traditional, adversarial American criminal justice system? In what ways do the principles of Native American justice complement more mainstream correctional initiatives? Are these values more compatible with some offenses than others? More appropriate for some types of offenders than others?
3. Learn more about the larger issue of radicalization of homegrown jihadist terrorist groups by exploring the content of the U.S. Violent Rehabilitation and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act 2007 (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/110th-congress/house-bill/1955/text>). Is this concern about prison inmates still relevant today? What research would you propose to more fully explore this issue in the wake of the newest international terrorist trends?
4. Should post-prison reintegration programs be race neutral? Were the factors that lead to offending and incarceration race neutral? In what ways should issues of race and ethnicity be considered when creating policies to facilitate inmate readjustment to society upon release?
5. Some cities are exploring paying criminals not to reoffend. Explore Richmond, California, and Washington, DC, as examples.