

Prison Subculture and Prison Gang Influence

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Discuss the prison subculture for inmates and correctional officers.
2. Compare importation theory with exportation theory.
3. Identify different aspects of prison culture that explain how offenders and officers view the world around them.
4. Discuss how professionalization and the diversification of correctional staff have impacted the prison subculture.
5. Discuss the impact that prison gangs have had on prisons, including the traditional prison subculture.
6. Identify the 13 gangs listed in this chapter as the primary prison gangs in the United States.
7. Explain what prison systems do to control gang problems that occur in their facilities.

I will stand by my brother
My brother will come before all others
My life is forfeit should I fail my brother
I will honor my brother in peace as in war

Aryan Brotherhood Oath

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides students with a very unique aspect of the world of corrections. Students will learn that within the institutional environment, there is a commonality of experiences that arise between those who are involved; this is true for both inmates and staff. Indeed, many people may not be aware that, in fact, the mind and the world of the inmate often affect the mind-set of security personnel who work with the inmate. In essence, there is an exchange of beliefs and perspectives that often come together to produce a unique fusion between the two groups. This exchange of beliefs creates a unique subculture that is the product of both inmate norms being brought in from the outside and those taken from the prison to the outside community.

It is important for students to understand that prison staff are not immune to the effects of the profound social learning that occurs, and, over time, as they become more enmeshed in the prison social setting, they begin to internalize many of the beliefs and norms held by the prison subculture. While this may seem to be counterproductive and/or even backward from what one might wish within the prison environment, this is an inevitable process as prison staff find themselves interacting with the street mentality on a day-to-day basis. In actuality, this is a maturing of correctional workers as they begin to see a world that is not necessarily black and white but instead has many shades of gray. Issues become more complicated than being simple “good guy and bad guy” situations as correctional workers work with offenders on a personal level. The nuances and differences between different offenders tend to complicate what initially might seem like simple decisions.

Because correctional staff interact with these offenders on a daily basis, a sense of understanding develops both among correctional staff and between staff and the inmate population. Inmates come to expect certain reactions from correctional staff, and, just as certain, staff come to expect certain reactions from inmates. Amidst this are informal rules of conduct where loyalty to one’s own group must be maintained, yet, at the same time, individual differences in personality among security staff and among inmates will affect the level of “respect” that an officer will get from the inmate population, and, for inmates, their conduct will also affect the amount of respect that they gain from others serving time. Likewise, correctional staff learn which inmates have influence, power, or control over others, and this may affect the dynamics of interaction. Further still, some inmates may simply wish to do their time whereas others produce constant problems; to expect security staff to maintain the same reaction to both types of inmates is unrealistic.

The dynamics involved in inmate-inmate, inmate-staff, and staff-staff interactions create circumstances that do not easily fall within the guidelines of prison regulations. Further, as a means of maintaining control of an inmate population that greatly outnumbers the correctional staff, many security officers will learn the personalities of inmates and will become familiar with the level of respect that they receive within the world of the convict. Likewise, and even more often, inmates watch and observe officers who work the cell block, the dormitory, or other areas where inmates congregate. They will develop impressions of the officer, and this will determine how inmates react to the officer. The officer is essentially labeled by the inmate population, over time, as one who deserves respect or one who deserves contempt. In some cases, officers may be identified as being too passive or “weak” in their ability to enforce the rules. In such cases, they are likely to be conned, duped, or exploited by streetwise convicts.

The various officer-inmate interactions impact the daily experiences of the individual officer and the inmate. Understanding how these various nuances impact these interactions is critical to understanding how and why prisons may operate as they do. In prisons that have little technology, few cameras, and shortages of staff, the gray areas that can emerge in the inmate-staff interactional process can lead to a number of ethical and legal conundrums. It is with this in mind that we now turn our attention to factors that create and complicate the social landscape of American prisons.

IMPORTATION THEORY

The key tenet of **importation theory** is that the subculture within prisons is brought in from outside the walls by offenders who have developed their beliefs and norms while on the streets. In other words, the prison subculture is reflective of the offender subculture on the streets. Thus, behaviors respected behind the walls of a prison are similar to behaviors respected among the criminal population outside of the prison. There is some research that does support this notion (Wright, 1994).

Regardless of what research may exist on this matter, most any correctional officer and most any inmate knows that the background of the offender (as well as the correctional officer) has a strong impact on how that person behaves, both inside and outside of a prison; this simply makes good intuitive sense. There are two key opposing points to consider regarding importation theory. First, the socialization process outside of prison has usually occurred for a much longer period of time for many offenders and is, therefore, likely to be a bit more entrenched. Second and conversely, the prison environment is intense and traumatic, being capable of leaving a very deep and lasting influence upon a person in a relatively short period of time. While this second point may be true, most offenders in prison facilities have led a lifestyle of offending and will tend to have numerous prior offenses. These offenses are only those for which they have been caught; there are still a wide range of criminal and noncriminal behaviors that may be unknown to the correctional system. This means that inmates will likely have led a lifestyle of dysfunction that is counter to what the broader culture may support. Thus, these individuals come to the prison with years of street life and bring their criminogenic view of the world to the prison.

It has been concluded by some (Bernard, McCleary, & Wright, 1999; Wright, 1994) that though correctional institutions may seem closed off from society, their boundaries are psychologically permeable. In other words, when someone is locked up, they still are able to receive cultural messages and influences from outside the walls of the prison. Television, radio, and mail all mitigate the immersion experience in prison. Visitation schedules, work opportunities outside of the prison, and other types of programming also mitigate the impact of the prison environment. Indeed, according to Bernard et al. (1999), “prison walls, fences, and towers still prevent the inside world from getting outside, [but] they can no longer prevent the outside world—with its diverse attractions, diversions, and problems—from getting inside” (p. 164). This statement serves as a layperson explanation of importation theory that is both accurate and practical.

INDIGENOUS PRISON CULTURE AND EXPORTATION THEORY

In contrast to the tenets of importation theory is the notion that prison subculture is largely the product of socialization that occurs inside prison. It was the work of Gresham Sykes (1958) that first introduced this notion in a clear and thorough manner. His theory has been referred to as either the deprivation theory of prisonization or the indigenous model of prison culture. Sykes (1958) referred to the pains of imprisonment as the rationale for why and how prison culture develops in the manner that it does. The **pains of imprisonment** is a term that refers to the various inconveniences and deprivations that occur as a result of incarceration. According to Sykes, the pains of imprisonment tended to gather around five general areas of deprivation, and it was due to these deprivations that the prison subculture developed, largely as a means of adapting to the circumstances within the prison. Sykes included the following five categories as being particularly challenging to men and women who do time:

1. The loss of liberty.
2. The loss of goods and services readily available in society.
3. The loss of heterosexual relationships, both sexual and nonsexual.
4. The loss of autonomy.
5. The loss of personal security.

Inmates within the prison environment essentially create value systems and engage in behaviors that are designed to ease the pains of deprivation associated with these five areas. Research has examined the effects of prison upon inmates who are forced to cope with the constrained prison existence.

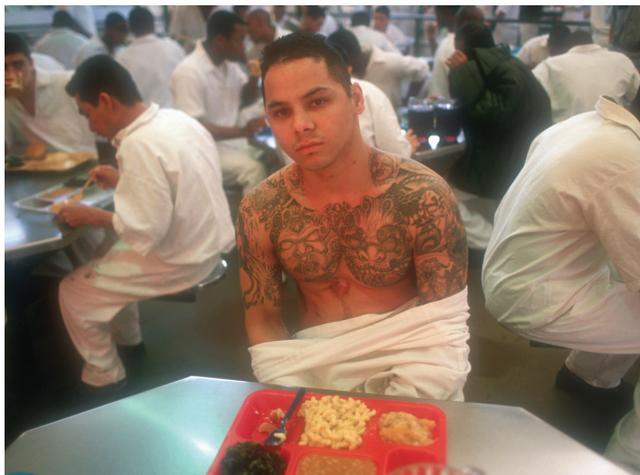
PHOTO 10.1

These items are the “Prison Blues” line of clothing, manufactured by inmates in the correctional system of the state of Oregon. Their slogan is “Made on the inside, worn on the outside.”



PHOTO 10.2

This inmate proudly displays his gang-affiliated tattoos.



For instance, Johnson and Dobrzanska (2005) studied inmates who were serving lengthy sentences. They found that, among those inmates who coped maturely to prison life, incarceration was a painful but constructive experience. This was particularly true for inmates who were serving life sentences (defined to include offenders serving prison terms of 25 years or more without the benefit of parole). As a general matter, lifers came to see prison as their home and made the most of the limited resources available in prison; they established daily routines that allowed them to find meaning and purpose in their prison lives, lives that might otherwise seem empty and pointless. The work of Johnson and Dobrzanska points toward the notion that, regardless of the environment, humans can be highly adaptable.

However, aside from the need to cope with prison life, there is also the idea that many of the mannerisms and behaviors observed among street offenders have their origins within the prison environment. Indeed, certain forms of rhyming, rap, tattoos, and dress have prison origins. For example, the practice known as “sagging” where adolescent boys allow their pants to sag—exposing their underwear—originates from jail and prison policies denying inmates the use of belts (because they could be used as a weapon or means to commit suicide). This practice is thought to have been exported to the streets during the 1990s as a statement of African American solidarity as well as a way to offend White society.

Other examples might be the notion of “**blood in—blood out,**” describing the idea that in order for inmates to be accepted within a prison gang, they must draw blood (usually through killing) in an altercation with an identified enemy of the gang. Once in the gang, they may only leave if they draw blood of the gang’s enemy sufficient to meet the demands of the gang leadership or by forfeiting their own blood (their life). This same phrase is heard among street gangs, including juvenile street gangs, reflecting the fact that these offenders mimic the traditions of veteran offenders who have served time in prison. Consider also certain attire that has been popular, off and on, during the past decade, such as when Rhino boots became popular footwear, not due to their stylishness or functionality, but because they were standard issue for working inmates in many state prison systems.

THE INMATE SUBCULTURE OF MODERN TIMES

In all likelihood, the inmate subculture is a product of both importation and indigenous factors. Given the complicated facets of human behavior and the fact that inmates tend to cycle in and out of the prison system, this just seems logical. In fact, attempting to separate one from the other is more of an academic argument than a practical one. The work of Hochstetler and DeLisa (2005) represents an academic attempt to negotiate between these two arguments. These researchers used a sophisticated statistical technique known as structural equation modeling to analyze the effects of importation and indigenous deprivation theories. They found evidence supporting both perspectives but found that the key factor that determined which perspective was most accountable for inmates’ adaptation to prison subculture was their level of participation in the inmate economy (Hochstetler & DeLisa, 2005).



Journal Article Link 10.1

Read about inmate adaptation to imprisonment.

This is an important finding because it corroborates practical elements just as much as it navigates between academic arguments regarding subculture development. The prison economy is one of the key measures of influence that an inmate (and perhaps even some officers) may have within the institution. An inmate who is active in the prison economy is one who is likely to have currency within the prison system. This currency can come in the form of actual money shifted in the inmate's commissary accounts, the possession and trafficking of cigarettes, ownership of desirable items, power over other inmates who can be prostituted for the pleasure of those willing to pay, or any number of other potentially valuable resources that can be brokered within the inmate economy.

Regardless, the more resources an inmate has, the wealthier he or she will be in the eyes of the inmate population. Oftentimes, those inmates who are capable of obtaining such wealth are either stronger, more cunning, or simply smarter (usually through training and literacy, such as with jailhouse lawyers) than most other members of the inmate population. Thus, these inmates are likely to be more adept at negotiating the prison economy, and they are likely to have more influence within the prison subculture. They are also more likely to be successfully adapted to the prison culture (the influence of indigenous prison cultural factors) while being able to procure or solicit external resources (being a source of exportation outside the prison walls). In short, those who master the economy often have effective and/or powerful contacts both inside and outside of the prison. This is consistent with the findings of Hochstetler and DeLisa (2005).

THE CONVICT CODE AND SNITCHING

Going beyond the arguments related to this subculture's association with factors internal and external to the prison facility, the subculture itself has numerous characteristics that are often portrayed in film, in academic sources, and among practitioners (see Focus Topic 10.1). Chief among these characteristics is the somewhat fluid code of conduct among inmates. This is sometimes referred to as the **convict code**, which is a set of standards in behavior attributed to the true convict—the title of *convict* being one of respect given to inmates who have proven themselves worthy of that title. Among academic sources, this inmate code emphasizes oppositional values to conventional society in general and to prison authorities in particular. The most serious infraction against this code of conduct is for an inmate to cooperate with the officials as a snitch. A **snitch** is the label given to an inmate who reveals the activity of another inmate to authorities, usually in exchange for some type of benefit within the prison or legal system. For example, an inmate might be willing to tell prison officials about illicit drug smuggling being conducted by other inmates in the prison in exchange for more favorable parole conditions, transfer to a different prison, or some other type of benefit.

Among all inmates, it is the snitch who is considered the lowest of the low. In traditional “old school” subcultures (i.e., those of the 1940s through the 1970s), snitches were rare and were afforded no respect. Their existence was precarious within the prison system, particularly because protection afforded to snitches was not optimal. During riot situations and other times where chaos might reign, there are recorded incidents where inmates have specifically targeted areas where snitches were housed and protected from the general population. In these cases, snitches were singled out and subjected to severely gruesome torture and were usually killed within the facility. Perhaps the most notorious of these incidents occurred at the New Mexico Penitentiary in Santa Fe. This prison riot occurred in 1980 and resulted in areas of the prison being controlled by inmates. These inmates eventually broke into “cell block 4,” which housed known snitches in the prison. The details of how the snitch-informers were tortured and killed shocked the public conscience as news media provided reports.



PHOTO 10.3

Jonathan W. Hilbun is an inmate at Richwood Correctional Center who is a dorm mentor in the Successful Treatment and Recovery (STAR) program. He stands here in front of a bookshelf that is part of the inmate library for the STAR program.



Video Link 10.1

Watch a video about prison economy.



Video Link 10.2

Watch a video about snitching in prison.



FOCUS TOPIC: 10.1

Focus From the Inside With Jonathan Hilbun, Inmate with Richwood Correctional Center.

The hyenas are the inmates who only prey on the weak inmates, and they will back off if the weaker inmate strikes back. But, if the weak one does not fend for himself, then the hyenas will devour him. A good description of a hyena attack is as follows:

A new inmate arrives at a prison and is fresh on the dorm. There are all kinds of rules that go unspoken among the men in the dorm, and, in conjunction with the rules and regs of the prison, this is penitentiary law. The new inmate does not know the code, so he breaks a law and a “penitentiary G” checks him on it. If the new inmate does not fight the penitentiary G, then the hyenas will move in as well. Usually, the main hyena will move in first to take the bite, and, by this time, all have figured that the new inmate will not bite because they observed him get called out to fight and he did not. However, the main hyena will venture forth just in case the new inmate gives them a surprise.

The first form of engagement is based on the offer of false protection status. This is largely a psychological game where the hyenas try to instill fear into the new inmate, known as the “prey,” and offer to assist him. A smart prey will turn the situation on the hyenas by fighting back against the leader. However, most new inmates are nervous and edgy, so if they are scared enough they will do anything the hyenas require. Sex, money, and whatever else the prey can offer are all on the table. But, if the prey fights the first hyena that approaches, then the penitentiary G who called him out at first will usually develop a little respect for the new inmate. This gives the new inmate some breathing space on the dorm, and his stay is then much easier. On the other hand, if the prey does not fight, then he is likely to go “under someone’s wing,” which can be good or bad, depending on who the protector is.

Another interesting point regarding inmate behavior, particularly hyena behavior, has to do with the inmates’ interactions with security. In many cases, hyenas will have no respect for authority but, at the same time, be hesitant to directly challenge authority. Rather, they will tend to use subversive or indirect means of ridiculing the officer. For instance, when the “Freeman” (another term for a prison guard) comes on the dorm to count, an inmate may holler something across the dorm that is crude and crass. Comments may include “F—k that count,” or “You don’t even know how to count ‘cause you flunked kindergarten,” or “This dorm don’t need no more police—go find a real crisis,” or any other number of comments intended to disrespect the officer.

It is at this point that the officer must make a stand, and he really needs to do it quickly. If he or she does not, then the other hyenas will join along and will taunt and tease the officer to see how much they can get away with. This can actually get pretty bad as it may even set up an ongoing officer-inmate dynamic that can go on for the remainder of the officer’s employment at the facility, if such misbehavior is left unchecked enough times.

In response, the officer will usually react by applying some type of punitive measures to inmates on the dorm. For instance, he will usually restrict the TV privileges and secure the phone lines as well, if the facility allows inmates to make phone calls. Likewise, he may decide to do a “special count” that requires all inmates to sit or lie in their own rack, prohibiting them from getting up and walking about the dorm. It can get pretty frustrating, over time, to sit in the bed for prolonged periods of time, and the officer knows this. It is doubly frustrating for those inmates who did not make the comment and who do not really respect the cowardly actions of the hyena.

During this time, the officer will usually leave the dorm and go back to the control room or observation post, leaving the dorm under observation until his return. Those who do not comply with the officer’s order to stay on their rack will likely “catch a charge,” meaning that they will get written up for disciplinary action. After a period of time, some inmates will begin to mumble and make statements like “Whoever said that coward sh__ better just take their charge,” or “I gotta call my people, so you better just take your charge and get on with it,” or “Whoever said that sh__ gots to get up outta here.” This type of behavior can be the beginning of a long day or night, and it can even shape the meaning of life for this dorm and the officer(s) involved if it turns into a long-term problem.

Usually, one of the inmates will finally tell the officer the identity of the hyena who made the unruly comments, and, in many cases, this results in a type of understood bond of respect between the officer and the inmate. Though there is nothing necessarily spoken between the two, the officer knows that the inmate is going against the common wisdom of the prison subculture in doing this, and, at the same time, the inmate knows that the officer cannot get compliance until he or she breaks through the veneer of the hyenas who have openly and publicly challenged his or her authority and mocked the officer for all to see. It is a delicate interplay, in this middle-ground area, between officer and inmate, where both groups must learn to coexist with one another within a set of informal and formal parameters.

Naturally, it takes quite a bit of courage to tell on another inmate. Inmates usually will view the act of disclosing the identity of the person who commits an infraction as an act of snitching. Snitching, as we all know, is not respected in jail or prison and can be dangerous. This is usually not respected, but, in cases where a hyena has acted in a cowardly manner and where the rest of the dorm is made to pay for his action, respect is lost for the hyena, especially if he does not step forward and take his charge, so to speak. In addition, there is one other aspect that can make this approach actually respectable in the eyes of other inmates. This is when the informing inmate talks to the officer on behalf of the dorm and makes it clear that he cannot and will not take any incentives or benefits for the information. If he also makes it clear that he is not trying to get too cozy with the officer but, instead, is trying to simply live under the conditions of *détente* that exist within the prison subculture between inmates and officers, this will be considered acceptable. This is especially true if other inmates know, in advance, that this inmate will likely inform on behalf of the dorm.

At this point, the hyena is obviously crossed out among others on the dorm and is held in even lower regard by other inmates as a coward who sidesteps his charge and allows others to “pay his lick,” so to speak. In some ways, this process of maintaining some semblance of decency and tangible respect for institutional authority is a means of redemption for the inmate and the dorm. In this regard, it is viewed that these men are capable of reform on at least a base level, contrasting with the typical saying that “there is no honor among thieves.” In essence, even the inmate subculture has standards that the hyena has failed to maintain. Thus, the lack of respect goes to the hyena, and, so long as the officer conducts his job in a firm but fair manner, the officer is afforded his due respect.

It is worth mentioning that Mr. Hilbun has been incarcerated for 18 and a half years in a variety of institutions, including Angola and Richwood Correctional Center.

SOURCE: Jonathan Hilbun (personal interview, December 2, 2011). Used with permission.

However, one thing should be noted about snitches in the modern world of corrections; they are much more frequently encountered. Though there is a supposed code against snitching, the truth of the matter is that during the 1990s with the emergence of the War on Drugs, more and more inmates consented to being informants with law enforcement as a means of securing better sentencing deals. Further, the new breed of inmate that was observed during this time did not reflect behavior that was “honor bound” like the older inmates in prison. Though there continued to be verbal opposition to inmate snitching, wardens and other prison administrators noted the sharp increase in informants within their institutions during this time. It would appear that among modern-day inmates, the willingness to do one’s time with honor is a lower priority. Many veteran prison officials and older inmates (particularly inmates who are serving life sentences) contend that this is reflective of modern society where people are not as accustomed to being inconvenienced—a fast-food and instant coffee generation.



Prison Tour Video Link 10.1

Watch an interview with two inmates.

SEX OFFENDERS AND PUNKS

Sex offenders, particularly child molesters, are also afforded no respect in prison. In the early to mid-1900s, child molesters typically had a high mortality rate and were often abused by other inmates. However, these types of offenses are becoming more prevalent and are more often detected by the justice system. Thus, there are higher proportions of these types of offenders in most prison systems. Further still, many prison systems have developed therapeutic programs that separate these offenders from the general population. Though this may be true nowadays, many are not placed in a separate treatment program and instead can be found within the general population of the prison.

For those inmates who are sex offenders, many are singled out by prison gangs to be “turned out.” Turning out occurs when an inmate is forced to become a punk for the prison gang. The term **punk** is common prison vernacular for an inmate who engages in homosexual activity, but is a derogatory term that implies that the inmate is feminine, weak, and subservient to masculine inmates. In other words, the punk is considered a woman in prison and is often forced to engage in sexual acts for the pleasure of one or more inmates. Sex offenders in prison are disproportionately represented within this prison population and are considered to be at high risk for this type of victimization.

THE STOIC DEMEANOR AND THE USE OF SLANG

Other ideals within the prison subculture include the notion that inmates should maintain themselves as men who show no emotion, free from fear, depression, and anxiety. Basically, the “strong silent type” is the ideal. Today’s young offenders may attempt to maintain this exterior image, but the effects of modern society (prevalence of mental health services, reliance on medications, and technological advances, as well as a fast-changing society) often preclude this stereotypical version of the convict from being reality for many inmates. Likewise, inmates are expected to refrain from arguments with other inmates. The general idea is that they must do their own time without becoming involved in the personal business of others. Getting involved in other people’s business is equated to being a gossip, and this also is considered more of a feminine behavior. Thus, to be manly in prison, inmates must mind their own business.

Inmates who stick to these two rules of behavior are generally seen as in control and not easily manipulated. Essentially, they are seen as psychologically strong of will and also fairly wise to the prison world. In some cases, these inmates may be referred to as a true convict rather than an inmate. In the modern prison culture, the title of **convict** refers to an inmate who is respected for being self-reliant and independent of other inmates or the system. Convicts are considered mature and strong, not weak and dependent on others for their survival. Convicts are considered superior to the typical inmate, and, while not necessarily leaders of other inmates (indeed, most do not care to lead others, but simply wish to do their own time), they are often respected by younger inmates who are themselves becoming acculturated into the prison environment.



Prison Tour Video Link 10.2

Watch two inmates discuss their relationships with other prisoners.

APPLIED THEORY 10.1

Labeling Theory as a Paradigm for the Etiology of Prison Rape: Implications for Understanding and Intervention

According to labeling theory, group reactions are the key determinant to events later considered antisocial in nature. Labeling theory essentially asks why some acts are labeled deviant when others are not (Akers, 2000). This theory asserts that social group reactions serve to make certain behaviors deviant, regardless of the individual context in which they occur (Vold, Bernard, & Snipes, 1998). This begs the question as to who creates the label associated with deviant behavior. The answer to this inquiry lies with those who hold the power within a given social structure. Some sociologists have asserted that the more powerful members of society create the standard for labels applied to individuals who are less socially prominent (Schur, 1973). From this perspective, this manuscript will serve to demonstrate the labeling processes involved in homosexual rape within prisons.

In order to understand labeling theory, one must also understand the underlying power structures within a given social order where the labeling process occurs. This is crucial because the powerful members of a society impose labels upon those who are less powerful (Schur, 1973). The label is determined by the standards of the affluent and upwardly mobile, with those at the lower echelons being nearly, though not entirely, powerless to “throw off the yoke” of the labeling process (Becker, 1963).

For the upper and middle classes, power can effectively be expressed through economic, vocational, and academic avenues. For the lower classes, however, many of these routes to upward social mobility are denied, leaving only direct physical means for obtaining power or control (Miller, 1958). Correspondingly, a standard based on physical prowess and ability can develop (Messerschmidt, 1999). Many perform physically oriented jobs, and likewise find the physical realm of achievement to be their best hope in moving upward through the social order (Messerschmidt, 1999). Such an example might be the “ghetto kid” turned pro football or basketball star, or the rural small-town kid turned Marine Corps hometown hero. These images themselves are stereotypes that serve to maintain the power structure as well as the means of achievement.

With the prison population being drawn disproportionately from the less affluent members of society, it should come as no surprise that prison norms may, in various subtle ways, exemplify power status norms held by the lower classes (Miller, 1958; Tucker, 1981). The members of the “prison society” are even less socially powerful than their socioeconomic counterparts who are not incarcerated. For these members, physical prowess and coercion become the primary method of achieving power in the prison setting. Thus, aside from some rare exceptions, such as successful “writ writers” or inmates who have affluent family members, those who are physically powerful tend to also be the most socially powerful within the prison. Within the male inmate subculture, the expression of physical prowess as power



is frequently paired with roles of masculinity, which, in turn, reinforces the subculture of physical prowess within the prison setting (Messerschmidt, 1999).

The meaning of masculinity is different in prison than in mainstream society. In prison the meaning is reinforced as men in this location act to affirm their masculinity in the limited ways that are available (Messerschmidt, 1999). This results in a modified form of “hegemonic masculinity,” which emphasizes negative attitudes toward authority, control over others, aggressiveness, and social reinforcement for violent acts (Messerschmidt, 1999). Previously learned sexual and social styles of masculinity, as exercised in the broader society, are adapted and altered within prison so that the male inmate does not lose his position of dominance and control. To fail to do so results in the male inmate accepting a subservient role, or as it is termed in the prison subculture, the role and label of a “woman” (Tucker, 1981). In essence, sexual violence among inmates is a statement of power, status, and control.

It is through both the means and the threat of violence that dominance and control are achieved, with the victim ultimately being given the label of “punk.” This is true even in cases that prison officials may term “voluntary” or “consensual” sex. This connection between forced and voluntary homosexuality was illustrated in interviews conducted by Davis (1982), during which he found that “consensual” homosexuals tended to be subjugated heterosexuals who had been forced to engage in sex to avoid physical harm. This process, referred to as being “turned out” or “punked out,” effectively redefines and labels the victim’s role in prison as that of a punk, or subjugated homosexual (Tucker, 1981). Thus, the homosexual orientation and label placed upon the deviant is not one of self-choice or personal preference, but is forced upon him by more powerful members of the inmate subculture.

Labeling Theory as a Paradigm for Prison Rape Etiology

According to Lemert (1999), the deviant is a product of gradual, unconscious processes that are part of socialization, especially subcultural socialization. Lemert also asserted that the personality change that occurs from accepting and internalizing a deviant label is not always gradual but can be sudden. As Lemert (1999) states, “it must be taken into consideration that traumatic experiences often speed up changes in personality” (p. 386). This is especially true for inmates who are victims of prison gang rape in which multiple assailants attack and repeatedly rape an inmate-victim. For the victim of gang rape, entering into a sexual relationship with one man in return for protection can be an adaptive coping mechanism for survival within the prison subculture.

Lemert (1999) further states that “when a person begins to employ his deviant behavior or role . . . as a means of defense, attack, or adjustment to the overt and covert problems created by the

consequent societal reaction to him, his deviance is secondary” (p. 388). In the previous example, the initial gang rape can be thought of as the source of primary deviance, whereas the deliberate decision to engage in “consensual” homosexuality with one partner essentially results in a more solidified self-identity. But this process creates a degree of cognitive dissonance within the individual, which, when resolved, tends to leave the victim more willing to engage in future homosexual conduct. Indeed, this dissonance is the crux of this adjustment process where the victim’s original identity is juxtaposed against his or her newly ascribed identity, resulting in an eventual psychological metamorphosis from the point of primary deviance to that of secondary deviance through future acts of homosexuality (Festinger, 1958; Lemert, 1999). Throughout the process of coping with this dissonance, typical acute symptoms of this trauma, such as intrusive recollections and/or dreams about the assault, intense distress over stimuli that remind the victim of the assault, hypervigilance, difficulties sleeping and eating, and unexplained or exaggerated outbursts of anger, are likely to be experienced. Those who cannot successfully navigate this dissonance present with the previous symptoms on a chronic level, coupled with more serious and self-damaging psychological impairments associated with rape trauma (e.g., self-mutilation and suicide). The fact that these victims must repetitively subject themselves to subsequent victimization naturally exacerbates their likelihood for long-term psychological impairment and emotional injury.

But the victim of male prison rape will find it necessary to adjust to this new role since the sexual values of mainstream society are completely inverted within the prison subculture. The inmate perpetrator who willingly engages in predatory homosexual activity would typically be given the marginalized label of “homosexual” or “bisexual” in the broader society. Ironically, however, within the prison there is exactly the opposite effect with a corresponding increase in social status and “manhood” for the perpetrator of sexual assault. Within the prison subculture, rapists are considered masculine conquerors of effeminate punks (Weiss & Friar, 1974). The aggressor is not held as homosexual in orientation but is simply assuming a position of power within the subcultural norms of prison life. The victim of the prison sexual assault, however, suffers an injury greater than the sexual assault alone, as the victim’s entire social position within the prison is effectively compromised and redefined.

Over time, many inmates who are forced into the subjugated role of punk learn that certain creature comforts can be obtained if they are willing to comply with sexual demands. Thus, many come to identify with and dress the part, to act the part, and even to rationalize their role. Indeed, this role can frequently go well beyond that of simple sexual services, extending to a relationship of complete and total servitude. Many will submit to cooking, cleaning, mending, and other activities typically held to be “feminine” by the prison subculture as well as mainstream society. Some inmates, upon acceptance of the punk label and resolution of the dissonance associated with secondary deviance, will even go so far as to involve themselves in competitive hypergamy, or the practice of achieving upward mobility through “marriage” within the prison subculture (Tucker, 1981).

While these inmates will frequently rationalize their activity as one of survival, their participation can lead them to a complete internalization of the role. With the label fully applied, many “homosexual” inmates will thus make the most of their remaining

time in prison and will strive to obtain whatever securities their role can bring them. When the inmate begins to see himself as a punk and resolves his feelings of dissonance, the label becomes a source of self-identity. While the label of punk denotes lower status within the inmate pecking order, the punk learns to fulfill the role in a manner that allows a relatively trouble-free existence, so long as he continues to live the role. Thus, what was once a forced or coerced label effectively becomes a label with which the victimized inmate identifies and which he accepts as a definition of his self.

Structural Issues

Lemert (1999) maintains that role conceptions of the individual must be reinforced by the reactions of others. Many inmates have found that the institutional system simply does not care, lending tacit approval to sexual violence through a form of conscious disregard. According to Scacco (1975), “the shocking fact is that there is both overt and covert implication of officers in the attacks that take place in penal institutions” (p. 30). Likewise, Weiss and Friar (1974) assert that “prisoners are convinced that prison rape is an integral part of the prison punishment system,” adding that inmates frequently contend that “prison rape is sanctioned by prison authorities. They view it as the ultimate method of control and punishment” (p. X). In this manner, members of the prison staff essentially serve to perpetuate and exacerbate the labeling process for “homosexuals” within the prison.

What is more, prison staff, both wittingly and unwittingly, serve to further marginalize the inmates labeled as punks when separating them from the general inmate population. These protective measures have a negative side effect since they can further reinforce the label punks are given. Likewise, the inmate punk is hesitant to go to prison authorities for assistance, due to further negative labels of being an informant or a snitch. Similarly, many inmates may be hesitant to discuss these issues with prison mental health staff for fear that such disclosures will be provided to authorities, ultimately making them a snitch for seeking psychological services for their difficulties. Such labels can have deadly results for the inmate. Thus, the inmate who seeks to avoid the labeling process finds himself with few avenues of escape or emotional assistance. The inmate either must fight off assaults or be cursed with one adverse label or another, if not both “punk” and “snitch.” In either case, the prospects are frequently grim, with the most likely result being that the punk label is assumed by the inmate.

An inmate with the label of punk is cut off and isolated from participating in conventional activities that the dominant inmate enjoys. Once the status of punk is given, it is effectively ironclad, and the punk finds himself marginalized within the prison population, leading him to seek out others who share a similar set of circumstances (Tannenbaum, 1938). The role of punk is one that allows the “weaker” inmate within the prison power structure to exist, but through an exploitative (rather than consensual) relationship. The powerful residents within this inmate subculture have thus effectively labeled the punk, who “voluntarily” assumes the role. The superior masculine role, desired and maintained by the majority of inmates, has been denied the punk, who is now considered deviant by both inmate subculture and larger social norms.

SOURCE: Hanser, R. D. (2003). *Labeling theory as a paradigm for the etiology of prison rape: Implications for understanding and intervention*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections. Retrieved from <http://nicic.gov/Library/019245>.

Within prison systems, there evolves a peculiar language of slang that often seems out of place in broader society. This slang has some consistency throughout the United States but does vary in specific terminology from state to state. The language often used by inmates, including slang, is also affected by their racial and gang lineage. For instance, members of the Crips or the Bloods will have certain terms that usually are only used by their groups, often as a means of identifying or denigrating the other group. Likewise, Latino gang members in the Mexican Mafia and/or the Texas Syndicate will also tend to have their own vernacular, with much of this being either Spanish phraseology or some type of unique slang. Terms like *punk* (an inmate turned out in prison), *shank* (a knife), *bug juice* (referring to psychotropic medications), and *green light* (referring to clearance to assault another inmate) are commonly known forms of slang found in most prison systems.

MAINTAINING RESPECT

In nearly every prison around the United States, one key fundamental issue is paramount among inmates: respect. This one word is perhaps the most important concept to understanding the inmate subculture. Inmate status revolves around the amount of respect given to an inmate and/or signs of disrespect exhibited toward an inmate. **Respect** is a term that represents an inmate's sense of masculine standing within the prison culture; if inmates are disrespected, they are honor-bound to avenge that disrespect or considered weak by other inmates. Any failure to preserve their sense of respect will lead to a question of the inmates' manhood and their ability to handle prison, and will lead others to think that they are perhaps weak. The fixation on respect (and fixation is an appropriate description in some prisons) is particularly pronounced among African American gang members in prison. This is also glorified in much of the contemporary gangsta music that emerged in the 1990s and continues today. This concept has become prevalent in the modern-day prison world. Because inmates have little else, their sense of self-respect and the respect that they are able to maintain from others is paramount to their own welfare and survival.

In addition, it is usually considered a sign of weakness to take help or assistance from another inmate, at least when one is new to the prison environment. Indeed, inmates will be tested when new to the prison world; they may be offered some type of item (e.g., coffee or cigarettes) or provided some type of service (getting access to the kitchen), but this is never for free or due to goodwill. Rather, inmate subculture dictates that a debt is thus owed by the *newbie* (a term for inmates who are new to a prison). New inmates may be required or coerced to do "favors" for the inmate who provided them with the good or service. For example, they might be asked to be a "mule" for the inmate or the inmate's gang. A **mule** is a person who smuggles drugs into prison for another inmate, often using his or her own body cavities to hide the drugs from prison authorities. In other cases, the inmate may be forced to become a punk for that inmate or for an entire prison gang.

THE CON AND THE NEVER-ENDING HUSTLE

Among inmates, there is the constant push and pull between the need to "con" others and, at the same time, the need to be streetwise enough to avoid being conned. Naturally, this constant and contradictory set of expectations completely impedes the ability for inmates to develop any sort of true trust; they must always remain vigilant for the potential "hustle" within the prison system. The term **hustle** refers to any action that is designed to deceive, manipulate, or take advantage of another person. Further, consider that the very term *convict* includes the word *con*, which implies that the individual cannot and should not be trusted. Thus, convicts are, stereotypically, always on the hustle, so to speak.

Inmates who are able to "get over" on others and or "skate" through work or other obligations in the prison system are considered particularly streetwise and savvy among their peers. In fact, some prison systems, such as the Texas prison system, have a term for this concept, known as "hogging." **Hogging** is a term that is used to imply that a person is using others for some type of gain or benefit, manipulating others into doing work, or fulfilling obligations on his or her behalf. When inmates are able to find some means to manipulate others into doing their dirty work, they are active in the art of the con. The process by which they encourage or manipulate a person to provide such a service is all part of the hustle.

A classic portrayal of this type of logic, though not a prison example, can be found in the story *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain. In this classic, Tom Sawyer, at one point, convinces other

boys in the area that painting a fence (a chore that was assigned to young Tom) was a fun activity. So fun was it, according to Tom, that he would not allow anyone else to help him unless they paid him to do so. Ultimately, other boys paid Tom for the “opportunity” to paint the fence and join in the fun. Once several other boys had been solicited and had paid their fee for the privilege of painting this fence, Tom slipped off to spend the money that he had procured from those he had duped into doing his own assigned work. This example demonstrates all the fine points of the con, the hustle, and the act of hogging others.

THE IMPACT OF THE INMATE SUBCULTURE ON CUSTODIAL STAFF

Perhaps one of the most interesting dynamics within prison occurs between the inmates and the prison staff. This area of discussion is both complicated and paradoxical, in many respects. The paradox involved with this dynamic is that, while on the one hand, inmate subculture restricts inmates from “siding” with officers and officer culture restricts officers from befriending inmates, there is a natural give-and-take that emerges between both groups. In fact, a symbiotic relationship usually emerges between prison security staff and the inmate population. The **symbiotic prison relationship** exists between correctional staff and inmates as a means of developing mutually compliant and informal negotiations in behavior that is acceptable within the bounds of institutional security yet, at the same time, allows inmates to meet many of their basic human needs. This relationship is grounded in the reality of the day-to-day interactions that prison security staff have with inmates who live within the institution.

Because prison is a very intense environment that has a very strong psychological impact on both inmates and staff, it is only natural that this type of relationship often emerges. While the rules of the institution are often clearly written, these rules are often not pragmatic for the officers who must enforce them. For example, a rule to restrict inmates from having more than one blanket in their cell may, on the face of it, seem easy enough to enforce. However, consider the following scenarios when considering rule enforcement:

Scenario 1

A veteran officer with many years of experience may find that a given inmate, Inmate X who upholds the convict code and has respect within the institution, has the flu during the winter. The officer has access to additional blankets, and this is known among the inmates. Inmate X, in this case, tends to mind his own business and usually does as he is expected when the officer is on duty. The officer, in this case, may decide to offer Inmate X an additional blanket and would do so with no expectation that the inmate give something in return. Likewise, the inmate (as well as others watching) would know that the officer’s kindness should not be taken for weakness, or no further empathy will be shown to convicts.

Scenario 2

This same veteran officer, having many years of experience, finds that Inmate Y who does not uphold the convict code and generally has average clout (at best) within the prison culture, has the flu during the winter. Inmate Y sometimes causes problems on the cell block for other officers and sometimes is sarcastic with officers. The veteran officer, in this case, would likely not give an additional blanket to Inmate Y, even if Inmate Y were to be courteous enough to ask for the additional blanket. In most cases, Inmate Y would know better than to ask, since he knows that he does not honor the convict code or work within the commonsense bounds of the symbiotic prison relationship. If he were to ask and especially if he were to push the issue, the veteran officer would inform him that “the rules are the rules” and would indicate that he needs to keep quiet and go to sick call when that option is available. Further discourse from Inmate Y would result in comments from the veteran officer that would imply that he is being a troublemaker and that he is not doing his time “like a man,” leading to a loss of respect among others on the cell block. This would likely shame Inmate Y and cause him to lose status, yet, at the same time, the veteran officer would likely gain status among the inmates as being firm, streetwise, and cognizant of subcultural norms. Because he does not give in to Inmate Y, he would be perceived as strong and capable, not subject to manipulation and not an easy mark.



Journal Article Link 10.2
Read more about the impact of inmate subculture on custodial staff.

PHOTO 10.4

Sergeant Tatum talks with inmates regarding the organization of an upcoming function in a meeting hall of the prison. The means by which officers and inmates talk to each other sets the tone for respect or disrespect in the prison.



Obviously, Inmate X and Inmate Y are being given different standards of treatment. This is because implicit within the symbiotic prison relationship is the notion that “I will do my time and leave you to do your time,” which is understood by veteran inmates and officers alike. Regardless of whether it is overtly stated or simply presumed, veteran officers will tend to leave convicts and/or trouble-free inmates unbothered and may, in some cases, even extend some degree of preferential treatment, within acceptable boundaries that allow them to maintain respect on the cell block. However, this does not mean that they will do so for all inmates, but they instead reserve the right to use discretion when divvying out the paltry resources available within the prison. In short, these veteran officers become

effective resource and power brokers as a means of gaining compliance and creating an informal system of fairness that is understood informally among the inmates. Essentially, this type of veteran officer operates with this understanding:

I will let you do your time, but you will let me do my time—one shift at a time.

This concept is important because it creates a connection between both groups; they are both in a noxious environment, and both individuals have a role that they must uphold. Yet, at the same time, some degree of give-and-take is necessary to avoid extremes in rules that do not, ultimately, create just situations. So long as inmates allow the officer to generally do his time, one shift at a time, he will, in turn, leave them to serve their time without problems. On the other hand, if an inmate does not honor this type of understanding, he should expect no mercy or consideration from the prison security staff; the rules are the rules, and any sense of discretion will simply cease to be acted upon.

Officers who master these types of negotiations tend to gain respect from inmates and even from other officers. They may sometimes be referred to as “convict bosses” by inmates. The term **convict boss** or **convict officer** denotes an identity where the correctional officer has developed a keen understanding of convict logic and socialization and uses that knowledge to maximize control over his assigned post. This term is a form of respect that has been gained among inmates for that officer and generally comes with time, experience, sound judgment, and a cunning personality that is not easily deceived or manipulated. The officer is not perceived as weak but is instead thought to possess a good degree of common sense among inmates within the facility.

One important note should be added to this discussion. Students should keep in mind that the examples in the prior scenarios present a veteran officer with several years of experience. The use of this type of discretion by newer officers who do not have sufficient time and experience working with the inmate population will not have the same result. If a newer or younger officer attempted such discretion, he would likely be seen as a “sucker” and someone who could be easily marked for future exploitation. This person would not be perceived to understand the fine nuances in the gray areas of discretion within prison rules, norms, and mores. This person would also not likely be trusted among his peers who, generally, would expect him to stay “by the book” until he developed the level of expertise to make distinctions between blurred circumstances. This officer would likely be labeled “weak” among inmates and might even be considered an “inmate lover” by other officers. These labels should be avoided in hard-core institutions because once they are applied, it is very difficult (if not impossible) to be rid of them.

Lastly, the mannerisms that are displayed, both by inmates and officers, often reflect the type of upbringing that one has had and also tend to belie the value system from which that person operates. Within the prison, this is important because during an inmate or beginning officer’s first few weeks of indoctrination to the prison experience, he or she is being “sized up” or appraised by others who observe them. Both the officers and the inmates begin to determine if the person is likely to be easily influenced and/or manipulated. This formative period whereby inmates and staff are socialized into the prison

culture is important due to the influences of the prison subculture that include the inmate's subculture, the officer's subculture, and the need to master the symbiotic prison relationship between the two.

PRISONIZATION

Prisonization is the process of being socialized into the prison culture. This process occurs over time as the inmate or the correctional officer adapts to the informal rules of prison life. Unlike many other textbook authors, the author of this text thinks that it is important to emphasize that correctional officers also experience a form of prisonization that impacts their worldview and the manner in which they operate within the prison institution. Within his text on prisonization, Gillespie (2002) makes the following introductory statement:

Prison is a context that exerts its influence upon the social relations of those who enter its domain. (p. 1)

The reason that this sentence is set off in such a conspicuous manner is because it has profound meaning and truly captures the essence of prisonization. However, for this chapter, students should understand that the influence of the prison environment extends to *all* persons who enter its domain, particularly if they do so over a prolonged period of time. Thus, prisonization impacts both inmates and staff within the facility. While the total experience will, of course, not be the same for staff as it is for inmates, it is silly to presume that staff routinely exposed to aberrant human behavior will not also be impacted by that behavior.

Indeed, to some extent, prison is a traumatizing experience, even for those who work there. For security staff who must be involved in altercations (e.g., uses of force, the need to contain riots, observing and responding to inmate-on-inmate assaults), the impact of prisonization can be particularly traumatizing. The impact that prisonization has upon staff as well as inmates is an important consideration since it does, in part, dictate the contours of the guard subculture, which stands in competition with the inmate subculture. The prison experience can and often does impact relationships that guards have with persons who do not work in the prison setting, such as their spouses and/or children.

With respect to inmates, Gillespie (2002) found that both the individual characteristics of inmates and institutional qualities affect prisonization and misconduct. However, he found that individual-level antecedents explained prisonization better than did prison-level variables. This means that experiences of inmates prior to being imprisoned were central to determining how well inmates would adapt to the prison experience. For this text, this contention will also be extended to prison guards; their prior experiences and their individual personality development prior to employment within the prison will dictate how well they adapt to both the formal and informal exchanges that occur within.

THE GUARD SUBCULTURE

This area of discussion is both controversial and open to a great deal of debate. However, one reason for developing this text and providing a discussion on this particular topic is to provide students with a realistic and no-nonsense appraisal of the world of corrections, particularly as practiced in the prison environment. In providing a glimpse of the guard subculture (and this text does contend that a guard subculture exists), it is important to keep in mind that the specific characteristics of this subculture vary from prison system to prison system and even from prison to prison within the same state system. The reasons for this are manifold but are mostly due to the fact that, unlike inmates, guards are not forced to remain within the environment all day and night each day of the week. Rather, guards have the benefit of time away from the institution, and they can (and sometimes do) transfer from facility to facility, depending on their career formation.

Further, since guards are routinely exposed to external society (contact with family, friends, the general public, the media, etc.), they are able to mitigate many of the debilitating effects of the prison environment. Likewise, their integration into society mitigates the depth to which prison socialization will impact them personally and professionally. Thus, there is a greater degree of



Prison Tour Video Link 10.3

Watch an interview with prisoners about prison culture and behavior.

variability in the required adaptations of prison guards when compared to inmates. In addition, the type of institution that they find themselves working within can also impact this socialization. A guard who works at a maximum-security or violent institution will likely experience a different type of socialization than a guard assigned to a minimum-security dormitory. All of these factors can impact how the prison culture affects individual officers and the degree to which they become enmeshed into the guard subculture.

The discussion that follows is intended to address guard culture in maximum-security prisons or those institutions that have histories of violence among inmates. Larger facilities that have more challenging circumstances tend to breed the type of subculture that will be presented here. Though modern-day correctional agencies seek to circumvent and eliminate these subcultural dimensions, they nonetheless still exist in various correctional facilities.

The popular Hollywood image of prison guards is that they are brutal and uncaring and that their relationships with inmates are hostile, violent, and abusive. However, this is a very simplistic and inaccurate view of prison guards that simply makes good movies but does not reflect the reality behind why many people go to work at a prison. For many, it is a stable job available to persons in rural areas where few other jobs exist, producing a workable wage for the effort. For others, prison work may be a stepping-stone to further their career, particularly if they are interested in criminal justice employment. Indeed, the author of this text worked at Eastham Unit in Texas while attending school at a state university in the area, and this was a common practice among many students of criminal justice or criminology studies. This means that, at least in this context, many of the prison guards employed in the region actually possessed an above-average education, and they most likely possessed depth and purpose that exceeded the Hollywood stereotype.

The author of this text would like to acknowledge the work of Kelsey Kauffman (1988) in relaying the overall processes behind prison guard socialization and the development of prison guard subcultures. Like Kauffman, the author of this text encountered a similar transition experience where, over time, the aloof and distant feeling between himself and his fellow coworkers grew into a feeling of camaraderie and close connection in identity. To this day, this author considers himself, first and foremost, a prison guard at heart. However, it is Kauffman who so eloquently and correctly penned the formation and description of the guard subculture, and it is her work that will be used as the primary reference for this section.

According to Kauffman (1988), the guard subculture does not develop due to prisonization, indigenous factors, or importation of values. Rather, the culture is a product “of a complex interaction of importation, socialization, deportation, and cultural evolution” (Kauffman, 1988, p. 167). Kauffman notes that prison guards have a distinct and identifiable subculture that separates them from other professionals. The central norms of this subculture dictate how they proceed with the daily performance of their duties, such as with the example scenarios provided earlier when discussing the impact of the inmate subculture on custodial staff. In describing the prison guard subculture, Kauffman produced a basic structure that captures the main tenets behind this subculture. This same structure is presented in this text due to the author’s own perception that Kauffman’s description of prison guard subculture is reflective of most encountered throughout the United States. The following are the central tenets of the prison guard subculture’s structure:

1. Always go to the aid of an officer in distress. This is the foundation for cohesion among custodial staff. This tenet also can, in times of emergency, provide justification for violating norms within the bureaucratic system. This tenet applies to all guards, regardless of how well accepted the officer in distress may or may not be. This norm is key to officer safety and is fundamental. If an officer fails to uphold this norm, he or she will likely be ostracized from the group and will be treated as an outsider.

2. Do not traffic drugs. This is also considered fundamental because of the danger that it can create as inmates fight for power over the trade of these substances. In addition, the use of drugs is illegal and does not reflect well on officers who are supposed to keep such offenders behind bars. If an officer violates this tenet, it is considered justified within the subculture to inform authorities. While the guard subculture may allow members to inform authorities, most will not do so due to feelings of betrayal. However, it would not be uncommon for guards, amongst themselves, to put pressure on the officer who violates this norm through threats, intimidation, and coercion. In addition, officers will likely isolate the officer from interactions and will not invite him or her to functions outside of work. The officer will be treated as *persona non grata*.



Audio Link 10.1

Hear more about prison guard subcultures.

3. Do not be a snitch. In many respects, this is a carryover from the inmate subculture. This comes in two forms of prohibition. First, officers should never tell information to inmates that they can use to get another officer in trouble. Generally speaking, officers are expected to not discuss other officers, their business, or their personal lives with inmates. The second prohibition applies to investigative authorities of the prison system. Officers are expected to stay silent and not divulge information that will “burn” another officer, particularly when the Internal Affairs Division (IAD) is investigating an incident. While it is expected that officers will not knowingly place their coworkers in legally compromising situations where they must lie for their coworkers (this would be considered abuse of the prohibition that places others in potential legal peril), it is still expected that coworkers not snitch on their fellow officer.

This tenet is perhaps one of the most difficult tenets because, in some cases, it puts officers in a position where they must lie to cover their coworkers, even when they were not directly involved. This can occur during investigations and even if officers are brought to court in a lawsuit. Officers who maintain their own behavior to comply with institutional rules still cannot be assured that they will be safe from liability because, in order to be trusted by their coworkers, they must be willing to “cover” for their fellow officer in circumstances where trouble might arise. This is regardless of whether the officer initiating the situation was or was not acting responsibly.

4. Never disrespect another officer in front of inmates. This tenet reflects the importance of respect and the need to maintain “face” within the prison culture. Officers who are ridiculed or made to look weak in front of inmates have their authority subject to question by inmates since inmates will talk, and the word will get around that the officer is not respected (and therefore not well supported) by his peers. This sets the officer up for potential manipulation in the future.

5. Always support an officer who is in a dispute with another inmate. This applies to all types of instances ranging from verbal arguments with inmates to actual physical altercations. Simply put, one’s coworker is always right, and the inmate is always wrong. However, behind the scenes, officers may not get along and, in fact, may disagree on different issues related to the management of inmates. Indeed, one officer may conduct a write-up for disciplinary of an inmate while the other overtly objects when in the office out of earshot of the inmate population. The reasons for this may be many, but generally older more seasoned officers will be adept at informally addressing inmate infractions whereas junior officers will tend to rely on official processes. However, given the threat of employee discipline that exists within the system and given the need for control of the inmate population, most officers will ultimately maintain loyalty during the final stages where their official support is necessary.

6. Do not be friends with an inmate. This is another tenet that has complicated shades and distinctions. For veteran officers, this tenet is not much of a concern. They have already proven themselves to be reliable and/or are known to not be snitches. Further, most veteran officers are capable of enforcing the rules, regardless of their prior conversations with an inmate. However, it is not uncommon for veteran officers (and even supervisors) to have one or two inmates whom they talk with, at least on a topical level. Though they may not consider themselves friends with the inmate, they may allow that inmate some privileges and opportunities that others would not, simply because they have developed a symbiotic prison relationship with that inmate that has existed for a long period of time. In return, these inmates may do the officer small favors like reserving higher-quality food from the kitchen for that officer or even, in prisons where the subculture has truly created permeable boundaries, letting the officer know when supervisors or others are watching him or her while on duty. This allows the officer to operate his or her cell block in a more leisurely manner and, as such, the entire cell block benefits from the officer’s laid-back approach.

7. Maintain cohesion against all outside groups. This tenet applies to members of the supervisory ranks, the outside public, the media, and even one’s own family. This tenet is based on the belief that the general public does not understand the pressures placed upon officers and that the media tend to be sympathetic to the plight of the inmate, not the officer. Officers do not wish to implicate their family members and also do not want them to fear for their safety; thus details are seldom disclosed. Further, the administration is not seen as trustworthy but instead is seen as being politically driven. Administrators care only about their careers and moving up the corporate ladder and are too far removed from the rank-and-file to still understand the complexities of the officer’s daily concerns. It is therefore better that officers not talk about what goes on in the institution to persons not within their ranks.



State Rankings Link 10.1
Correctional Officers and
Jailers in 2009.

The above tenets, based on the work of Kauffman (1988), perhaps most clearly summarize the prison guard subculture. Again, this scheme may not be exactly as presented at all prisons, but in most larger and most older facilities, remnants of this thinking will have consensus among security staff.

As we have seen in prior chapters, numerous lawsuits emerged during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, with their aftermath greatly impacting the field of corrections in the 1990s as well as the current millennium. Prison systems had to modify and adjust their operations to be considered constitutional, and this required that these systems incorporate strong incentives for organizational change among their prison staff. An emphasis on professionalism emerged throughout the nation, and, as the War on Drugs resulted in a swelling inmate population, so too swelled the number of prison guards who were hired within state prisons. Indeed, the elimination of building tender and trusty supervision schemes used in many southern states necessitated the recruiting and hiring of prison security staff. Likewise, during the 1990s, the term *prison guard* became outdated and was replaced with the official job classification of correctional officer in many state prison systems. The American Correctional Association advocated for the professionalization of correctional officers, and states began to adopt the standards set by that organization.

PROFESSIONALIZATION OF THE CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

During the 1970s, amidst the increase in hiring that began to take place, concern arose regarding the training and competency of correctional officers. Indeed, in 1973 the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals encouraged state legislators to take action to improve the education and training of correctional officers. Further, correctional administrators cited the need for security staff to study criminology and other disciplines that could aid in working with difficult populations. The National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals (1973) also indicated that “all new staff members should have at least 40 hours of orientation training during their first week on the job, and at least 60 hours additional training during their first year” (p. 494). This represents some of the first national-level attempts to mandate professional training and standards for correctional officers. Though these first steps were certainly headed in the correct direction, progress was slow. In 1978, it was determined that only half of all states were actually meeting the 40-hour entry-level training requirement, and even fewer were meeting the recommended 60 hours of training during the officer’s first year.

The educational progress of correctional officers had not improved much during this time. Roughly 13% of the agencies did not even require a high school diploma, and the remaining 77% required only that—college was not even a remote consideration. Josi and Sechrest (1998), during a period when correctional officer standards were becoming a matter of priority, commented that “the job of correctional officer over

the years has not been seen as requiring education at even the high school level, much less beyond” (p. 9). This comment was made in 1998, which was only about 14 years prior to the writing of the current text. Given the importance of this type of work, it is clear that more intensive training should be provided to correctional officers, and it is also clear that the acquisition of higher education should be encouraged.

The American Correctional Association has, throughout the past decade, generated a major push for professionalization of the field of corrections. This has resulted in a pattern of steadily increasing entry-level educational requirements consistent with a broader trend toward correctional officer professionalism. However, the term *professionalism* itself has been touted about by various correctional systems with much of an attempt to articulate


Reference Link 10.1
Read about correctional officers’ professionalization.

PHOTO 10.5

Brittany Naron is completing her bachelor’s degree in criminal justice while employed as a correctional officer. She has also received POST-level training in corrections and completed internship experiences while working and attending college. Officer Naron was a student in one of the author’s courses.



CORRECTIONS AND THE LAW 10.1

Nonlethal Force and Criminal and/or Civil Liability

Daniel Gordon and Eric Newsome, correctional officers at the Greenville Federal Correctional Institution, were indicted by a federal grand jury for violating the civil rights of an inmate and then lying to cover up the crime. Wan J. Kim, Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division and Acting United States Attorney Randy Massey, for the Southern District of Illinois announced today. The indictment alleges that the two defendants assaulted the inmate in his cell using fists and handcuffs to strike and injure the inmate. The grand jury charged both men with conspiracy to violate the inmate's civil rights and with filing false reports after the incident. Additionally, the grand jury charged Newsome with lying to a special agent of the United States Department of Justice's Office of the Inspector General. A trial date has been set for September 11, 2006.

Each defendant faces a maximum term of ten years in prison on each of the civil rights counts, ten years on the conspiracy count, and 20 years on each count of filing a false report. Newsome potentially faces an additional five years in prison for lying to the special agent of the Office of the Inspector General.

The indictment resulted from an investigation by Special Agent Kimberly Thomas from the Chicago Field Office of the Inspector General, Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard H. Lloyd from the United States Attorney's Office, and Trial Attorney Michael Khoury from the Civil Rights Division.

An indictment is an accusation and is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the United States has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The Civil Rights Division is committed to the vigorous enforcement of every federal criminal civil rights statute, such as those laws that prohibit the willful use of excessive force or other acts of misconduct by law enforcement officials. The Division has compiled a significant record on criminal civil rights prosecutions in the last five years. Since FY 2001, the Division has increased the conviction rate of defendants by 30 percent.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice. (2006). Two men indicted for violating the civil rights of an inmate at Greenville Federal Correctional Institution and lying to cover up the crime. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2006/July/06_crt_462.html.



what this specifically means. While corrections is pointed in a progressive direction, there is definitely much more work to be done. Further, given the widespread budget cuts common in many states throughout the nation, money and resources for improved training and educational standards may be lacking. Yet, this is at a time when it is needed the most. How well prison systems fare in the future is yet to be seen, but one thing is clear: A failure to train and educate this workforce will only ensure that the potential corrective efforts of prison systems are minimized, and this then creates a potential risk to the public safety of society as a whole.



Audio Link 10.2

Hear about the affects of state budget cuts.

RACIAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Prior to the 1980s, prisons tended to be in rural areas and to hire staff from within the local area. The demographics of correctional staff in the United States have changed greatly from the late 1980s to the current time. This change toward a more multicultural setting is reflected in broader society and most all criminal justice agencies. This trend toward multiculturalism and diversity will only continue, both with the staff who are employed and with the inmates who are supervised.

The diversity that has developed in the correctional workforce has followed, in step, the move toward professionalization of the correctional profession. Indeed, prior to this shift, women and minorities were considered a threat to the cohesion of the correctional work group. During this time, women and minorities were often not treated fairly in the working environment, being subject to discrimination and harassment. Many African American and Latino American correctional staff reported bias in the workplace, and this was even more pronounced among women in corrections. However, the professionalization of corrections has opened the door for more fair and balanced work environments, and correctional staff have become more sensitized to different perspectives in the workplace.

Further, administrators of correctional facilities have made attempts to hire persons from diverse backgrounds since it has become increasingly clear that this is a benefit when contending with a diverse inmate population. This reflects the shift in prison operations where the primary purpose of prison is to simply respond to problematic behavior with force. Rather, the use of effective communication skills as a means of preventing problems and addressing issues in a more professional manner requires a sense of cultural competence among agencies and certainly among staff. One means of improving agency cultural competence is through the hiring of diverse workers who can relate to the inmate population's own diversity. Having officers of similar racial groups, with proficiency in various languages that are spoken in the facility, and from similar customs and beliefs enhances the ability of the agency to address problematic issues related to racial and/or cultural barriers. Thus, diverse work groups can mitigate many of the negative effects of the prison subculture as well as gangs that tend to be structured along racial lines.

FEMALE CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS

The correctional field has traditionally been stereotyped as a male-dominated area of work. In later chapters, students will read more about women in the correctional field; an entire chapter is devoted to female offenders in correctional systems (Chapter 11). In fact, as with the current chapter, there is a general subculture that exists within women's prison facilities, and this subculture is separate and distinct from the male prison subculture. Likewise, the issues that confront women who work in corrections tend to be different as well. We will explore the various aspects related to both inmates and correctional workers who are female in the upcoming chapter.

For now, it is simply important to note that women are increasingly becoming represented within the field of corrections. While women have had a long history of conducting prison work, they have typically been placed in clerical positions, teaching roles, support services, or the guarding of female offenders. They have not historically worked in direct supervision of male offenders. It was not until the late 1970s and/or early 1980s that women were routinely assigned to supervise male inmates (Pollock, 1986). The introduction of women into the security ranks has greatly impacted the organizational culture of many prison facilities and the subculture within them.

Women tend to not have the same aggressive social skills that men in prison tend to exhibit. Further, the prison environment tends to emphasize the desire to "be a man" and also denigrates the role of women as inferior. This means that women were not widely accepted among correctional officers and/or inmates. Since women have become integrated into the correctional industry, the male-oriented subculture has been weakened. The introduction of women into the security ranks, along with the inclusion of diverse minority groups, the professionalization of corrections, and the proliferation of prison gangs, has eroded the influence of the male-dominated and male-oriented convict code. While the convict code still exists and has its adherents, it is no longer considered a primary standard of behavior in many prison facilities but instead has become more of an ideal.

PROFESSIONALIZATION OF CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS AND THE CONVICT CODE

As indicated earlier in this chapter, the convict code, though still alive, is not universally found in all institutions, and newer generations of inmates do not seem to stay as loyal to the code as do prior generations. The professionalization of the corrections field has also limited the effectiveness of the convict code (Mobley, 2011). Authorities' unwillingness to allow inmates to enforce the convict code and to essentially police themselves (as with the building tender system discussed in prior chapters) has removed an important element of power from inmate groups (Mobley, 2011). The enforcement of rules through violence is no longer tacitly or implicitly permitted as it once was among prison guards (Mobley, 2011). Inmates who seek to enforce this code now get punished in some institutions and/or transferred as a means to disrupt their power.

The growing number of institutions in most state prison systems has enhanced the trend toward professionalization in corrections (Mobley, 2011). This has likewise resulted in more interest in this



Prison Tour Video Link 10.4

Watch an interview with a female correctional officer.



Video Link 10.3

Learn more about the challenges faced by female correctional officers.



Journal Article Link 10.3

Read about the legitimacy and authority of correctional officers.

area of employment, particularly in 2009 and beyond where a depressed economy has made this area of employment more desirable for many of the working and middle class. Bureaucratic tendencies to centralize expanding prison systems and staff institutions with better-trained personnel stem largely from the same causes that have boosted incidences of snitching among the younger generation of inmates (Mobley, 2011). The criminalization of drug use during the 1990s and the prioritization of law enforcement resources against drugs—known as the War on Drugs—are the primary factors that have influenced prison systems to grow and professionalize, and have also aided in the slow but sure decline of the convict code within the inmate subculture (Mobley, 2011).

THE IMPACT OF GANGS UPON PRISON SUBCULTURE

Gang members are another group that tends to not adhere strictly to the tenets of the convict code (Mobley, 2011). This is particularly true among Latino and African American gangs. African American and Latino American gangs, which are the majority racial lineages represented among prison gangs, tend to view prison stints as just another part of the criminal lifestyle. As such, they have no true use for the convict code since it is their gang family who will protect them, not their reputation according to the convict code. Their alliances and their allegiance are uniformly tied to outside gangs that operate within prison walls (Mobley, 2011). So many young inner-city African American males and young Latino American males have been incarcerated that they are able to find some of their homeboys or hombres in nearly any correctional facility within their state. (Mobley, 2011) Thus, the young gang member does not, in actuality, need to trouble himself with adapting to the prison subculture (Mobley, 2011).

With their homeboys, gangsters comprise a distinct subculture whether on the street or in prison (Mobley, 2011). They “look out for” one another and protect each other, living in a nearly familial lifestyle. Few African American gang members speak to inmates outside of their gang “set,” at least about anything of substance. Though most would claim that they do not snitch to “the man,” and most would say that they just wish to do their own time, their true loyalty is to their gang family. Gang members “run with their road dogs” from “the hood” and meet up with each other in prison, forming bonds and making plans for when they reunite in their respective communities, the turf for their street gang activity (Mobley, 2011). This constant cycle, in and out of prison, creates a seamless form of support for many gang members.

THE IMPACT OF CROSS-POLLINATION: RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STREET GANGS AND PRISON GANGS

It is perhaps the emergence of gang life that has been the most significant development within prison subcultures throughout various state systems. In many texts on prisons and/or the world of corrections, there is a section on prison gangs. In most cases, these texts tend to present gang membership as isolated to the prison environment, with little emphasis on the notion that gang membership is permeable, found inside and outside the prison. Thus, while inmates may be gang members inside the prison, they do not simply discard membership once their sentence is served or when they are paroled out into society. Rather, their membership continues, and, in many cases, they will continue to answer to leadership who may still be locked up in prison. In other cases, they may be required to report to other leaders on the outside of the prison walls who will continue criminal work on behalf of the gang, plying their criminal trade on the streets and in broader society.

Conversely, many prison gang members were prior street gang members. Thus, an offender may engage in street gang criminal activity for a number of years, with short stints in jail being frequent. As noted earlier in this chapter, few inmates in state prison systems are locked up with long-term sentences for their first offense; rather they have typically committed several “priors” before that point, and some may have never even been detected by outside law enforcement. During their activity on the streets, these offenders will develop a reputation, particularly within their gang or their area of



Video Link 10.4
Watch a video about
prison gangs.

operation (if in an urban or a suburban setting) and will develop associations with other gang members. Once they finally do end up with a long-term sentence in a state facility, they have usually already embedded themselves within the gang structure on the outside that includes members who have been locked up inside the prison system.

In some cases, those doing state time may be the upper leadership of the street gang; these members will tend to direct prison gang activities internally while “calling the shots” for members on the outside. The term *shot caller* refers to these inmates and/or gang members who dictate what members will do within the gang hierarchy. The point to all of this is that a gang’s membership does not begin or end with the prison walls. Rather, the prison walls are simply a feature that modern-day gangs must contend with—an obstacle that increases the overhead to conducting criminal enterprise.

Because gang membership is porous in nature, social researchers can only vaguely determine likely gang growth both inside the prison and outside the prison. In 1998, there were an estimated 780,000 gang members across the nation. A large proportion of these gang members also served time behind bars at one point or another throughout their criminal career. In fact, in some prison systems, such as the Texas prison system, gangs nearly controlled the prison system and even controlled many of the staff that worked within the system through various forms of friendships or occasional intimidation, all designed to manipulate staff within the organization.

Thus, prison gangs in some state systems were both persuasive and very powerful. Potential recruits for existing prison gangs enter prison with natural feelings of anxiety and quickly learn the value of having some form of affiliation. Indeed, inmates without the protection of affiliation are likely to be the target of other inmates who are members of a gang. Likewise, this affiliation tends to be based along racial allegiances. In fact, most prison gang membership is strictly defined by the race of the member.

Traditional prison gangs include, but are not limited to, the Aryan Brotherhood, the Mexican Mafia, La Nuestra Familia, Black Guerilla Family, Texas Syndicate, and the Mexikanemi. Further, a confluence of street gangs has permeated several prison systems, particularly in California, Illinois, New York, Texas, and Florida. Common street gangs found in prisons are the Crips and the Bloods. In the Chicago area, most street gangs are aligned with either the Folk Nation or the People Nation. The Folks include notorious street gangs such as the Gangster Disciples and the Two Sixers (Fleisher & Rison, 1999). The People include groups such as the Latin Kings and the Vice Lords (Fleisher & Rison, 1999). Historically speaking, the main distinction between prison gangs and street gangs has been the internal structure and the leadership style of the gang (Fleisher & Rison, 1999). However, over time this distinction has become so blurred as to be meaningless in the offender world (Fleisher & Rison, 1999). In the correctional environment of today, the Gangster Disciples and Latin Kings, classic street gangs, are just as influential and powerful as are the Mexican Mafia and the Texas Syndicate (Fleisher & Rison, 1999). More telling is the fact that the Mexican Mafia, the Aryan Brotherhood, and even emerging local groups such as the Barrio Aztecas have become just as formidable in their own respective ethnic and/or culturally based neighborhoods or regions. Thus, both types of gangs have become “cross-pollinated” and are fully operational in both sectors of the criminal world. Indeed, it is sometimes common for leaders of the gang to be incarcerated, all the while giving orders for various actions to members who are still outside the prison operating within the community. For this text, this is effectively **gang cross-pollination**, when the gang has developed such power and influence as to be equally effective regardless of whether its leadership is inside or outside of the prison walls.

When discussing gangs that are cross-pollinated, the term **security threat group (STG)** will be used to describe a gang that possesses the following high-functioning group and organizational characteristics:

1. Prison and street affiliation is based on race, ethnicity, geography, ideology, or any combination of these or other similar factors (Fleisher, 2008, p. 356).
2. Members seek protection from other gang members inside and outside the prison, as well as insulation from law enforcement detection (use of safe houses when wanted).



Audio Link 10.3

Learn more about the prison violence committed by the Aryan Brotherhood.

3. Members will mutually take care of one another's family members, at least minimally, while the member is locked up since this is an expected overhead cost in the organization.
4. The group's mission integrates an economic objective, and uses some form of illicit industry such as drug trafficking to fulfill the economic necessities to carry forward other stated objectives (Fleisher, 2008). The use of violence or the threat of violence is a common tool in meeting these economic objectives.

Regardless of whether these groups are cross-pollinated to the point of being a disruptive offender group, other characteristics common to prison gangs go beyond racial lines of membership. These characteristics are common to most any gang within jail and/or prison, though not necessarily common to those based primarily on the street. First, prison gangs tend to have highly formal rules and a written constitution. The constitution and the rules are adhered to by all members who value their affiliation, and sanctions are taken against those who violate the rules. Second, prison gangs tend to be structured along a semimilitary organizational scheme. Thus, authority and responsibility are very clearly defined within these groups. Third, membership in a prison gang is usually for life. This has often been referred to, as noted above, as *blood in—blood out* among the popular subculture. This lifelong affiliation is also one of the root causes of parolees continuing their affiliation beyond the prison walls, and this lifelong membership is enforced against those who attempt to exit the prison gang. Thus, when gang members leave the prison environment, they are expected to perform various “favors” for the members who are still incarcerated. Lastly, as members circulate in and out of prison, they are involved in gang activities both inside and outside of the penal institution. Thus, the criminal enterprise continues to be an active business, and prison simply becomes part of the overhead involved in running that business.



Audio Link 10.4

Listen to a clip about prison gangs.

MAJOR PRISON GANGS IN THE UNITED STATES

During the 1950s and 1960s there was a substantial amount of racial and ethnic bias in prisons. This was true in most all state prison systems, but was particularly pronounced in the southern United States and in the state of California. During the late 1950s, a Chicano gang formed known as the Mexican Mafia (National Gang Intelligence Center, 2009). This gang was drawn from street gang members in various neighborhoods of Los Angeles and, while in San Quentin, began to exercise power over the gambling rackets within that prison. Other gangs soon began to form as a means of opposing the Mexican Mafia. Among the earliest to form were the Black Guerilla Family, the Aryan Brotherhood, La Nuestra Familia, and the Texas Syndicate.

This section provides a brief overview of some of the major prison gangs found throughout the nation. As accurately as possible, these gangs are presented in a manner that is historically correct, capturing the basic feeling of the time and context during their development (see Table 10.1). Because the federal government produces accurate resources and data on justice-related topics, information regarding most of these gangs has been obtained from the National Gang Intelligence Center, a think tank of the Department of Justice. Much of the information presented has been obtained from a recent document titled the *National Gang Threat Assessment 2009*. The following few pages provide an overview of 13 of the most prevalent prison gangs in the United States. Though not fully inclusive, this is a comprehensive listing of the major prison gangs that exist today. The history of each gang, criminal activity, and other relevant information is provided. The gangs are presented in the order in which they were formed, starting with the late 1950s and continuing through the early 1990s:

The **Mexican Mafia** prison gang, also known as La Eme (Spanish for the letter *M*), was formed in the late 1950s within the California Department of Corrections. It is loosely structured and has strict rules that must be followed by the 200 members. Most members are Mexican American males who previously belonged to a southern California street gang. The Mexican Mafia is primarily active in the southwestern and Pacific regions of the United States, but its power base is in California. The gang's main source of income is extorting drug distributors outside prison and distributing methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, and marijuana within prison systems and on the streets. Some members have direct links to Mexican drug traffickers outside of the prison walls. The Mexican Mafia also is involved in other criminal activities, including controlling gambling and homosexual prostitution in prison.



Reference Link 10.2

Read about the proliferation of gangs in the U. S. and their impact on prisons.

TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT 10.1

Using Scanners to Detect Contraband Brought Into and Out of Prison Facilities

This was no ordinary telephone call. A Baltimore man allegedly used a cell phone to arrange a murder, offering to pay \$2,500 for the crime, according to Maryland federal prosecutors. Moreover, the man should not have had a cell phone—he was in the Baltimore City Jail on the evening he allegedly placed the fateful call. Indeed, according to the federal indictment, he was being held on a murder charge and made the call to arrange the killing of a witness to the original murder. Cell phones and the electric chargers that power them are just the latest form of contraband that correctional institutions grapple with daily. Corrections officers also face attempts to smuggle drugs and weapons into the facilities, as well as inmates who fashion weapons out of ordinary materials. To help correctional managers detect contraband and run safer institutions, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is sponsoring several research projects and pilot programs, based on recommendations from expert practitioners, to test an array of technologies. Scanning and detection devices can help spot everything, from a cell phone to a knife.

Testing Airport Scanners in Prisons

One NIJ-sponsored pilot program that enjoyed success used a millimeter wave imaging system to scan visitors at the Graterford State Correctional Institution in Pennsylvania. The imaging system can look through clothing to detect weapons, cell phones, and nonmetallic objects. Currently used by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to scan passengers at an increasing number of airports, the system was tested and evaluated at Graterford, a maximum-security facility that houses about 3,100 inmates outside Philadelphia.

A person steps into a “portal,” which looks like a booth. The system beams radio energy in the millimeter wave spectrum from antennas that rotate around the person. The energy is reflected, and scanners produce an image of the body and any objects hidden beneath the clothing. The system, called the SafeView, is manufactured by L-3 Communications. According to the manufacturer, the system produces less radiation than a cell phone transmission. Millimeter wave systems have been controversial because they present images of bodies so well—similar to nude photographs—that some people consider the systems intrusive. The TSA has taken various measures, such as immediately deleting the images, to win acceptance. This technology has much the same capabilities

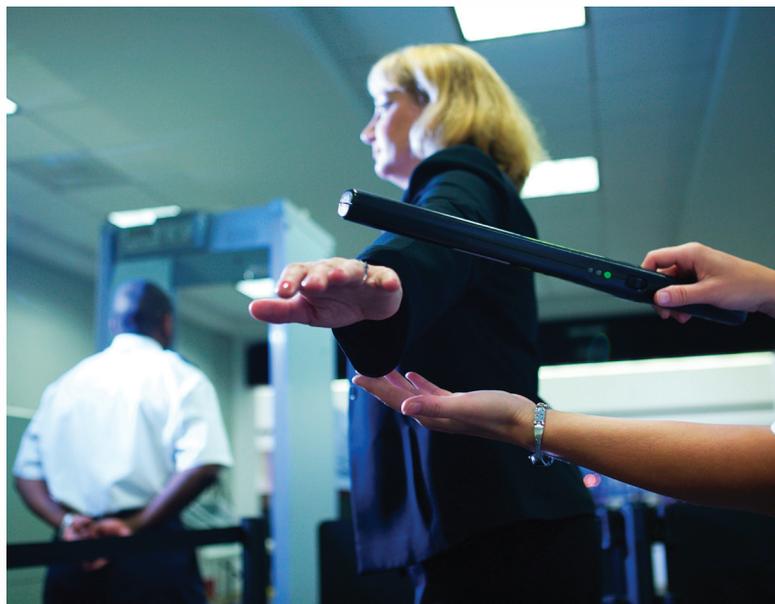


PHOTO 10.6

This woman is being checked for contraband prior to entering a secure area of a prison institution.

and limitations as an alternative approach—backscatter X-ray systems—used for the same purpose.

The pilot project at Graterford involved scanning visitors. Thomas Dohman, Graterford’s intelligence captain, said the system was used for more than a year, and officials believe it was successful. “It’s very effective at discouraging smuggling,” he said. To address privacy concerns, prison officials used a privacy screen that cut out the most explicit views but still allowed the system to signal if something was hidden beneath a person’s clothing. Graterford officials also set up laptop computers when they introduced the system so visitors could see for themselves how the images looked. “The public accepted it,” Dohman said.

The Graterford system completed between 400 and 600 scans in a typical week, and each scan was completed in seconds. “It really didn’t slow down the [screening] process,” Dohman said. The manufacturer made the system available for free during the testing period, and the NIJ coordinated the pilot project because it provided an opportunity to do an operational evaluation in a correctional environment that involved a commercially available system.

Overall, the millimeter wave system improved the contraband situation at Graterford, Dohman said. On several occasions, the system detected cell phones. Yet Dohman believes the system’s greatest success is in its deterrent effect. According to Dohman, people who knew about the system did not even try to smuggle something through it. “It’s infrequent that people had anything concealed,” he said.

Although this technology detects contraband hidden under clothing, it does not detect contraband secreted in body cavities. To address this need, the NIJ is currently funding the development of a system that can identify contraband hidden in body cavities. The system, which is based on electric field tomography (EFT), is being developed by Quantum Magnetics Inc.

Portable Scanner Spots Improvised Prison Weapons Made by Inmates

Although millimeter wave portals can identify objects hidden under clothing, they are large, fixed, and relatively expensive. Corrections officials have told the NIJ that they would also like to be able to use inexpensive, handheld devices. These would give corrections officials more flexibility by allowing them to screen people at entrances and to perform spot checks anywhere. The NIJ is sponsoring the development of a handheld device that can detect everything from cell phones to Plexiglas. Many correctional institutions have reported that while their metal detection systems work well, the institutions face constant challenges in detecting nonmetallic objects, such as improvised weapons made of wood or hard plastics.

The NIJ awarded a grant to Luna Innovations Inc. to develop a new device that would spot contraband items regardless of what materials are used. The Weapons and Non-Permitted Devices Detector, or WANDD, is a handheld system similar to handheld metal detectors. The WANDD scans fully clothed people for contraband hidden under their clothing. Although designed specifically to spot nonmetallic contraband, it detects metal as well.

Unlike millimeter wave systems that use radio energy, the WANDD uses sound waves—akin to sonar—to detect objects. The WANDD includes an ultrasonic wave transmitter and an acoustic receiver. The device “listens” to the sound waves that bounce back to it, detecting hidden objects under clothing. Engineers at Luna tested the prototype at the Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail in Williamsburg. They found that the device works well with various clothing fabrics, including standard jumpsuits. The WANDD prototype successfully detected objects such as cell phones, plastic knives, guns, and credit cards.

SOURCE: Bulman, P. (2009). *Using technology to make prisons and jails safer*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice.

The **Black Guerrilla Family** (BGF), originally called Black Family or Black Vanguard, is a prison gang founded in San Quentin State Prison, California, in 1966. The gang is highly organized along paramilitary lines, with a supreme leader and central committee. The BGF has an established national charter, code of ethics, and oath of allegiance (see Figure 10.1). BGF members operate primarily in California and Maryland. The gang has 100 to 300 members, most of whom are African American males. A primary source of income for gang members is cocaine and marijuana distribution. Currently, BGF members obtain such drugs primarily from Nuestra Familia/Norteños members or from local Mexican traffickers. BGF members are involved in other criminal activities, including auto theft, burglary, drive-by shootings, and homicide.

The **Aryan Brotherhood** (AB; see Figure 10.2) was originally formed in San Quentin in 1967. The AB is highly structured with two factions—one in the California Department of Corrections and the other in the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Most members are Caucasian males, and the gang is active primarily in the southwestern and Pacific regions. Its main source of income is the distribution of cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and methamphetamine within prison systems and on the streets. Some AB members have business relationships with Mexican drug traffickers who smuggle illegal drugs into California for AB distribution. The AB is notoriously violent and is often involved in murder for hire. Although the gang has been historically linked to the California-based prison gang Mexican Mafia (La Eme), tension between AB and La Eme is increasingly evident, as seen in recent fights between Caucasians and Hispanics within CDC.

FIGURE 10.1 Sample Black Guerrilla Family (BGF) Code

BG Term	Meaning
Annette Brooks	Aryan Brotherhood
Bobby G. Foster	BGF
Central High	mainline
Compton	hole or segregation
D. C.	decision or deciding
Kiss	marked for death
Mary Mitchell	Mexican Mafia
Nelson Franklin	Nuestra Familia
Paula	police officer
Record shop	hospital
Salt	hacksaw
Sammy Davis, Jr.	bootlicking
Supermarket	killed or dead

FIGURE 10.2 Symbol of the Aryan Brotherhood



The **Crips** are a collection of structured and unstructured gangs that have adopted a common gang culture. The Crips emerged as a major gang presence during the early 1970s. Crips membership is estimated at 30,000 to 35,000; most members are African American males from the Los Angeles metropolitan area. Large, national-level Crips gangs include 107 Hoover Crips, Insane Gangster Crips, and Rolling 60s Crips. The Crips operate in 221 cities in 41 states and can be found in several state prison systems. The main source of income for the Crips is the street-level distribution of powder cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, and PCP. This gang is also involved in other criminal activity such as assault, auto theft, burglary, and homicide.

The **Bloods** are an association of structured and unstructured gangs that have adopted a single-gang culture. The original Bloods were formed in the early 1970s to provide protection from the Crips street gang in Los Angeles, California. Large, national-level Bloods gangs include Bounty Hunter Bloods and Crenshaw Mafia Gangsters. Bloods membership is estimated to be 7,000 to 30,000 nationwide; most members are African American males. Bloods gangs are active in 123 cities in 33 states, and they can be found in several state prison systems. The main source of income for Bloods gangs is street-level distribution of cocaine and marijuana. The gangs also are involved in other criminal activity including assault, auto theft, burglary, carjacking, drive-by shootings, extortion, homicide, identity fraud, and robbery.

Ñeta is a prison gang that was established in Puerto Rico in the early 1970s and spread to the United States. Ñeta is one of the largest and most violent prison gangs, with about 7,000 members in Puerto Rico and 5,000 in the United States. Ñeta chapters in Puerto Rico exist exclusively inside prisons; once members are released from prison, they are no longer considered part of the gang. In the United States, Ñeta chapters exist inside and outside prisons in 36 cities in nine states, primarily in the Northeast. The gang's main source of income is retail distribution of powder and crack cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and, to a lesser extent, LSD, MDMA, methamphetamine, and PCP. Ñeta members commit assault, auto theft, burglary, drive-by shootings, extortion, home invasion, money laundering, robbery, weapons and explosives trafficking, and witness intimidation.

The **Texas Syndicate** originated in Folsom Prison during the early 1970s. The Texas Syndicate was formed in response to other prison gangs in the California Department of Corrections, such as the Mexican Mafia and Aryan Brotherhood, which were attempting to prey on native Texas inmates. This gang is composed of predominantly Mexican American inmates in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). Though this gang has a rule to only accept members who are Latino, it does accept Caucasians into its ranks. The Texas Syndicate has a formal organizational structure and a set of written rules for its members. Since the time of its formation—largely as a means of protection for Texas inmates in the California Department of Corrections—the Texas Syndicate has grown considerably, particularly in Texas.

FIGURE 10.3 Symbol of the Texas Syndicate



The **Mexikanemi** prison gang (also known as Texas Mexican Mafia or Emi) was formed in the early 1980s within the TDCJ. The gang is highly structured and is estimated to have 2,000 members, most of whom are Mexican nationals or Mexican American males living in Texas at the time of incarceration. Mexikanemi poses a significant drug trafficking threat to communities in the southwestern United States, particularly in Texas. Gang members reportedly traffic multikilogram quantities of powder cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine; multiton quantities of marijuana; and thousand-tablet quantities of MDMA from Mexico into the United States for distribution inside and outside prison.

The **Nazi Low Riders (NLR)** evolved in the California Youth Authority, the state agency responsible for the incarceration and parole supervision of juvenile and young adult offenders, in the late 1970s or early 1980s as a gang for White inmates. As prison officials successfully suppressed Aryan Brotherhood activities, the Brotherhood appealed to young incarcerated skinheads, the NLR in particular, to act as middlemen for their criminal operations, allowing the Aryan Brotherhood to keep control of criminal undertakings while adult members were serving time in administrative segregation. Through their connections to the Aryan Brotherhood, the NLR was able to become the principal gang

within the Youth Authority and eventually to move into penitentiaries throughout California and across the West Coast. The NLR maintains strong ties to the Aryan Brotherhood and, like the older gang, has become a source of violence and criminal activity in prison. The Aryan Brotherhood still maintains a strong presence in the nation's prison systems, albeit less active, while NLR has also become a major force, viewing itself as superior to all other White gangs and deferring only to the Aryan Brotherhood. Both gangs engage in drug trafficking, extortion, and attacks on inmates and corrections staff.

Barrio Azteca emerged in 1986 in the Coffield Unit of TDCJ by five street gang members from El Paso, Texas. This gang tends to recruit from prior street gang members and is most active in the southwestern region, primarily in correctional facilities in Texas and on the streets of southwestern Texas and southeastern New Mexico. The gang is highly structured and has an estimated membership of 2,000. Most members are Mexican national or Mexican American males. The gang's main source of income is smuggling heroin, powder cocaine, and marijuana from Mexico into the United States for distribution both inside and outside prisons. Barrio Azteca members also are involved in alien smuggling, arson, assault, auto theft, burglary, extortion, intimidation, kidnapping, robbery, and weapons violations.

Hermanos de Pistoleros Latinos (HPL) is a Hispanic prison gang formed in the TDCJ in the late 1980s. It operates in most prisons and on the streets in many communities in Texas, particularly Laredo. HPL is also active in several cities in Mexico, and its largest contingent in that country is in Nuevo Laredo. The gang is structured and is estimated to have 1,000 members. Members maintain close ties to several Mexican drug trafficking organizations and are involved in trafficking quantities of cocaine and marijuana from Mexico into the United States for distribution.

Tango Blast is one of largest prison/street criminal gangs operating in Texas. Tango Blast's criminal activities include drug trafficking, extortion, kidnapping, sexual assault, and murder.

In the late 1990s, Hispanic men incarcerated in federal, state, and local prisons founded Tango Blast for personal protection against violence from traditional prison gangs such as the Aryan Brotherhood, Texas Syndicate, and Texas Mexican Mafia. Tango Blast originally had four city-based chapters in Houston, Austin, Dallas, and Fort Worth. These founding four chapters are collectively known as Puro Tango Blast or the Four Horsemen. From the original four chapters, former Texas inmates established new chapters in El Paso, San Antonio, Corpus Christi, and the Rio Grande Valley. In June 2008 the Houston Police Department estimated that more than 14,000 Tango Blast members were incarcerated in Texas. Tango Blast is difficult to monitor. The gang does not conform to either traditional prison/street gang hierarchical organization or gang rules. Tango Blast is laterally organized, and leaders are elected sporadically to represent the gang in prisons and to lead street gang cells. The significance of Tango Blast is exemplified by corrections officials reporting that rival traditional prison gangs are now forming alliances to defend themselves against Tango Blast's growing power.

United Blood Nation is a universal term that is used to identify both West Coast Bloods and United Blood Nation (UBN). The UBN started in 1993 in Rikers Island GMDC (George Mochen Detention Center) to form protection from the threat posed by Latin Kings and Netas, who dominated the prison. While these groups are traditionally distinct entities, both identify themselves by "Blood," often making it hard for law enforcement to distinguish between them. The UBN is a loose

FIGURE 10.4 Constitution of the Mexikanemi

1. Membership is for life ("blood in, blood out").
2. Every member must be prepared to sacrifice his life or take a life at any time.
3. To achieve discipline within the Mexikanemi brotherhood, every member shall strive to overcome his weakness.
4. Members must never let the Mexikanemi down.
5. The sponsoring member is totally responsible for the behavior of a new recruit. If the new recruit turns out to be a traitor, it is the sponsoring member's responsibility to eliminate the recruit.
6. When insulted by a stranger or group, all members of the Mexikanemi will unite to destroy the person or other group completely.
7. Members must always maintain a high level of integrity.
8. Members must never relate Mexikanemi business to others.
9. Every member has the right to express opinions, ideas, contradictions, and constructive criticism.
10. Every member has the right to organize, educate, arm, and defend the Mexikanemi.
11. Every member has the right to wear tattoo of the Mexikanemi symbol.
12. The Mexikanemi is a criminal organization and therefore will participate in all activities of criminal interest for monetary benefits.

SOURCE: Orlando-Morningstar, D. (1997). Prison gangs. *Special Needs Offenders Bulletin*. Washington, DC: Federal Judicial Center.

TABLE 10.1 Timeline History of Prison Gang Development in the United States

<i>Year formed</i>	<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Name of gang</i>
1950	Washington	Gypsy Jokers
1957	California	Mexican Mafia
1958	California	Texas syndicate
1965	California	La Nuestra Familia
1966	California	Black Guerrilla Family
1967	California	Aryan Brotherhood
mid 1970s	Arizona	Arizona Aryan Brotherhood
1977	Arizona	Arizona Old Mexican Mafia
1980	New Mexico	New Mexico syndicate
early 1980s	Texas	Aryan Brotherhood of Taxes
early 1980s	Texas	Texas Mafia
mid 1980s	California	Bulldogs
1984	Arizona	Arizona's New Mexican Mafia
1984	Texas	Mexikanemi
1984	Texas	Mandingo Warriors
1985	Federal system	Dirty White Boys
1985	California	415's
1990	Connecticut	Los Solidos

SOURCE: Orlando-Morningstar, D. (1999). *Prison gangs*. Washington, DC: Federal Judicial Center.

confederation of street gangs, or sets, that once were predominantly African American. Membership is estimated to be between 7,000 and 15,000 along the U.S. eastern corridor. The UBN derives its income from street-level distribution of cocaine, heroin, and marijuana; robbery; auto theft; and smuggling drugs to prison inmates.

Gang Management in Corrections

Gang management requires a comprehensive policy that specifies legal precedents, procedures, and guidelines, including the verification of gang members. Over the years, most state systems have developed gang intelligence units and have trained correctional staff on gangs and gang activity. In modern times, state and federal corrections refer to gangs as security threat groups, or STGs, as noted above. Students may notice that, in the prior subsection, most of the 13 gangs listed have links to outside society and seek one another's protection while engaged in criminal activities that have an economic objective. This means that these gangs are all STGs because they operate inside and outside the prison and possess all the other characteristics discussed in previous subsections of this chapter.

When combating STGs in prison, the technical aspects, such as the paper classification and procedures needed to investigate gang members, are fairly straightforward. However, the human element is what makes the fight against STGs much more difficult. In correctional facilities that do not emphasize professionalism or encourage open communication among security staff, and do have a strong underlying prison subculture (both inmate and correctional officer), STGs are likely to proliferate. A lack of professionalism, stunted communication, and powerful subcultural norms that are counter to the prison

administration serve as the breeding ground for gang development. Further, when selecting correctional staff to serve on gang task forces, the prison administrator must exercise care and remain vigilant. In some cases, an inmate's sibling, cousin, girlfriend, former wives, and companions may be employed within the facility. This is, of course, a common tactic used by gangs who seek to infiltrate the correctional system.

Gang Control, Management, and Administrative Segregation

In addition to the physical security of the facility, there are many psychological aspects of controlling gang activity. For instance, the immediate tendency of corrections officials may be to restrict privileges for gang-related inmates. But, as Fleisher (2008) notes, withdrawing incentives or placing these inmates in long-term states of restricted movement can have financial and social consequences for the prison facility. For instance, in Texas, many gang-related inmates are kept in administrative segregation. Administrative segregation is a security status that is intended to keep the assigned inmate from having contact with the general population. It is not punitive in nature, like solitary confinement. This custody status is intended to protect the general population from the inmate in segregation. However, this form of custody is very expensive.

Further, there is a tendency for prison systems that use administrative segregation to house inmates of the same gang in the same area. This prevents them from coming into contact with enemy gang members yet cuts costs that would ensue if they were kept on different cell blocks or dormitories. But doing this replicates the street gang culture as they are all together but with geographic isolation (i.e., one neighborhood, one gang) where there is one cell block and one gang. In other words, this can build solidarity for the group. This can also lead to problematic behaviors where inmates exercise power (through the gang rank structure) over a cell block or dormitory, encouraging security to work with those in power to maintain compliance over the other lower-ranking inmates of that gang. Naturally, this should be avoided because it validates the gang's power and undermines the security staff. Fleisher (2008) notes that other problematic behaviors can also emerge. For instance, gangs may attempt to run cell blocks, "sell" cells on the cell block, or "own" territory on the recreation yard. This simply reinforces their feeling that they have power over the institution. This should be avoided.

Gang Management Data

The modern prison facility has improved surveillance, layout, and intelligence-gathering strategies that have worked well to thwart the activities of gang members. One key aspect of a comprehensive gang intelligence program is the use of data that is continuously validated. Fleisher (2008) notes that prison administrators should do the following:

1. Develop strong nationwide ties to gang units in police departments.
2. Participate in national correctional conferences on gang intelligence.
3. Maintain good relations with fellow STG management persons in other agencies.
4. Establish strong contact with local police agencies and the state's attorney's office.



PHOTO 10.7

An inmate holds another inmate hostage with a homemade shank.



Journal Article Link 10.4

Read about classifying prisoners for administrative segregation.

It is important to point out that gang data are of no assistance if they are not well organized and carefully analyzed. The modern intelligence team should be well trained on databases and should have the ability to customize databases for various projects.

The first phase in developing an effective program is to initiate an effective intelligence and communications network that would accurately indicate how many inmates have gang affiliations, which gangs they are affiliated with, and their status within those gangs. The database should also provide information on which facilities gang members are in and their institutional classification. Further, all of this information can provide the department with data on the proliferation or concentration of any group, so that it can forecast where or when a buildup of a particular group could cause problems. Strategic transfers of inmates can assist the agency in controlling the establishment of gang power bases and can ensure that some individuals do not have undue influence over others.

In addition, good gang intelligence programs will have developed a digitized imaging program that offers numerous advantages for identifying gang members and their status, behavior, and control. The complete history and personal data of gang members can be recorded, and digitized images (front and side) can be taken. Digitized images should also be made of any tattoos, distinguishing marks, or scars. These images are usually clearer than those obtained by film, and this negates the need for taking additional photographs, or for film storage or development. The digitized images can also be entered into a computer and downloaded into the database. This type of process tends to take about two minutes per individual and can produce a permanent record that can be promptly updated as circumstances require.

Through this process, each facility is able to update records quickly. Changes are simultaneously downloaded to a central repository so the department has expedient, accurate information regarding new gang members or changes in the status of current members. An advantage of this system is that it is possible to conduct single and multiple searches on the basis of any data in the file. For instance, if one inmate gang member reports being attacked by another inmate but could not identify the inmate by name, a timely departmental search could be accomplished based on any information the victim could give. If the victim stated that the attacker was about 5 feet tall, with a moustache, and that he had a tattoo of a dragon on his right hand, a computerized departmental search could be expeditiously conducted. Every registered person in the entire gang network who fit that description would be displayed on the screen in a photo array—constituting a virtual “computerized lineup.” These types of screens can also be altered to focus on points of interest, by enlarging images of areas in which there are scars, tattoos, or other distinguishing marks.

Lastly, prison staff should, of course, be appropriately trained on the use of these types of tools, and they should also be trained in gang recognition skills. This training also requires a good deal of ethics training since gang populations can be very manipulative. Ensuring that staff are well trained and confident will help the institution run well and will keep security at its peak. This will also curb gangs from growing and/or exerting undue pressure upon others. All in all, staff training will augment the policies and tools that agencies utilize. In fact, staff training will be the prime factor that determines whether policies and/or technical tools are utilized effectively.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided students with a glimpse of the “behind the scenes” aspects of the prison environment. The notion of a prison subculture, complete with norms and standards that are counter to those of the outside world, has been presented to give students an idea of the values and norms that impact the day-to-day operation of many prisons. There has been substantial debate as to whether this informal prison subculture is the product of adjustments and adaptations to prison life or if this subculture is more the product of norms brought in from the outside world—from the street life.

The informal subculture within prisons tends to be largely driven by inmates. The convict code has typically been presented as the “gold standard” of behavior among inmates. This code represents perceptions of eras that are now out of date and are not in sync with the modern era. The effects of professionalism within the correctional officer ranks, the diversity of correctional staff, and the difference in

this generation of inmates all have led to the near demise of the honor-bound convict code. Within the informal subculture, it is clear that correctional staff also have some informal standards and expectations. The work of Kauffman (1988) has provided very good insight on the behavior of correctional staff who work in prisons.

The norms associated with both the subculture of prison staff and the convict code of inmates are in a state of flux and decline. The subculture among correctional staff has been impacted by the emphasis on professionalism and the diversification in staff recruiting. These two aspects related to employees in the system have, over time, changed the face of corrections and have also undermined the tenets of the prison subculture. What has resulted is a state of ambiguity where inmates often pay lip service to tenets of respectable behavior (according to prison logic) but often break the rules on this behavior when put under pressure. Simply put, there is truly no honor among thieves.

Gangs have emerged as a major force in state prison systems. The first recorded prison gangs began to emerge in the late 1950s and the early 1960s, primarily in the California prison system. Since that time, gangs have proliferated around the United States and have exerted substantial influence over the prison subculture and even dynamics in prison operations. In this chapter, we have covered 13 of the larger and more well-known prison gangs in the nation. From the coverage of these gangs, it is clear that they have networks that extend beyond the prison walls, and this, in turn, increases their power and influence within the prison walls. Indeed, when offenders in a street gang enter prison, they do not simply forfeit their membership in their gang. Likewise, when these inmates leave prison, they again do not simply leave their gang obligations behind. Rather, gangs have become porous groups that exist inside and outside the prison walls.

The methods used to control gang activity inside prisons have been discussed. Prison gang intelligence units must have effective means of investigating potential membership and collecting data on gang members. Utilizing electronic equipment for identification, storage, and retrieval is key to maintaining an effective antigang strategy. The ability to share data with other agencies enhances public safety within the region surrounding the prison and also improves security within. The truth of this issue is that, whether we like it or not, the prison has an impact on outside society, due to the manner in which the inmate population cycles into and out of prison. Thus, it is clear that prisons impact society, both in terms of keeping dangerous persons locked up and in terms of their learned behavior once they are released back into society.

END-OF-CHAPTER DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How is the prison subculture for inmates and correctional officers often interrelated?
2. Compare importation theory with exportation theory and explain which one you believe is the stronger influence on prison subculture.
3. Explain some of the common outlooks and views of prison subculture. How does this contrast with the conventional logic of outside society?
4. How have professionalization and the diversification of correctional staff impacted the prison subculture?
5. Explain what is meant by “hyena logic” among inmates and provide some examples of how this impacts group behavior in some prison facilities.
6. Identify at least three prison gangs and explain how they have impacted corrections in their respective jurisdictions. Note their allies and adversaries in the prison and explain how this impacts prison operations.
7. Explain what prison systems can or should do to control gang problems that occur in their facilities.
8. Within the prison subculture, explain how labeling theory is related to prison rape.

KEY TERMS

Blood in—blood out	Importation theory	Respect
Convict boss/officer	Mule	Snitch
Convict code	Pains of imprisonment	Symbiotic prison relationship
Hogging	Prisonization	
Hustle	Punk	

APPLIED EXERCISE 10.1

You are the assistant warden of a large medium-security facility within a state prison system in the southeastern United States. Your facility has a disproportionate number of African American inmates (common in prison systems throughout the United States) and a disproportionate number of men, particularly Caucasian male officers.

In response to concerns from the Grievance Department regarding inmate allegations of racism from officers inside the facility, the warden has asked you to develop a comprehensive diversity training program for the security staff in your facility. Currently, your facility holds an annual one-day “refresher” course for staff. This course is actually only a four-hour block of instruction provided at the state training facility where employees around the state complete their annual in-service training to update their knowledge and skills. Everyone throughout the system knows that the four-hour block of instruction is not taken seriously and is simply offered as a means of documenting that the state has made the training available.

Your warden desires to change this within your facility for two reasons. First, it is just a good and ethical practice to take diversity seriously. Second, the dollars used from grievances and other allegations are getting costly enough to make diversity training a fiscally sound alternative to potential litigation.

With this in mind, you are given the following guiding information regarding the training program that you are to implement:

1. The program should be 1.5 days in length, given once annually.
2. The program should address numerous areas of concern, including race, gender, age, and religion.

Students should keep in mind that workplace diversity has two components: First it involves fair treatment and the removal of barriers, and second it addresses past imbalances through the implementation of special measures to accelerate the achievement of a representative workforce. Further, workplace diversity recognizes and utilizes the diversity available in the workplace and the community it serves.

Workplace diversity should be viewed as a means to attaining the organizational objectives of the correctional facility—not as an end in itself. The link between the agency objectives and the day-to-day processes that occur among staff in the facility is crucial to the success of workplace diversity initiatives.

For this assignment, outline the content that you would recommend for the 1.5-day training session and explain your rationale behind your recommendation. Also, explain how you will “sell” these ideas to prison staff to ensure that they take the training seriously. Lastly, explain how this training, if successful, can improve security and safety in the institution. Your submission should be between 500 and 1,000 words.

“WHAT WOULD YOU DO?”

You are a caseworker in a state facility and work closely with the institution’s classification department on a routine basis. You have one inmate on your caseload, a pedophile named Jeff, who has presented with a number of challenges. Jeff is a 35-year-old male who is an inmate in your maximum-security facility. Jeff has

recently been transferred to your facility from another facility, largely for protective reasons. Jeff has come to you because he is very, very worried. Jeff is a pedophile, and he has been in prison for nearly 8 years on a 15-year sentence. He is expected to gain an early release due to his excellent progress in prison and due to prison overcrowding problems and his own exemplary behavior. He has been in treatment, and, as you look through his case notes, you can tell that he has done very well.

But there were other inmates at his prior prison facility who did not want to see him get paroled. In fact, it is a powerful inmate gang, and Jeff had received “protection” from this gang in exchange for providing sexual favors to a select trio of inmate gang members. Jeff discloses that, while it was humiliating, he had to do this to survive in the prison subculture, particularly since he was a labeled pedophile. The gang knew this, of course, and used this as leverage to ensure that Jeff was compliant. In fact, the gang never even had to use any physical force whatsoever to gain Jeff’s compliance. Jeff notes that this now bothers him, and he doubts his own sense of masculinity. Jeff also discloses that he has had suicidal ideations as a result of his experiences.

Jeff has performed well in treatment for sex offenders. But Jeff has also been adversely affected by noxious sexual experiences inside the prison. You are the first person that he has disclosed this to. As you listen to his plight, you begin to wonder if his issues with sexuality are actually now more unstable than they were before he entered prison. Though his treatment notes seem convincing, this is common among pedophiles. But not known to the other therapist was how Jeff had engaged in undesired sexual activity while incarcerated. This activity has created a huge rift in Jeff’s masculine identity. Will this affect his likelihood for relapse on the outside? Does Jeff need to resolve his concerns with consensual versus forced homosexual activity? You begin to wonder.

Now, as you listen, you realize that if you make mention of this, then the classification system is not likely to release Jeff, and this condemns him to more of the same type of exploitation. The only real option that allows Jeff to be protected from such victimization is placing him in protective custody. However, Jeff adamantly refuses such a custody level due to fear that the gang will think that he is an informant who is giving evidence against them; they would essentially seek to kill him. If you do not mention any of this information and thereby allow someone to be released with a highly questionable prognosis, you run the risk of putting the public’s safety at risk.

What would you do?

CROSS-NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE 10.1

Prison Gang Riots and Warfare in Guatemala and El Salvador

Gang members staged simultaneous riots in at least seven Guatemalan prisons on Monday (August 2005), attacking rivals with grenades, guns and knives in coordinated chaos that left 31 inmates dead, officials said.

The riots apparently began with attacks by members of the Mara Salvatrucha gang against rivals of the MS-18 gang, said Interior Minister Carlos Vielmann.

He said 31 inmates died before the riots were brought under control shortly after noon.

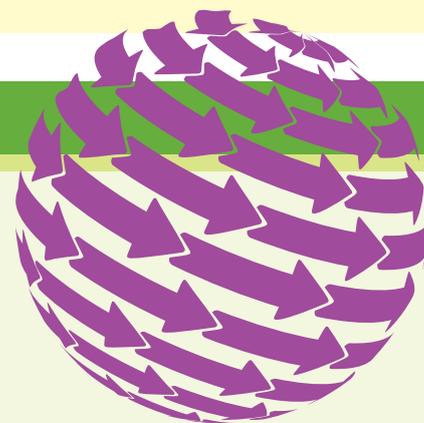
An Associated Press photographer saw 18 bodies, many riddled with bullet wounds, carried from El Hoyo prison,

which was specifically built to hold gang members in Escuintla, 30 miles south of the capital. A guard and 61 inmates were injured at El Hoyo, and tattooed gang members bleeding from knife wounds were carried from the prison on stretchers.

Escuintla Gov. Luis Munoz said the riot began with the explosion of two grenades.

As explosions echoed from inside the small, converted police barracks in downtown Escuintla on Monday morning, nearby storekeepers rattled metal shutters down over the shop windows and crowds of visitors pressed police for information.

The explosions stopped within an hour. Police first began removing the injured, then the dead.



Dozens of relatives, many of them the mothers of young gang members wept hysterically as stretchers were carried from the prison. The dead were taken to a morgue. So many were injured that they overflowed the capacity of the two local hospitals, forcing officials to take some elsewhere.

“Constant Communication”

Vielmann said visitors had brought guns into the prisons. “Until we have finished the high-security prisons (now under construction), that problem will persist,” he said.

Speaking about the apparent coordination of the attacks, Vielmann said, “the gangs maintain constant communication. They have a Web page and not only synchronize in Guatemala, they synchronize with El Salvador, Honduras and with the United States.”

He said they also use cellular phones and messages passed by prison visitors.

Human Rights Prosecutor Sergio Morales said there was evidence that police had helped gang members smuggle weapons into El Hoyo.

El Hoyo holds 400 alleged gang members. It was opened at an old police barracks after a December 2002 riot involving gang members at another prison in which 14 inmates died.

In the other riots Monday, three inmates died at the Canada Prison Farm 12 miles further south, and officials said eight died in rioting at Guatemala’s top-security Pavon prison, about 15 miles east of the capital.

Two Stabbings

Two others were stabbed to death at a prison in Mazatenango, 85 miles southwest of the capital, according to officials.

Vielmann said smaller disturbances were quashed at three other prisons.

Law enforcement officials say the gangs emerged in Los Angeles and later spread to Central America when criminal migrants were deported back home.

Governments throughout Central America have been waging a campaign against the Mara Salvatrucha and related gangs, tightening laws and throwing thousands of the tattooed gang members into prisons, which have often seen clashes between feuding factions.

In May 2004, a fire swept through a prison in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, killing 107 inmates, most of them Mara Salvatrucha members.

That fire came 13 months after some suspected gang members were locked in their cells, doused with gasoline and set ablaze during a riot at the El Porvenir prison farm near the Honduran city of La Ceiba. Nearly 70 people, including prisoners, visitors, and guards, were killed.

In El Salvador, riots broke out in February when an alleged gang member was transferred to a top-security facility, and one inmate was killed. In September, 800 gang members rioted at two Salvadoran prisons.

Question 1: Discuss the reach of these gangs throughout their country of origin and even in other countries in the general region.

Question 2: In your opinion, what should these countries do to address the challenges associated with violent prison gangs in their correctional systems? Briefly explain your answer.

SOURCE: “At least 31 killed in Guatemala Prison Gang War.” Associated Press, August 15, 2005. Used with permission.

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