

# **Prison Violence and Social Capital: An Analysis of Adult State Correctional Facilities**

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## **Abstract**

This study examines the role of social capital in reducing prison violence and the extent to which prisons facilitating social capital experience different rates of collective violence, inmate violence, and violence against the staff. This paper suggests that in prison environments conducive to social capital, relationships and subgroups among inmates are used as informal methods of social control to diminish prison violence. Using a regression analysis, the author concludes that it is not clear whether social capital contributes to levels of violence within prisons, but that environments where it is most likely to flourish appear potentially conducive to non-violent behavior.

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Over the past century, the criminal justice system has undertaken multiple and often conflicting responsibilities, ranging from punishment and rehabilitation to deterrence and inmate social reintegration.<sup>1</sup> Despite these shifting paradigms in justice, correctional facilities must ensure the safekeeping of those living within their walls. While the function of a prison was once described by McCorkle as the “secure safekeeping of all inmates and personnel within...maintaining and improving the welfare of all inmates confined in it”,<sup>2</sup> such is not the experience of inmates who experience the horrors of physical victimization and sexual predation, nor that of the guards whose lives and safety are often jeopardized by inmate assaults and collective disturbances. This study examines prison violence

and introduces the notion of social capital within correctional institutions as a means through which inmates can normalize non-violent behavior.

Historically, prison rates of violence and homicide have varied by state and region. A study in a Tennessee State Penitentiary in the early 1970s noted 19 stabbing incidents that occurred within slightly over one year.<sup>3</sup> Between 1969 and 1972, 211 stabbing incidents occurred in a Louisiana prison, 11 of which were fatal.<sup>4</sup> In 1974, there were one hundred and ninety-seven recorded male stabling incidents within the California prison system.<sup>5</sup> In 1990 alone, Camp and Camp report that "nearly 100 inmates were murdered; another 10,000 or so were victims of severe assaults that required medical attention".<sup>6</sup> Collective violence poses additional threats to the safety and order of correctional institutions when they erupt or intensify to riot-level. In the 1920s, 1950s, and 1970s, waves of prison riots stirred the public's interest in understanding, preventing, and controlling prison violence.<sup>7</sup> Of the 300 prison riots that have been documented since 1774, approximately 270 occurred within the past fifty years.<sup>8</sup> Today, assaults on inmates and guards, sexual predation, riots, and gang violence are among some of the major dilemmas shared by inmates and their families, prison administrators and staff, and correctional guards. While prison disorder may occur on an individual level or may erupt collectively, prison environments that are conducive to violence and collective action are products of more than just inmate coping deficiencies or isolated managerial and administrative policies. Literature on prison violence recognizes many aspects of prisons that may simultaneously cultivate violent eruptions or victimization. For individual-level and aggregate disruptions to occur, however, perpetrators must not only possess the motivation and drive, but the capacity and resources to carry out certain behaviors within environments that are highly regulated and controlled.

### **Social Capital**

The theory of social capital has been applied to various institutions and communities as a "resource for action",<sup>9</sup> where certain achievements and levels of productivity are enacted through relationships among persons. Social capital has been described as a "web of cooperative relationships between citizens that facilitates resolution of collective action problems"<sup>10</sup> that enables certain communities to engage in cooperative problem-solving. It has facilitated not only economic and political actions, but has also contributed to lowered rates of crime, teenage pregnancy, and juvenile delinquency.<sup>11</sup>

Mansbridge<sup>12</sup> has also explored the role of social capital in political systems, which require reciprocal trust, monitoring systems, and sanctioning. Coleman<sup>13</sup> recognized the existence of social capital within families, schools, communities, and in markets. More recently, Akerlof and Yellen<sup>14</sup> refer to forms of social capital in their model of gang behavior and community cooperation. The principles behind social capital theory involve social structures and networks, appropriable social organizations, obligations and expectations, trust, information channels, and closure of social norms, all of which may explain the facilitation of action.<sup>15</sup>

Coleman's<sup>16</sup> model describes many elements that are applicable to correctional environments, ranging from obligations and expectations to information channels, social norms, and social networks. Though the application of social capital has been largely limited to the fields of political science and economics, its relevance as a counterpart to socio-cultural theories of violence may contribute towards understanding inmate violence and prison culture.

### **Proposed Theory of Non-Violent Norms and Social Capital in Prisons**

Correctional institutions house many violent and dangerous offenders, yet the "vast majority of people filling our expensive new prisons are nonviolent property and drug offenders".<sup>17</sup> For these non-violent offenders with shorter prison sentences, engaging in violent behavior or incurring disciplinary infractions is counterproductive to their potential for successful social reintegration. Johnson reports findings of a Leavenworth prison where nearly 80 percent of the inmates "try to avoid trouble"<sup>18</sup>. Furthermore, he states that the majority of inmates stay to themselves to avert trouble.

However, inmates will seek methods to ease the pains of confinement and alleviate trauma of their incarceration experience when confronted with a stressful situation. This may involve a range of nonviolent actions and strategies, such as engaging in withdrawal, substance abuse, isolation through protective custody, recreational activities, nonviolent strikes, and even semi-disruptive actions such as non-compliance and disobedience.<sup>19</sup> When bureaucratic procedures are perceived as empty gestures of formalism, inmates may resort to other coping methods. Those experiencing overwhelming tension and stress often face dilemmas whereby maximizing their individual short-term interests (i.e. tension reduction) through violent be-

havior may also harm the collective prison population.<sup>20</sup> Rates of inmate victimization may increase when the collective prison population is disrupted, thus magnifying individual stress levels to a greater extent.

Sykes<sup>21</sup> describes a "cohesively-oriented prisoner committed to the values of inmate loyalty, generosity, endurance, and the curbing of frictions who does much to maintain the prison's equilibrium".<sup>22</sup> When prison officials curtail this power, the peaceful environment is no longer sustainable and "the stage has been set for insurrection".<sup>23</sup> Riots may be means through which inmates can reduce this tension and stress, voice their grievances, and regain institutional equilibrium. Similarly, Parisi<sup>24</sup> claims that aggression may be a "tension-reducing coping style of some inmates or groups of inmates, but certainly at the expense of increasing stress among other inmates".<sup>25</sup> Thus, when inmates commit infractions against other inmates or guards, their behavior jeopardizes the entire prison community.

Putnam<sup>26</sup> suggests that in communities where social capital is plentiful, life is easier due to reciprocity, social trust, increased coordination, and communication – all of which enable collective action and problem-solving. Given the enormous presence of non-violent offenders in many prisons, a large segment of the prison population can be expected to share a collective attitude that devalues violence despite the presence of numerous incarceration-related stressors. When the general inmate population encompasses of both violent and non-violent offenders, the "violent potential of a small number of dangerous prisoners may be suppressed by mixing them with a relatively large body of nonviolent prisoners".<sup>27</sup> Therefore, unity, cohesion, and order among inmates should increase in prison environments conducive to social capital, thus sustaining norms of non-violence through social action and informal inmate organization. This provides a "resource for action"<sup>28</sup> to enforce the collective objective of non-violent behavior. With informal social controls intact, fewer former controls by managerial or administrative procedures are needed to maintain order. When the prison staff is perceived as less controlling, inmates are less likely to engage in riots, collective disturbances, and violence.

This study examines the role of social capital in reducing prison violence among federal and state prison inmates. Namely, it seeks to understand what specific characteristics of correctional institutions might facilitate social capital and ultimately influence prison violence. To suggest that social capital exists within prisons, the following sections demonstrate how correctional environments are communities with norms, culture, and

associations.

### Prison: Communities and Cultures

Societies benefit from the cooperative engagement of their members when striving to meet commonly held goals.<sup>29</sup> Within a structural model, individuals who trust others also expect others to follow prescribed rules; therefore, they are more likely themselves to "accept the decisions of authorities".<sup>30</sup> Undoubtedly, the same may describe prison cultures where trust in other inmates, adherence to prison norms and rules, and conflict resolution may be crucial to averting collective uprisings, violent assaults, or occasions of disorder that are dangerous and life-threatening to guards and inmates alike.

Social capital allows certain ends to be met that would otherwise be impossible and without which emerges a socially disorganized community.<sup>31</sup> Goals within prisons may include violence prevention, the maintenance of order, and the manifestation of a safe environment where inmates can serve their sentences without accruing additional time. The presence of social capital within correctional institutions, however, rests upon an assumption then that prisons are active social environments, rich with cultural norms, interactive communities, and complex networks through which individuals may engage in reciprocal interactions. Researchers have described prisons as often highly organized systems, albeit subject to unique norms and different expectations than those existing in free communities. Like any community, however, social capital may be present and measured in prisons not only at an aggregate community level, but also at an individual level where the feelings of trust, confidence, and participation originate.<sup>32</sup>

Prison environments are highly sophisticated cultures filled with "habits, behavior systems, traditions, history, customs, folkways, codes",<sup>33</sup> unique dynamics between inmates and prison workers,<sup>34</sup> and behavioral codes.<sup>35</sup> Prisons have also been portrayed as communities,<sup>36</sup> or "small societies in which inmates develop their own argot, their own code of conduct, and their own leadership ranks",<sup>37</sup> and where peace is maintained through the use of informal social controls and discipline enacted through laws and rules.<sup>38</sup> Power and authority have traditionally been key elements to sustaining social order within prison communities, yet Owen (1988) suggests that "some unique forms of cooperation and reciprocity"<sup>39</sup> characterize most of the relationships between inmates and guards. Therefore,

social order in prisons may be preserved through a delicate balance of interaction and respect between inmates and guards.

The inmate population itself is also a unique culture with a mix of informal groups who exhibit loyalty, organization, solidarity, attachments, and competition.<sup>40</sup> Inmate communication that has evolved into unique profanity and slang may be the vehicle through which positive and negative relationships are facilitated. A range of typologies have been used to classify inmates, many utilizing continuums such as the "asshole-all right continuum",<sup>41</sup> or labels and groupings such as snitches, elitist cliques, old timers and youngsters. Snoop distinguishes between white inmates and inmates who are "proud, black, oppressed",<sup>42</sup> "black, incorrigible and irrational",<sup>43</sup> homosexual, altruistic, and female. Cressey<sup>44</sup> delineates the thieves, the convicts, and the straight inmates, and Clemmer describes the "complete clique man", the "group man", "semi-solitary man", and the "complete-solitary man".<sup>45</sup>

Like any highly structured and intricate culture, prisons have internal structural and institutional conflicts, personal conflicts amongst prison workers, unique normative structures, power struggles within administrative echelons, disparities between inmate and officer interests, and an array of social relationships among individuals within the prison.<sup>46</sup> These relationships have been described as "the fundamental basis of the prison social order".<sup>47</sup> DiIulio lists several factors accounting for varying dimensions of prison order, including: inaccurate or biased data, inmate characteristics, expenditure levels, crowding, inmate-to-staff ratios, levels of formal training, architecture, inmate social system, inmate-staff race relations, level of inmate treatment, and repressive measures.<sup>48</sup>

Theories examining prison disorder have turned to a wide range of plausible determinants of collective action, riots, prison violence, and prison victimization and have explored variables ranging from social and psychological dynamics within inmate populations to managerial techniques at the administrative level. A review of the literature on prison riots and collective violence, inmate violence, and critical factors involved in such insurrections are examined next.

### **Inmate Victimization and Assaults**

Identifying the roots of prison violence and assaults introduces a complex cyclical dynamic in which prison victimization causes other forms

of victimization, a process that has been described as an "insane feedback system through which prison victimization rates are under constant pressure to increase".<sup>49</sup> Delineating victim from perpetrator can be especially difficult when victimizers are instantly transformed into victims during single encounters.<sup>50</sup> Potential motivators for prison violence include alleviating tension through sexual victimization, economic profit, status climbing, self-defense, and opportunities for early release for disruptive inmates who deceive parole boards. This manipulation involves disruptive behavior at the onset of the sentence followed by 'improved' behavior over time. More simply, profits and gains may be reduced to mere cigarette cartons, two of which was once the "going price for a contract murder"<sup>51</sup> in one federal penitentiary.

Fleisher<sup>52</sup> reviews literature on prison violence and examines age, overcrowding, boredom, ethnic and racial tension, sexual jealousy, gang rivalries, and psychological factors. He explores Toch's notion that violent inmates are products of prison and concludes that "violent convicts commit violent acts"<sup>53</sup> and that convicts who experience the aforementioned factors will also commit violence. Similarly, subcultural variables that precipitate prison victimization and involve both prison staff and inmates include attempts to gain political control, economic and market conflicts, prisoner militancy, and staff subcultures that promote prisoner victimization.<sup>54</sup>

Importation theories, on the other hand, suggest that lower-class inmates entering prison often bring in external components that contribute to individual prisons violence.<sup>55</sup> These may include the values, norms, and beliefs found in violent subcultures, gender-role definitions, racist perspectives, and tension related to homosexuality.<sup>56</sup> Bowker also identifies "imported background variables that impact prison victimization"<sup>57</sup> such as age, nature of criminal history, the continuation of drug subcultures within prisons, and prior incarceration history.

Other literature has found that environmental, structural, physical factors (Bowker 1980) and administrative and management factors (Fleiser 1989, Reisig 1998, Useem and Reisig 1999) are key to understanding prison violence. While empirical evidence is scarce amidst often conflicting and/or complimentary theories of prison assaults, riots, and collective action, additional empirical analyses may reveal the differences between prison with high and low rates of violence. Such predictive knowledge may be particularly relevant in a time of massive reform in sentencing policies,

increasingly harsh prison sentences, high rates of incarceration of non-violent offenders, and increasingly crowded correctional institutions. Despite a rapidly changing inmate population, prison administrators will still be held accountable when inmates or staff are injured or killed. To prevent such incidents, prisons must be capable of recognizing risk factors relevant to inmate subcultures in order to prevent prison victimization and to protect its staff.

### Prison Riots, Disorder, and Collective Action

An abundance of theories and variables have been cited as causes of prison violence and riots, ranging from specific factors such as inmate access to weapons, to more complicated and intricate "evolutionary sequences" <sup>58</sup> involving systems of individuals such as Syke's concept of social equilibriums. <sup>59</sup> Other factors that have been identified include overcrowding, abuse by guards, lack of rehabilitation programs or psychiatric care, inmate inactivity, prison structure, incarceration as mentally distorting through assimilation to criminal culture, intermixing of inmates, discrepancies in parole practices, and theories that postulate that riots indicate inmate abuse. <sup>60</sup> Yet, many of these claims have not been substantiated through empirically based research. <sup>61</sup> However, recent perspectives on riots and collective violence view these incidents as occurring within a complex systems context, through which prison violence involves not only inmates, but also prison staff and structural components. Cressey asserts that riots involve not only inmate participation, but include "disturbances among staff members". <sup>62</sup>

Other researchers have identified administrative controls (Conrad 1996, Flynn 1973, DiIulio in McCorkle et al. 1995, Useem and Reisig 1999, DiIulio 1987), conflict theories (South Carolina Department of Corrections 1976), and multiple component or stage theories (Parisi 1982, McCorkle et al. 1995, McCorkle 1956, Wilsnack in DiIulio 1987) that are necessary towards understand prison riots.

A recent analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Justice's 1984 and 1990 censuses of adult correctional facilities found that that living conditions had no effect on prison disorder and that fewer assault rates on inmates and guards occurred prisons with programs (i.e. education, industrial, vocational). <sup>63</sup> Researchers noticed "little that resembles a 'community' behind the walls" <sup>64</sup> and found that structural, institutional, and environmental variables accounted for less than 15% of the variance in

individual and large-scale rates of violence. <sup>65</sup> Ultimately, however, they concluded that assault rates and collective disturbances were unrelated.

The South Carolina Department of Corrections Collective Violence Research Project (1976) found noteworthy differences between riot prison and non-riot prisons. Riots occurred more frequently in high maximum-security prisons and in prisons using certain methods of inmate classification. Within riot prisons, they also found a positive association with prison capacity, prison age, fewer time spent by wardens with inmates, higher levels of education in inmates and COs, lack of work assignments in medium and minimum security prisons, lack of recreational activities, and more administrative and punitive segregated housing. However, the question remains "*Given equal exposure to any single condition or event, why do some prison have disturbances while others do not?*" <sup>66</sup>

Since the 1980s and 1990s, however, large-scale changes within the criminal justice system have occurred in areas of policing, prosecution, sentencing, and prisons. Blumstein reviews some recent changes in policies and attitudes, such as skepticism over the rehabilitation model of imprisonment that has "contributed significantly to the growth in prison populations"; <sup>67</sup> mandatory-minimum sentencing laws; limitations placed on judicial discretion in sentencing; and the crack-cocaine epidemic of the 1980s. These enormous changes within the criminal justice system are likely to be accompanied by vast changes within inmate populations and subcultures, administrative policies and techniques, prison structures and environments, and inmate norms, values and behaviors such that models of prison violence that were widely accepted two decades ago may not be applicable to current prison systems. This study analyzes prison assaults against inmates and guards, staff and inmate deaths caused by inmates, riots, fires, and collective disturbances in order to understand prison violence. Specifically, it introduces the notion of social capital within correctional facilities as a vehicle through which inmate norms of non-violence may be disseminated to reduce prison disruptions.

It is expected that prison conditions that facilitate repeated encounters between inmates (such as multiple occupancy housing) and provide educational and work programs will experience less violence directed both towards other inmates and the institution itself. In prisons with a more diverse population, it is expected that violence against inmates will decrease due to the formation of several subgroups that enforce informal social control over their members. However, violence against inmates and

the institution is expected to rise in prisons with a higher percent of maximum-security inmates with violent tendencies. In prisons where many inmates are permitted to leave the facility unsupervised in order to participate in a special program, violence against the institution and inmates is expected to increase. Inmates who are not granted this privilege are likely to be those who are less trustworthy due to a variety of reasons, such as disciplinary infractions or disruptive behavior. Therefore, they are likely to provoke additional violence against both inmates and the institution as a symbol of their perceived injustice and as a method of generating disciplinary citations among the privileged inmates. Finally, when the ratio between the correctional staff and total number of inmates increases, violence against the institution is expected to increase.

## Methods

The data in this analysis was originally collected by the U.S. Department of Justice in a 1995 Census of State and Federal Adult Correctional Facilities.<sup>68</sup> Data were obtained from July 1, 1994 through June 30, 1995. Unlike censuses that were conducted in prior years, the respondents in this census completed identical survey forms. The dataset includes 1500 facilities contracted to state governments, operated by joint authority, or under the jurisdiction of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. 529 institutions are categorized boot camps, alcohol treatment facilities, medical facilities, and classification centers and were filtered from the dataset, resulting in 971 remaining institutions whose main function is categorized as 'general population or confinement'. Of the 971 institutions, 127 (13.1%) were federally operated, 836 (86.1%) were under state departments of corrections jurisdiction, and 8 (0.8%) were operated by local/joint authority. Of the prisons, 243 (25%) were classified as maximum/close/high, 391 (40.27%) as medium level, 335 (34.5%) as minimum/low, and 2 (0.21%) as administrative custody. The total reported prison population from the 971 prisons was 862,312 with a mean inmate count (on June 30, 1995) of 888.07 (s.d.= 872.78). Prison populations ranged from 20 to 6257 inmates. On average, the institutions held 833.14 males and 54.92 females. Of the inmates included in the survey, 35.44% were Caucasian, and 48.03% African American. The average inmate classifications by gender and security level were: maximum males (179.95), maximum females (4.63), medium males (356.2), medium females (17.95), minimum males (279.59), and minimum females (28.01).

In this nonexperimental design using statistical controls, three

models were constructed to determine whether variation in inmate-inflicted violence directed towards inmates (*inmate*), inmate-inflicted incidents affecting the staff and institution (*institution*), or total inmate-inflicted incidents (*total*) could be attributed to the structural properties of the institution, demographics of the inmate population, and other institutional programs and policies. The construction of three dependent variables enabled specific and aggregate analyses of violence directed towards inmates and towards the institution.

Prisons varying in the percentages of maximum-security inmates housed were expected to report diverse levels and types of violence; thus heteroskedasticity was suspected in the disturbance terms of the *percent maximum security* variable. This suspicion was verified by plotting the squared residuals obtained from the *institution* and *total* models against *percent of maximum-security inmates*. Graphical evidence also indicated unequal variance in the squared residuals across observations when variables in the *inmate* regression model were plotted against *percent of inmates on death row*. The Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey test was used to calculate an alternate estimate of the squared residuals ( $\epsilon^2$ ) in order to detect heteroskedasticity. By dividing the residual sum of squares for each relevant regression by the total number of observations, the maximum likelihood estimator [MLE] was calculated and used to create  $p_i$  [(squared residuals)/MLE]. By regressing  $p_i$  on the two variables suspected of causing heteroskedasticity and then dividing the resulting estimated sum of squares in half [with a chi-square distribution], with degrees of freedom equal to the number of independent variables, the resulting test statistic reinforced the earlier hypothesis of heteroskedasticity in both variables. Additional graphical evidence suggested that for many other independent variables, the squared residuals were heteroskedastic, which may result from extreme outliers in some variables and errors in the model specification.

A square-root transformation in the *institution* and *total* models was initially used to correct for heteroskedasticity, but in attempts to create homoskedastic variances in each model, the transformed equations resulted in severe multicollinearity among the independent and control variables, as indicated by VIF statistics exceeding 1000, high bivariate correlations, auxiliary tests, and TOL values exceeding 1. Thus, correcting for heteroskedasticity through a GLS transformation exacerbated the problem by introducing near-multicollinearity in each model. Thus, OLS was used for three original models despite the presence of heteroskedasticity. Though many t-statistics were statistically significant with high  $R^2$ s, the indepen-

dent variables were highly correlated. The differences between the GLS and OLS estimators suggest a spurious association where high correlations among transformed variables disappear when the original equation is applied.<sup>69</sup> Due to the unknown variance ( $\delta^2_i$ ) in each model, and without assumptions regarding the error variance and independent variable, no additional transformations were used.

#### *Dependent Variables*

For the purpose of this study, the terms *violence* and *infractions* will be used interchangeably to reflect all assaults, all deaths, riots, fires, and all reported disturbances. Prison violence was measured in by constructing three separate dependent variables: 1) violence against other inmates, 2) infractions against the institution, and 3) total infractions against both inmates and the institution. The *infractions against inmates* variable measures the sum of inmate-inflicted inmate deaths and inmate assaults (physical or sexual) on other inmates. *Infractions against the institution* reflects the sum of inmate-inflicted assaults (physical or sexual) against the staff, inmates-inflicted staff deaths, total reported riots (defined as involving five or more inmates and resulting in serious injury or significant property damage), total fires resulting in damages of over \$50.00, and other disturbances. *Total infractions* aggregates all infractions against inmates and the institution. The frequency and mean of each incident category from the 971 institutions are listed in Table A.

**Table A: Total and Mean Number of Recorded Assaults, Inmate/Staff Deaths, Riots, Fires, and Other Disturbances**

Incident	Total	Mean
Assaults on facility staff	11550	12.12
Assaults on other inmates	22429	23.73
Staff deaths from assaults	14	0.014
Inmate deaths from assaults	74	0.076
Fires	707	0.73
Riots	290	0.3
Other disturbances	1751	1.81

For each dependent variable in each of the three models, the total number of relevant incidents per each institution was divided by the total number of inmates from that institution and multiplied by 100 to create a

value reflecting the number of incidents per 100 inmates.

#### *Independent Variables*

To identify prison conditions conducive to building or maintaining social capital, the independent variables reflect the following factors: (a) size of the inmate population, (b) means through which inmates could repeatedly interact, (c) inmate diversity, (d) number of correctional officers, (e) program participation, and (f) correspondence with family.

The number of inmates per institution was measured by the reported inmate count on June 30, 1995. Means through which inmates could repeatedly interact and would allow for social norms and subcultures to develop and the dissemination of values and beliefs include: *percent of inmates in multiple occupancy housing*, *percent of inmates on work assignments*, and *ratio of total number of prison programs to total number of inmates* (i.e. basic adult education, secondary education (GED), special education for inmates with learning disabilities, vocational training, college courses, study release, drug dependency, mental health counseling, employment, life skills and community adjustment, parenting, and others). The latter variable is an indicator of the potential circumstances where inmates may interact and cooperate. Diversity was measured by multiplying the proportion of white inmates per institution by the proportion of African American inmates. Other racial categories were not included due to a lack of variance. Participation in educational programs was measured by the percentage of inmates enrolled in any type of educational programs. Finally, a dummy variable indicating whether children were allowed to spend the night at the facility was created by entering a "1" if children are not permitted to stay overnight and "0" if they were permitted.

#### *Control Variables*

Several control variables were used to account for differences between the prisons. These include: *overcrowding* (measured by the total number of inmates divided by the rated capacity and multiplied by 100 to obtain a percentage over capacity), *percent of inmates under 18 years of age*, *percent of inmates on death row*, *percent of maximum security inmates*, *ratio of correctional staff* (excluding administrators, maintenance clerics, professional/treatment staff) *to inmate population*, and *percent of inmates in special custody* (administrative, protective, and disciplinary).

Table B: Regression Models and Variables

<b>Dependent Variables</b>	<p><b>INST</b>= Total incidents against <b>institution</b> per 100 inmates (assaults against staff, staff deaths, riots, fires, disturbances)</p> <p><b>INM</b>= Total incidents against <b>inmates</b> per 100 inmate (inmate assaults and inmate deaths by other inmates)</p> <p><b>TOT</b>= <b>Total</b> incidents per 100 inmates (all assaults, all inmate inflicted deaths, riots, fires, disturbances)</p>
<b>Independent Variables</b>	<p><b>POP</b> = Total prison population</p> <p><b>MULT</b> = % of inmates in multiple occupancy housing</p> <p><b>PROG</b>= Ratio (programs: inmates)</p> <p><b>DIV</b>= Diversity (proportion African American * proportion. Caucasian)</p> <p><b>EDU</b>= % of inmates in educational program</p> <p><b>CHIL</b> = Children allowed to stay overnight dummy (1=no)</p> <p><b>WRK</b> = % of inmates on work assignment</p>

A dummy variable (*federal*) controlled for prisons operated by different jurisdictions, thus allowing for a comparison between federally operated institutions and those run by the state or by joint/local authority. Due to the lack of variance in the joint/local variable, the reference category represents all prisons under state and joint/local authority. In the federal dummy variable, a "1" was entered if the prison is federally operated and "0" if state or local.

Some prisons housed women only, men only, or both men and women. To control for the variation in gender between prisons, a dummy variable was created for *women only* and for *women/men* where "1" was entered if it satisfied the description and "0" if otherwise. The reference category was *men only* prisons. Some prisons afforded inmates the privilege of leaving the institution without supervision on a regular basis for various reasons. To control for this policy difference among prisons, a dummy variable was created where "1" indicates that the prison where over 50 percent of the inmates are permitted to leave and "0" if less than 50 percent leave the prison.

<b>Controls</b>	<p><b>FED</b>= Federal dummy (1= federally operated, 0= state or joint/local operated)</p> <p><b>JUV</b> = % of inmates under 18 years</p> <p><b>SPEC</b> = % of inmates in special custody (admin., protect., disciplinary.)</p> <p><b>ROW</b> = % of inmates on death row</p> <p><b>MAX</b> = % maximum security inmates</p> <p><b>STAF</b> = Ratio: (correctional staff) : (inmates)</p> <p><b>WOM</b>= Women only dummy (1= prison houses only women)</p> <p><b>MEN</b>= Women and men dummy (1= prison houses women and men)</p> <p><b>LEAV</b> = Leave dummy (1 = 50% or more permitted to leave, 0= less than 50%)</p> <p><b>OVER</b>= % overcapacity</p>
	<b>Results</b>
<b>Models</b>	<p><b>INST</b> = <math>\beta_1 + \beta_2(\text{POP})_i + \beta_3[\text{MULT}]_i + \beta_4[\text{PROG}]_i + \beta_5[\text{DIV}]_i + \beta_6[\text{EDU}]_i + \beta_7[\text{CHIL}]_i + \beta_8[\text{WRK}]_i + \beta_9[\text{FED}]_i + \beta_{10}[\text{JUV}]_i + \beta_{11}[\text{SPEC}]_i + \beta_{12}[\text{ROW}]_i + \beta_{13}[\text{MAX}]_i + \beta_{14}[\text{STAF}]_i + \beta_{15}[\text{WOM}]_i + \beta_{16}[\text{MEN}]_i + \beta_{17}[\text{LEAV}]_i + \beta_{18}[\text{OVER}]_i + \mu_i</math></p> <p><b>INM</b> = <math>\beta_1 + \beta_2(\text{POP})_j + \beta_3[\text{MULT}]_j + \beta_4[\text{PROG}]_j + \beta_5[\text{DIV}]_j + \beta_6[\text{EDU}]_j + \beta_7[\text{CHIL}]_j + \beta_8[\text{WRK}]_j + \beta_9[\text{FED}]_j + \beta_{10}[\text{JUV}]_j + \beta_{11}[\text{SPEC}]_j + \beta_{12}[\text{ROW}]_j + \beta_{13}[\text{MAX}]_j + \beta_{14}[\text{STAF}]_j + \beta_{15}[\text{WOM}]_j + \beta_{16}[\text{MEN}]_j + \beta_{17}[\text{LEAV}]_j + \beta_{18}[\text{OVER}]_j + \mu_j</math></p> <p><b>TOT</b> = <math>\beta_1 + \beta_2(\text{POP})_k + \beta_3[\text{MULT}]_k + \beta_4[\text{PROG}]_k + \beta_5[\text{DIV}]_k + \beta_6[\text{EDU}]_k + \beta_7[\text{CHIL}]_k + \beta_8[\text{WRK}]_k + \beta_9[\text{FED}]_k + \beta_{10}[\text{JUV}]_k + \beta_{11}[\text{SPEC}]_k + \beta_{12}[\text{ROW}]_k + \beta_{13}[\text{MAX}]_k + \beta_{14}[\text{STAF}]_k + \beta_{15}[\text{WOM}]_k + \beta_{16}[\text{MEN}]_k + \beta_{17}[\text{LEAV}]_k + \beta_{18}[\text{OVER}]_k + \mu_k</math></p>

Table C summarizes findings from the three separate regressions examining violence directed towards 1) inmates, 2) institution, and 3) both inmates and institution. Overall, the model accounted for 32.9% of the variance in violence directed towards the institution ( $R^2 = 0.329$ ,  $F = 27.484$ ,  $p = 0.0$ ), 13.0% of the variance in inmate on inmate violence ( $R^2 = 0.130$ ,  $F = 8.349$ ,  $p = 0.0$ ), and 25.9% of the variation in the *total* dependent variable.

The results indicate that by holding all other variables constant, multiple housing had a significantly negative effect only on the number of incidents against the institution. For every percent increase in the number of inmates in multiple occupancy housing, controlling for all else, the num-



ber of incidents against the institution per 100 inmates decreased on average by 0.144. While it was suspected that increased overcapacity would result in increased incidents of violence, it did not have a statistically significant effect in any models. Diversity also appeared to have a significantly large role in reducing the overall number of incidents, especially violence directed against inmates. For every unit increase in the diversity scale (proportion of African American inmates multiplied by proportion of White inmates), the number of total incidents per 100 inmates decreased on average by 5.33 and the number of infractions against inmates per 100 inmates on average by 4.761 when controlling for all else. The number of inmates in special custody also appeared to be significantly related to prison violence.

While the percent of inmates on death row was not statistically significant in each of the three models, the percent of inmates in maximum security was positively associated with a slight increase of violence towards the institution and total violence. Some of the prisons housed inmates who were under 18 years old. As suspected, the number of incidents against inmates increased on average by 0.24 per 100 inmates for every percent increase in inmates under 18.

The findings also indicate that the number of inmates on work assignment is negatively related to violence against the institution and total violence, although the substantive interpretation may not be meaningful. These decreases may not have a noticeable effect within prisons. Interestingly, when over 50% of inmates are permitted to leave the institution unsupervised for a range of reasons, violence against the institution seems to increase. The prison environment also had an impact on violence directed towards the institution and towards inmates. When compared to prisons with only male inmates, prisons with both men and women experienced, on average, 0.749 fewer incidents against the institution per 100 inmates. Prisons housing women only showed no statistically significant impact on any form of violence. Finally, federally operated institutions experienced 0.806 fewer incidents against inmates per 100 inmates on average than did the sample of joint/local authority and state operated prisons.

**Table C: Unstandardized and Standardized Regression Coefficients from Three Regressions:  
Total Incidents, Infractions Against Inmates, Infractions Against Institution  
(per 100 inmates)**

	Total Unstand. B	Std. Error	Std. Coeff. Beta	Inmates B	Std. Error	Std. Coeff. Beta	Institution B	Std. Errors	Std. Coeff. Beta
Inmate Population	9.03E-05	0	0.014	6.68E-05	0	0.016	1.87E-05	0	0.005
% Multiple Occupancy	-1.07E-02	0.008	-0.048	3.33E-03	0.005	0.023	-1.44E-02	0.004	-0.122
Programs: Inmates	-4.538	7.084	-0.024	-1.368	4.931	-0.011	-3.164	3.57	-0.031
Diversity	-5.336 ↓	2.616	-0.061	-4.761 ↓	1.821	-0.085	-0.535	1.318	-0.012
% Education programs	-1.93E-03	0.01	-0.006	-1.94E-03	0.007	-0.009	-2.26E-04	0.005	-0.001
Children dummy	0.986	0.697	0.046	0.728	0.485	0.053	0.24	0.351	0.021
% Under 18	0.167	0.14	0.034	0.240 ↑	0.097	0.076	-4.06E-02	0.071	-0.016
% On death row	0.133	0.122	0.032	9.80E-02	0.085	0.036	3.00E-02	0.062	0.013
% Maximum security	1.960E-02 ↑	0.008	0.093	3.49E-03	0.005	0.026	1.691E-02 ↑	0.004	0.151
% Work assignment	-1.284E-02 ↓	0.007	-0.055	-4.88E-03	0.005	-0.033	-8.360E-03 ↓	0.004	-0.068
Women only dummy	7.24E-02	0.603	0.004	1.78E-02	0.42	0.001	7.20E-02	0.304	0.007
Women/Men dummy	-0.481	0.707	-0.02	0.25	0.492	0.016	-0.749 ↓	0.356	-0.059
Officers: Inmates	2.048	1.321	0.053	1.358	0.919	0.055	0.638	0.665	0.031
Overcrowding	7.08E-03	0.007	0.033	4.15E-03	0.005	0.03	2.70E-03	0.003	0.023
% In special custody	0.254 ↑	0.023	0.368	0.117 ↑	0.016	0.264	0.137 ↑	0.012	0.375
Leave dummy	0.401	0.842	0.015	-0.259	0.586	-0.015	0.712 ↑	0.424	0.051
Federal dummy	-0.415	0.51	-0.024	-0.806 ↓	0.355	-0.074	0.333	0.257	0.037

## Discussion

The findings from the three regression analyses suggest that in prison environments conducive to social capital, certain forms of prison violence may decrease. An increase in the percentage of inmates living in multiple occupancy housing appears to reduce the total number of riots, fires, and assaults on inmates, and staff deaths. Though this finding may not be substantively significant, it still suggests that when inmates are exposed to each other and are able to communicate freely, they may develop norms that devalue infractions and violence against the prison. This can have rewarding consequences, such that tension and stress between and among staff and prisoners may be alleviated, fewer inmates receive disciplinary infractions, and a peaceful equilibrium may be preserved within the prison environment. This enables inmates to engage in informal social organization through which cooperation, reciprocity, and trust may be facilitated.<sup>70</sup> As a result, the nonviolent beliefs and values held by many of the nonviolent inmates may be fostered and dispersed throughout the prison.

In addition, prisons with more maximum-security inmates experience more infractions against the institutions and the total amount of violence. This may be explained by the higher degrees of freedom granted to minimum- or low- security inmates, which may allow for the development of informal social networks, subgroups, communication channels, and provide more opportunities for cooperation and reciprocity. With more inmates classified as maximum-security who are in single cells, the less likely they are to interact with other inmates, which is crucial to forming or strengthening social capital and cooperative behaviors. When these inmates are isolated from each other and the general inmate population, the values of the nonviolent inmates are difficult to disseminate and fewer informal social controls may exist to reinforce non-violent behaviors. Therefore, it is not surprising that much of their violence is directed towards the institution, as well as in the *total* model. However, it is likely that the increase in maximum-security inmates is associated with violence against the institution due to the often violent and impulsive nature of the inmates rather than the prison conditions.

Increased diversity also has a large violence reducing effect on the total number of incidents, especially those directed towards inmates. With increased diversity, fewer inmates who are perceived as minorities the number of subgroups increases. These groups, or cliques, may be fairly small in diverse populations but may provide the context in which values,

beliefs, norms, and trust may be generated between inmates. In addition, inmates who belong to small subgroups may interact with their peers more frequently, thus providing opportunities for communication channels to develop and for more occasions of cooperation and reciprocity. As a result, the reduced number of incidents directed towards other inmates seems likely to be a product of the many subgroups in which inmates may divide themselves within a diverse inmate population. It should be noted, however, that only African American and Caucasian inmates were included in the measure of diversity. By including other racial/ethnic groups (Asian Americans, Native Americans, Hispanic/Latinos) to increase variation in the diversity measure, and by examining the geographical locations of the prisons in future studies, regional differences regarding the effect of diversity upon violence may be detected.

Some elements expected to foster social capital were not statistically significant, such as the ratio of the number of educational/special programs inmates the percent of inmates in educational programs, and when the ratio between the number of correctional officers and inmates was low. It was also expected that prisons allowing children to spend the night would generally experience less violence, but no evidence of this was detected. However, only 75 prisons allowed children to spend the night at the institution, allowing for little variance in observations. This suggests that certain prison conditions, while likely to cultivate norms and channels of communication, may not influence levels of violence within today's prison population. However, other control variables produced more significant results.

The percent of inmates in administrative, protective, and disciplinary custody appears to be significantly related to violence towards inmates, the institution, and overall violence. Where a larger percent of the inmate population is under the direct control and supervision of the prison staff, more violence can be expected to ensue against the institution. Though the percent of inmates in special custody was statistically significant, the low parameter estimates indicate that this finding may have a minimal substantive impact.

In facilities housing a greater percent of inmates under 18 years old, there appears to be a slight increase of violence against other inmates. This may be explained by developmental, experiential, and maturational differences between youthful offenders and adult inmates. Younger offenders are often violent and it is not surprising that their violent tenden-

cies emerge in the form of assaults against each other. Further, older and seasoned inmates may attempt to intimidate or use younger inmates, both physically and sexually, which may result in physical altercations.

It appears that the elements increasing or reducing violence against inmates may be different from those resulting in violence against the institutions. This may be an indicator that informal social controls among inmates can be used to reduce violence against each other, against the institution, or both. By examining the standardized coefficients in the *total* model, it appears that the reduction in the number of incidents per 100 inmates is more responsive to the level of diversity than to the percent of inmates on work assignment. However, the violence is more responsive to the percent of inmates in special custody than to the percent in maximum security when violence increases.

Overall, relationships and subgroups among inmates might serve as an informal method of social control that can further diminish the number of incidents against the institution. Similarly, prisons with more inmates in special custody have the greatest impact on the variation of violence in institutions. Where the percent of inmates in special custody increases violence among inmates, it might also heighten the violence against the institution since the informal controls against such violence are not intact among the inmates. It is likely that where violence against inmates is present, more disorganization occurs and as a result, incentives to not commit infractions against the institution are not effective. Likewise, where violence against inmates is low, non-violent inmates may be drawing upon resources to promote their non-violent interests.<sup>71</sup> In the absence of violence, there may be a level of trustworthiness that allows the prison population to "accomplish much more than a comparable group without that trustworthiness",<sup>72</sup> thus further reducing the likelihood of infractions against the institution. Ultimately, it is not clear whether social capital per se contributes to levels of violence within prisons, but environments where it is most likely to flourish appear potentially conducive to promoting non-violent behaviors.

### Limitations

Several limitations to this study should be noted. The dependent variables are measured as number of incidents and therefore cannot be a negative; thus, there is no upper bound and the lower bound is unobservable. Future analyses should use statistical procedures to correct for this.

Further, the surveys do not reflect demographic data about the inmates regarding age, type of offense, length of sentence, criminal history, substance abuse, use of prescribed medication, and detailed information regarding each violent incident within prison.

While the standardized questionnaire used in this census ensures high measurement reliability, the use of second-hand data does not guarantee that the surveys were accurately completed. Further, recording procedures varying across jurisdictions suggests potential instrumentation effects, which may be a potential source of measurement error in the dependent variables. Officers may underreport incidents and each prison may have different definitions of what constitutes an infraction. Therefore, we risk measurement error in both the independent and dependent variables, which may result in misleading conclusions. Multiple treatment interference also threatens the internal validity of each model such that the combination of individual elements in certain prisons may enhance or reduce prison violence to a greater extent than each element individually. McCorkle et al.<sup>73</sup> propose that increased security may lead to both increases and decreases in violence, suggesting that any one variable may have polar effects across different prisons.

Though the parameter estimates may remain unbiased when we have systematic measurement error in the dependent variables, we would encounter large standard errors and inconsistent estimates. Also, by measuring social capital through several independent variables instead of an index or scale remains another potential source of measurement error. Thus, further research on measuring social capital in correctional institutions is necessary. In addition, future analyses should use a weighting system to account for the severity of each offense and also determine if the indicators measuring violence against inmates and violence against the institution are correlated.

Despite the findings of this study, any statistical and substantive interpretations should be approached with caution due to the remaining heteroskedasticity. By using OLS regardless of the heteroskedastic disturbance terms in each model, we are likely to encounter estimators that are unbiased but inefficient. Because the variance has not been minimized, the standard errors may be inflated and confidence intervals too wide. In addition, the t-statistics may be too small due to the large standard errors, and the F-statistics may be inaccurate as well. Thus, any findings derived from this study risk inaccuracy and may produce misleading conclusions.

Conducting additional statistical tests to detect heteroskedasticity and isolate the responsible variables may enable us to transform the models such that the disturbance terms are homoskedastic. Techniques commonly used are the Glejser test, the Goldfeld-Quandt test, and the Park test.<sup>74</sup> In addition, White's heteroskedasticity-consistent variances and standard errors procedure may be practical in attaining consistent variance. Further, the models in this study were created under the assumption of linearity in each parameter, thus risking poor functional form.

### Future Research

This study assumes that social capital exists in prisons, although measurement may be difficult. Further research may reveal methods of measuring norms and indicators of social capital in prison. It is also important to determine whether social capital actually reduces violence and disciplinary infractions rather than establishing norms that increase collective violence and disturbances. It is possible that different inmate populations utilize social capital differently as a function of institutional structure, gender, characteristics of staff, and diversity. Additional research may also study racial compositions among inmate populations to determine whether diversity reduces or increases infractions. If so, is there an optimal level of diversity? Is violence in homogeneous prison populations different than environments with more diversity? Is violence against inmates significantly different than violence directed towards the institution? Does the type and severity of violence/infraction change with different prison populations? Clearly, more research is needed to examine positive and cooperative behaviors among prison populations and to determine what factors may make prisons safer for inmates and staff.

### Conclusion

Findings from this study suggest that certain violence-reducing factors among inmates are different from violence directed towards the institution. Whether violence against inmates instigates violence against the institution is left to be determined. In prisons with less violence among the inmate population, informal social controls may be reducing violence directed towards the institution. To create and sustain a system of non-violence, inmates may be utilizing behaviors that are characteristic of communities with high levels of social capital. Further analysis is needed to understand the way that resources within prisons may be combined to create "different system-level behavior"<sup>75</sup> and to determine whether social

capital among inmates is a valuable resource for the entire institution. Ultimately, when fewer riots, fires, disturbances, and assaults are directed towards the institution, prison staff and guards can work under safer conditions and institutions can operate more efficiently.

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#### Notes

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## Religiosity, Presidential Campaign Discourse and The Democratic Party

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Government

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### Abstract

This essay seeks to examine the effect religion, or at least the rhetoric of religion also called religiosity, has had on Republican and Democratic Party campaign discourse in the last twenty to thirty years. The influx of religious messages and themes, particularly in presidential campaigning, is widely accepted and understood to be an ongoing trend since the birth of our nation. Empirical evidence proves this is not the case. Rather, the recent rise in religiosity represents a shift in the general political debate that has impacted not only the Republican Party, but the Democratic Party as well.

Religion must be considered as a value that affects how issues are framed, how candidates campaign, and ultimately how citizens vote. Whether this religiosity is good or bad, however, is not the focus of the research at hand. Neither does this endeavor argue whether religion and politics should be mixed or what that mix means to the separation of church and state. While these are extremely important questions, this essay represents an attempt to look the rise in religiosity from a different point of view.

First, this research provides evidence of the increased religiosity in recent presidential campaign discourse and demonstrates that this rise is disproportionate with the nation's overall religiousness. Second, it considers why the conservative religious right became politically active when it did and how it influenced the Republican Party. Third, it demonstrates that this shift by the Republicans eventually forced the Democrats to shift their campaign messages as well. Finally, this essay argues that religion is an extremely important social factor influencing issues and candidate preferences for voters. Therefore, the use of religiosity as campaign rhetoric is worthy of careful scholarly attention.

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