Midwest Social Sciences Journal

Volume 25 | Issue 1 Article 9

6-15-2022

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Cover Page Footnote

The author wishes to thank the Department of Correction for approving this project and graciously allowing the author access to the facilities. She also wishes to thank the incarcerated individuals who agreed to participate and Courtney Marshall, who served as research assistant. This research was supported by a Faculty Research and Creative Works Grant from the University of Southern Indiana and two Liberal Arts Research Awards from the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Southern Indiana.

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ABSTRACT

The punitiveness of prisons is considered necessary for deterrence, but there is also a societal expectation that prisons will also rehabilitate. Scholars have examined whether prisons are ideal environments for rehabilitation from the perspective of the inmate, though this work focuses largely on measurement issues related to the scales used to measure offenders' perceptions. The current research expands upon this by asking a sample of 154 incarcerated men from across three correctional facilities in the midwestern United States what they think about their current correctional environment using the Prison Environment Scale (PES) and focusing on the answers provided by those incarcerated individuals. These results are presented descriptively, giving a voice to the incarcerated and to their perceptions of the prison environment. Results from this exploratory study indicate that incarcerated individuals feel negatively about the social and physical environment of prisons, noting the existence of hierarchies, use of possessions as currency, lack of physical space, and lack of meaningful activities. Devising ways to promote a prosocial prison environment is important for effective rehabilitation, improved institutional conduct, and positive postrelease outcomes.

KEY WORDS Inmate Attitudes; Inmate Perceptions; Prison Environment; Physical Environment; Social Environment

In an era of mass incarceration in the United States, studies of prisons and prisoners remain relevant. Although contemporary prisons are meant to focus on both punishment and rehabilitation, this dual mission comes with contradictions. Exploring the environment that

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exists within the prison is important for several reasons. First, the overemphasis on punishment during the past four decades has stimulated the "no frills," or penal harm, movement, in which increased punitiveness of the prison environment is viewed as appropriate to deter offenders and potential offenders (Garland 2001; Siegel and Bartollas 2016). Second, the American public wants offenders to be rehabilitated prior to their release (Cullen et al. 2000, 2002; Roberts and Hough 2005), and rehabilitative programs are offered within correctional facilities to reduce offending (Latessa, Cullen, and Gendreau 2002; Lipsey and Cullen 2007; Wilson et al. 2000). Some question exists as to whether prisons are ideal or appropriate environments in which to rehabilitate individuals, however. Prisons isolate offenders from their families and communities and contribute to the development of antisocial coping mechanisms, all of which make prison environments unlikely to be supportive of rehabilitation (Petersilia 2003; Sykes 1958). The presence of prison gangs and the threat of physical and sexual violence further contribute to negative environments (Fleisher and Decker 2001; Trammell 2012). Although these perils of the prison environment have been investigated, little attention has been paid to how incarcerated individuals themselves interpret the physical and social environments surrounding them. An idea of how incarcerated individuals perceive the prison environment generally is needed, given how important that environment is to rehabilitation, misconduct while incarcerated, and recidivism.

Previous research exploring the prison environment has focused largely on examining scales used to measure offenders' perceptions of the prison environment (Ross et al. 2008; Saylor 1984; Tonkin 2015; Wright 1985) or has been conducted in countries other than the United States (Allison and Ireland 2010; Ireland, Ireland, and Power 2016; Molleman and van Ginneken 2015; Stasch et al. 2018; Woessner and Schwedler 2014). While some research has focused on the United States, much of that is outdated (Saylor 1984; Waters and Megathlin 2002; for exceptions, see Bradford 2006 and Ross et al. 2008). The current research provides a contemporary examination by asking incarcerated individuals in the midwestern United States what they think about their current correctional environment utilizing the Prison Environment Scale (PES, Allison and Ireland 2010) using data collected in 2017. These results are presented descriptively, giving a voice to the incarcerated and to their perceptions of the prison environment. Utilizing a sample of 154 men incarcerated in three prisons in a U.S. midwestern state, results from this exploratory study indicate that incarcerated individuals feel negatively about the social and physical environments of prisons, noting the existence of hierarchies, use of possessions as currency, lack of physical space, and lack of meaningful activities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Prison Environment

The prison environment consists of the physical structure and layout of the facility as well as the social atmosphere and relationships. The physical and social environments are affected by the regulations governing correctional facilities. The prison's purpose of maintaining control over its incarcerated occupants is thus reflected in its physical structure and social climate.

The physical structures of prison facilities are complex, and in the United States, they vary from state to state and within states. The most obvious differences are related to security level. Minimum- or low-security prisons are for those deemed the smallest risk to society and who do not require a strict level of supervision. Minimum-security prisons often lack perimeter fences, typically house the incarcerated in dormitories, and allow the incarcerated the most freedom of movement. Medium- and maximum-security facilities are characterized by perimeter fencing or double fencing and watchtowers (Siegel and Bartollas 2016). Medium-security prisons may house incarcerated individuals in dormitories or cells and exert more control over movement. Maximum-security prisons house the incarcerated in cells and strictly control movement. In supermax prisons, incarcerated individuals are housed in single cells, typically for 23 hours per day, and exert extremely strict control over the incarcerated individuals' movements outside their cells. As security level of the prison increases, the inmate-to-staff ratio increases (Bradford 2006; Siegel and Bartollas 2016).

In addition to security level and physical structure, other physical aspects of prison environments should be noted. Prisons often lack natural daylight and have "harsh acoustic environments" (Moran 2019:47). Natural light and control of noise have been shown to be important for health, well-being, and recovery and are "likely to be extremely challenging to deliver in prison" (Moran 2019:47). A study of Dutch remand centers indicated that the layout of the prison significantly affected how incarcerated individuals felt about their relationships with staff, with those housed in panopticon-style prisons, older units, and units with more double cells feeling less positive about their interactions with staff (Beijersbergen et al. 2016). Molleman and van Ginneken (2015) found that prisoners who shared cells viewed the quality of the prison as lower than those who did not share cells. The no-frills movement has also seen the removal of weight-lifting equipment, cable television, R-rated movies, and other amenities from the correctional environment because of the idea that offenders do not deserve such luxuries and that prison environments need to be as Spartan as possible (Hensley et al. 2003; Johnson, Bennett, and Flanagan 1997). These physical features of prisons, along with others not specifically mentioned here, are the physical context in which the social climate forms.

Wright (1985) identified social climate as "a set of organizational properties or conditions that are perceived by its members and are assumed to exert a major influence on behavior" (p. 258). In the prison context, scholars have been interested in how incarcerated individuals experience incarceration, as the prison environment will influence how the individuals adapt and conduct themselves in this environment and perhaps after release (Wright 1985). As Moran (2019) recently wrote, "It is perhaps intuitively clear to anyone living or working in prison that the nature of the prison environment affects the wellbeing of those within it" (p. 48). In the 1970s, Toch (1977:10) interviewed incarcerated individuals in order to identify "shared environmental concerns . . . that 'cut across' persons" and understand what the incarcerated believed were important problems in the correctional setting. He identified eight concerns: privacy, safety, structure, support, emotional feedback, social stimulation, activity, and freedom. Wright (1985) characterized these eight concerns as "global concerns of inmates that are universally perceived" (p. 260). These eight areas have been the subject of some research in criminal justice even if not

specifically identified as part of the environment of the prison. Liebling's (2004) book *Prisons and Their Moral Performance* examined incarcerated individuals' perceptions of the prison environment in UK prisons, focusing on quality of life. Her work illustrated that how the incarcerated felt they were treated by prison staff was the most important variable for distinguishing among quality of life in prisons. Liebling (2004) referred to these elements, including kindness and respect, as "moral dimensions" that could be measured as the "moral performance" of each prison.

A brief overview of Toch's eight environmental concerns is warranted. Privacy within a correctional facility includes the extent of (over)crowding and is a major issue (Bradford 2006; Toch 1977). Crowding and overcrowding are acknowledged as having negative effects on the incarcerated (Specter 2010; Steiner and Wooldredge 2009). Privacy and the lack thereof illustrate how the physical and social environments are interwoven in the prison context. Albrecht (2012) argued that overcrowding negatively influences the trust and confidence that the incarcerated have in prison authorities and also reduces the services that prisons can provide. Although people typically think of prisons as keeping the public safe from inmates, it is also the duty of the prison to ensure the safety of inmates. Safety is a major concern of the incarcerated, given that they may encounter violence from other incarcerated individuals or from staff (Sykes 1958). Safety was a prevalent issue in a study of incarcerated females' perceptions of the prison environment (Bradley and Davino 2002), where safety in prison was compared to safety before incarceration, largely within the context of interpersonal violence in relationships. Bradley and Davino (2002) argued that for effective treatment of past trauma to occur, an environment that is safe, both physically and psychologically, must first be established. Toch (1977) argued that the structure of the prison is concerned mostly with how daily life is governed by the rules and regulations of the facility. This is related to the behavior of the incarcerated and the use of punishment when rules are broken and also concerns the availability of services such as showers and recreation (Bradford 2006).

Social support refers to the availability of counseling, self-help groups, or other kinds of enrichment activities that can help the incarcerated deal with problems and improve their skills (Bradford 2006; Toch 1977). The availability of mental health services and of opportunities for self-improvement can improve the abilities of the incarcerated to manage depression and to better cope with the deprivations of the prison environment. *Emotional feedback* includes relationships between the incarcerated and staff, relationships among the incarcerated, and interaction of the incarcerated with those outside the prison through visits, telephone calls, and letters (Bradford, 2006). A significant amount of research on inmate-correctional staff relationships has focused on inappropriate relationships and misconduct by staff (Worley 2011; Worley, Marquart, and Mullings 2003; Worley and Worley 2016). Prison visitation research typically measures whether an incarcerated individual had a visit in a specific time frame and whether that was related to outcomes such as prison misconduct and recidivism, but more recent research on prison visits acknowledges that such visits are multidimensional and complex (Hickert, Tahamont, and Bushway 2018) and that some prison visitors are not supportive to the incarcerated (Meyers et al. 2017).

Social stimulation refers to the social elements that affect the incarcerated, such as interactions with other incarcerated individuals and with correctional staff (Bradford 2006; Toch 1977). An essential part of life in prison and in society generally is interpersonal relationships (Liebling 2011), and a significant part of Liebling's (2004) Measurement of Quality of Prison Life Questionnaire addresses relationships between the incarcerated and staff. Social stimulation also includes the prison culture, composed of the norms and customs within the correctional environment. Prisons are often regarded as a microcosm of society (Clemmer 1940; Siegel and Bartollas 2016), with the idea that incarcerated individuals import their values and cultures into the prison (Irwin and Cressey 1962). Clemmer (1940) described prisonization as "a process of assimilation in which prisoners adopt a subordinate status, learn prison argot (language), take on the habits of other prisoners, engage in various forms of deviant behavior . . . , develop antagonistic attitudes towards guards, and become acquainted with inmate dogmas and mores" (pp. 299–300). Prisons have long been characterized as violent places, and that violence may stem from the social interactions that occur in them.

Activities in prison can include physical recreation, educational and vocational classes, card playing or television watching, or any number of other activities (Bradford 2006; Toch 1977). Such activities can provide relief from the monotony of tightly scheduled life. The availability of such activities may have declined because of demands that prisons environments be more Spartan (Hensley et al. 2003; Johnson et al. 1997). The dimension of freedom is concerned with inmates' autonomy and control over their own environment (Bradford 2006; Toch 1977). Incarcerated individuals have limited autonomy over their day-to-day activities. Their perceived feelings of control may vary and can be related to stress (Ruback, Carr, and Hopper 1986).

Prisons are complex places both physically and socially, and these interact and contribute to the overall environment in which incarcerated individuals live and, presumably, are rehabilitated. Barquin, Cano, and Calvo (2019) illustrated how perceptions of the prison environment and quality of life held by incarcerated individuals varied among five Spanish prisons, highlighting the fact that even in the same country, prisons vary quite a bit. While some researchers have investigated individual aspects of the prison environment, others have created scales to tap into multiple dimensions.

Prison Environment Studies and Scales

Numerous studies have investigated incarcerated individuals' perceptions of the prison environment, utilizing various measures and scales in a variety of countries. Saylor (1984) wrote a report for the U.S. Federal Bureau of Prisons in which he examined various ways to measure prison climate. His review of the early attempts to measure prison climate concluded that Moos' 1975 instrument, the Correctional Institutions Environment Scale (CIES), presented the most frequently used survey in adult correctional facilities at that time. Saylor (1984) questioned whether the CIES was an appropriate scale to utilize, given the emphasis on comparing institutions or units in terms of treatment effectiveness, which Saylor viewed as not the goal or objective of most correctional administrators when considering the prison environment. Waters and Megathlin (2002) utilized the CIES in two

small samples in the United States in order to examine the effect of program changes. Their findings illustrated that almost two years after the implementation of several educational and rehabilitative programs, incarcerated individuals more positively viewed the correctional environment. Small sample sizes and the focus on examining perceptions of programs make this study limited in its use, however.

Wright (1985) utilized a survey instrument called the Prison Environment Inventory (PEI) to examine the correctional climate in U.S. prisons. His 80-item instrument was created to focus on the eight environmental issues mentioned by Toch (1977). Wright (1985) discussed the creation of the instrument and the procedures by which reliability and validity were assured. He concluded that the instrument "is an effective measure of prison environments" (p. 270), but he did not make any specific mention of what the incarcerated individuals in his sample actually thought about their prison environments. In 2006, Bradford utilized an adapted version of the PEI in his thesis at East Tennessee State University to examine the factor structure of the PEI and whether the eight dimensions discussed by Wright were still found in samples of incarcerated individuals from different security levels in the United States. Bradford (2006) wanted to know which of the eight dimensions was most important to the incarcerated and found that safety was the primary concern. Molleman and van Ginneken (2015) also used an adaptation of Wright's 1985 PEI in a study examining overcrowding in Dutch prisons, finding that prisoners who shared cells viewed the quality of the prison as lower than those who did not share cells.

Ross, Diamond, Liebling, and Saylor (2008) explored the prison social climate by administering questionnaires to incarcerated individuals in the United States and England in order to present a cross-cultural comparison. Their research utilized the Prison Social Climate Survey developed by the Federal Bureau of Prisons for the U.S. sample and the Measurement of Quality of Prison Life instrument developed by Liebling (2004) for the English sample. The researchers examined quality of life, perception of well-being in prison, and perceived safety of the facilities. Their research was on comparing the factor structures of the different surveys, though they concluded that the two incarcerated populations perceived their prison environments similarly.

Tonkin (2015) examined the data structures of 12 social-climate surveys in his research on prisons and psychiatric hospitals. Tonkin's goal was to determine the existence of questionnaires for this purpose and to examine their psychometric properties. Although he acknowledged the empirical support for the Essen Climate Evaluation Schema, he argued that this scale was not as in-depth as other scales regarding social climate. He did, however, note that those other scales were not yet sufficiently validated. Tonkin's (2015) work was focused on examining the reliability, validity, internal consistency, and factor structure of social-climate scales. He concluded that the surveys that he examined measuring social climate in prisons and psychiatric hospitals appeared to provide both reliable and valid portraits of the social climates in these settings.

Like Tonkin (2015), Stasch, Yoon, Sauter, Hausam, and Dahle (2018) also utilized the Essen Climate Evaluation Schema in their examination of incarcerated individuals in Germany. They wanted to know how prison climate was related to treatment motivation. Their study of 215 inmates indicated that the incarcerated individuals' perceptions of the prison environment were correlated with how the individuals felt about treatment. Those

who viewed the prison environment as more positive and had more positive attitudes toward treatment also had the most positive predictors of lowered risk factors as measured by the Level of Service Inventory–Revised (Stasch et al. 2018).

Another study of German inmates, by Woessner and Schwedler (2014), utilized a prison-climate scale from Ortmann (1987). Woessner and Schwedler (2014) found a significant correlation between perceptions of a positive prison climate and prosocial changes in some dynamic risk factors among violent and sexual offenders. They argued that more attention should be paid to creating a positive prison climate so prosocial therapeutic changes in risk factors could occur.

A different version of a prison environment or climate survey, the Prison Environment Scale (PES), was developed by Allison and Ireland (2010), who utilized the scale as part of their larger study on bullying in a UK prison. Their research indicated that perceptions of the prison environment, encompassing both physical and social factors, that were supportive of bullying were related to increased reports of being a bully or being a victim of a bully. Allison and Ireland (2010) created the PES specifically for this research "due to an absence of suitable questionnaires" (p. 46). Ireland et al. (2016) also utilized the PES along with the Prison Bullying Scale to investigate bullying in Canadian prisons.

Exploring the perceptions that inmates have of the correctional environment is important, given the large impact that this environment can have on rehabilitation as well as the idea that treatment is more effective when it takes place within a "safe and supportive environment" (Woessner and Schwedler 2014:874). Further, Ireland (2008, 2012) argued that the social environment of the prison should be thought of in terms of the "healthy community" concept, in which more should be done to develop "healthy prison communities" (2008: 22). Because previous research has focused primarily on examining the factor and data structure of prison environment surveys or has been conducted outside the United States, the current exploratory research focuses on how incarcerated individuals in a U.S. midwestern state perceive the prison environment by providing a descriptive account of their attitudes.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This research utilized data from a survey administered to male inmates incarcerated at three correctional facilities within a U.S. midwestern state. The research was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the author's university and by an internal review panel of the state's Department of Correction (DOC). Facilities A and C were medium-security facilities, and Facility B was a maximum-security facility. The DOC randomly selected incarcerated individuals who had been incarcerated for at least six months in their current facilities. A 2%–4% sample size was allowed, resulting in initial sample sizes of 140 at Facility A, 100 at Facility B, and 50 at Facility C. Data collection occurred in March 2017.

The randomly selected individuals were invited to attend a survey session to learn more about the project. These group sessions were held in auditoriums or chapels within the prison. Final response rates were calculated based on the number who participated out of the number who attended the survey session. This resulted in response rates of 62% (81/130) at Facility A, 74% (32/43) at Facility B, and 89% (41/46) at Facility C, with an aggregated response rate of 70% (154/219).

The survey included demographic questions as well as questions regarding several topics. The focus of this paper is on the results from the PES (Allison and Ireland 2010), a scale focusing on the physical and social environments within correctional facilities. For each item, individuals could respond with *Strongly Disagree*, *Disagree*, *Neutral*, *Agree*, or *Strongly Agree*, which were coded 1–5. The PES was selected over similar scales for several reasons. First, the PES was more recently created, more accurately reflecting applicable issues in institutional environments than scales created decades ago that have not been widely used since then. Second, although other contemporary scales exist, the PES specifically focuses on both the social and physical environments of correctional settings, which are of great importance in determining social climate. Third, the PES comprises only 40 items, and given concerns about respondent fatigue, this scale was deemed the best for this research. Last, the specific items on the PES are quite readable, an important consideration for a population known to have low education and literacy (Harlow 2003).

Although the PES has been utilized with samples of incarcerated individuals in the UK and Canada (Allison and Ireland 2010; Ireland et al. 2016), no evidence was located that it has been utilized in the United States. The current research is exploratory, with the goal of providing an initial description of the perceptions of the correctional environment held by those incarcerated in a U.S. midwestern state.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the sample. The largest age group was 40–44 years, with almost 20% of the sample, but more than half of respondents were under age 40. Most of the respondents (60%) indicated that they were White/Caucasian. Fewer than a third (28.6%) said they were Black/African American, and 5.8% indicated that they were Hispanic/Latino. Almost half indicated that their marital status was single, with 18.8% reporting that they were divorced, 18.2% indicating that they were in a relationship, and 14.3% reporting that they were married.

When asked about the offense type for their current incarceration, more than one-third indicated incarceration for a violent offense, with almost one-third indicating incarceration for a drug offense. Fewer than 20% reported that their current incarceration was for a property offense. The "Other" category was selected by more than 20% of the sample, which is unusual when compared to Bureau of Justice Statistics reports, in which less than 1% of state inmates reported their offense type as "Other" (Carson 2018). There may have been some confusion about what offenses truly belonged in the "Other" category. Almost 43% of the sample indicated that this was their first incarceration, 20% reported this was their second incarceration, and 22.1% indicated this was their third incarceration.

An examination of the PES provides an exploratory look at how incarcerated individuals in a midwestern state perceive the physical and social environments of the prisons in which they were incarcerated. Total PES scores were computed, with 11 of the 40 items reverse-coded as indicated by Ireland (personal communication, 2018). Higher scores indicate a greater perception of a negative environment. Total scores ranged from 109 to 170, with a mean of 135.26.

Table 1. Inmate Characteristics

Variable	*n* (%)
Age	
20–24	12 (7.8)
25–29	26 (16.9)
30–34	23 (14.9)
35–39	27 (17.5)
40–44	30 (19.5)
45–49	14 (9.1)
50–54	13 (8.4)
55–59	5 (3.2)
60–64	2 (1.3)
65 or older	2 (1.3)
Race/Ethnicity	
White/Caucasian	94 (61.0)
Black/African American	44 (28.6)
Hispanic/Latino	9 (5.8)
Other/Multiple Races/Ethnicities	7 (4.5)
Relationship status	
Single	73 (47.4)
Married	22 (14.3)
In a relationship	28 (18.2)
Divorced	29 (18.8)
Widowed	2 (1.3)
Offense for which currently incarcerated[a]	
Violent	51 (33.1)
Property	28 (18.2)
Drug	50 (32.5)
Public order	1 (.6)
Other	31 (20.1)
Including current incarceration, how many times in prison?	
1	66 (42.9)
2	31 (20.1)
3	34 (22.1)
4	6 (3.9)
5	8 (5.2)
6 or more	9 (5.8)
N	154

[a] Some inmates indicated multiple offense types, so these percentages do not add up to 100%.

Principle components analysis (PCA) was employed to examine the structure of the 40-item scale in order to more meaningfully analyze and examine the data. The suitability of the data for PCA was determined by examining the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. This value was 0.627, exceeding the recommended value of 0.6 (Kaiser 1970; Kaiser and Rice 1974). Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant. These indicate that the data are appropriate for PCA.

PCA revealed 13 components with eigenvalues above 1, explaining 68.14% of the total variance. The scree plot indicated between two and five components. Investigation into the variables loading onto each component in these configurations and previous research utilizing this scale (Allison and Ireland 2010; Ireland et al. 2016) were examined, leading to the decision to retain a five-factor solution. Variables loading at 0.3 or higher were retained, per Pallant (2013). The five-factor solution explained nearly 40% of the variance (39.88%). Every item loaded onto a factor. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the full scale and each factor to demonstrate reliability. The full scale had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.695, slightly below Nunnally's (1978) recommendation of 0.7 or higher in exploratory research. Table 2 shows the items comprising each factor, the factor loadings, and the Cronbach's alpha for each factor.

Table 2. Factor Structure of the PES

Full Scale (alpha = .695)	**Factor Loading**
Factor 1: Power and Dominance (alpha = .778)	
Prisoners monitor what possessions other prisoners have.	.642
Possessions are a valuable form of currency.	.603
It's easy for prisoners to break the rules when there are lots of other prisoners about.	.596
There are too many prisoners for staff to supervise well.	.592
Prisoners at the top of the "pecking order" have the most power and dominance.	.564
Levels exist between prisoners based on how much control and influence they have.	.545
Prisoners that are seen as weak and vulnerable are at the bottom of the "pecking order."	.519
A "pecking order" exists between prisoners.	.482
Possessions are traded at high prices.	.470
There are lots of new prisoners coming onto and leaving this unit.	.470
Prisoners who bully receive respect.	.433
It is important for prisoners to be seen as "tough" by others.	.426
Prisoners won't back down if challenged.	.402
Staff supervision is predictable.	.316

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Table 2. Factor Structure of the PES, concl.

Full Scale (alpha = .695)	**Factor Loading**
Factor 2: Activities and Space (alpha = .709)	
There are many meaningful activities to do.	.776
Prisoners feel bored because of the lack of activities to do.	–.679
There are no activities to keep prisoners occupied.	–.654
Possessions are always provided when needed/requested.	.528
There is not much physical space.	–.491
There is an emphasis on treating and releasing prisoners here.	.498
Rules telling prisoners what they can have are clear.	.390
Staff think about prisoners' circumstances when applying prison rules and regulations.	.345
Factor 3: Prisoner/Staff Interaction (alpha = .354)	
Prisoners always know where staff will be present.	.758
Prisoners always know when staff will be present.	.722
Prisoners talk to staff on a regular basis.	.498
There is enough personal space.	.497
Prisoners have nothing to lose by behaving badly.	.410
Prisoners know the other prisoners around them long enough to trust them.	.329
Factor 4: Security and Rules (alpha = .164)	
There is an emphasis on security and control here.	.633
The hierarchy seen in staff grades is seen between prisoners also.	.590
Prisoners generally follow prison rules and regulations here.	.542
There is an emphasis on prison rules and regulations here.	.414
Prisoners would tell a member of staff if another had broken a prison rule or regulation.	.385
There is a high turnover of prisoners.	.378
Factor 5: Prisoner Social Interactions (alpha = .460)	
Bullying is just part of prison life; nothing can be done to stop it.	.671
The opportunity to have social contact is good.	–.573
Bullying can't be stopped, so there is no point trying.	.464
Victims deserve to be bullied.	.382
Prisoners come into contact with many other prisoners every day.	–.378
Prisoners would help someone who is being bullied.	–.361

Note: PES=Prison Environment Scale (Allison and Ireland 2010).

Factor 1, "Power and Dominance," contained 14 items related to the hierarchy of prisoners, the importance of possessions, and the perception of inmates as "weak" or "tough." The Cronbach's alpha was .778, above the .7 threshold for exploratory research (Nunnally 1978). The number and percentage for each item can be seen in Table 3. Total scores ranged from 33 to 68, with a mean of 48.63, with higher scores indicating a more negative view of the prison environment. The means for individual items ranged from 2.49 to 4.00, with an average mean of 3.47. A score of 3 on an individual item indicated a response of *Neutral*, and a score of 4 indicated *Agree*, so many inmates responded between *Neutral* and *Agree* on items related to power and dominance.

An examination of the items indicates that the most common answer choice for eight of the 14 items was *Neutral*. Five items had the most inmates indicate *Agree*: "Prisoners monitor what possessions other prisoners have," "Possessions are a valuable form of currency," "Levels exist between prisoners based on how much control and influence they have," "A 'pecking order' exists between prisoners," and "There are lots of new prisoners coming onto and leaving this unit." For one item, the majority indicated *Strongly Agree*. This item was the statement "Prisoners that are seen as weak and vulnerable are at the bottom of the pecking order," to which more than 38% of inmates responded with *Strongly Agree*." None of the statements had a majority of inmates indicating *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree*. These results indicate that on statements related to power and dominance, inmates find the prison environment more negative than positive.

Table 3. PES Factor 1: Power and Dominance

Variables	***Strongly Disagree*** *n* (%)	***Disagree*** *n* (%)	***Neutral*** *n* (%)	***Agree*** *n* (%)	***Strongly Agree*** *n* (%)	**Missing Response** *n* (%)
Prisoners monitor what possessions other prisoners have.	13 (8.7)	16 (10.7)	42 (28.2)	48 (32.2)	30 (20.1)	5 (3.2)
Possessions are a valuable form of currency.	1 (0.7)	9 (6.0)	32 (21.5)	54 (36.2)	53 (35.6)	5 (3.2)
It's easy for prisoners to break the rules when there are lots of other prisoners about.	7 (4.7)	13 (8.7)	67 (44.7)	40 (26.7)	23 (15.3)	4 (2.6)

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Table 3. PES Factor 1: Power and Dominance, concl.

Variables	***Strongly Disagree*** *n* (%)	***Disagree*** *n* (%)	***Neutral*** *n* (%)	***Agree*** *n* (%)	***Strongly Agree*** *n* (%)	**Missing Response** *n* (%)
There are too many prisoners for staff to supervise well.	12 (8.0)	20 (13.3)	44 (29.3)	36 (24.0)	38 (25.3)	4 (2.6)
Prisoners at the top of the "pecking order" have the most power and dominance.	7 (4.8)	15 (10.2)	51 (34.7)	37 (25.2)	37 (25.2)	7 (4.5)
Levels exist between prisoners based on how much control and influence they have.	5 (3.4)	11 (7.4)	48 (32.2)	51 (34.2)	34 (22.8)	5 (3.2)
Prisoners that are seen as weak and vulnerable are at the bottom of the "pecking order."	8 (5.4)	11 (7.4)	30 (20.1)	43 (28.9)	57 (38.3)	5 (3.2)
A "pecking order" exists between prisoners.	3 (2.1)	8 (5.5)	43 (29.5)	47 (32.2)	45 (30.8)	8 (5.2)
Possessions are traded at high prices.	14 (9.5)	14 (9.5)	64 (43.2)	39 (26.4)	17 (11.5)	6 (3.9)
There are lots of new prisoners coming onto and leaving this unit.	5 (3.4)	11 (7.5)	43 (29.5)	57 (39.0)	30 (20.5)	8 (5.2)
Prisoners who bully receive respect.	34 (23.0)	41 (27.7)	49 (33.1)	14 (9.5)	10 (6.8)	6 (3.9)
It is important for prisoners to be seen as "tough" by others.	15 (10.0)	17 (11.3)	52 (34.7)	45 (30.0)	21 (14.0)	4 (2.6)
Prisoners won't back down if challenged.	13 (8.7)	31 (20.7)	52 (34.7)	37 (24.7)	17 (11.3)	4 (2.6)
Staff supervision is predictable.	14 (9.2)	22 (14.4)	44 (28.8)	41 (26.8)	32 (20.9)	1 (0.6)

Notes: PES=Prison Environment Scale (Allison and Ireland 2010). $N = 154$ respondents. Cronbach's alpha for this factor was .778.

The second factor, "Activities and Space," contained eight items related to activities, feelings of boredom, and physical space and had a Cronbach's alpha of .709, above the .7 threshold (Nunnally 1978). Table 4 shows the number and percentage of incarcerated individuals who responded in each answer category for each item. Four of the eight items were reverse-coded to calculate the total scores and means. Total scores ranged from 18 to 39, with a mean of 29.45, and as with Factor 1, higher scores indicate a more negative perception of the prison environment. Although the means for individual items ranged from 2.84 to 4.23, where 3 indicated *Neutral* and 4 indicated *Agree*, an examination of the answer categories illustrates that the most common answer choice to four items was either *Strongly Agree* or *Strongly Disagree*, indicating strongly felt perceptions about the prison environment related to activities and space. Three of the items requiring reverse coding had the largest number of inmates indicate *Strongly Disagree*, all of them positive statements: "There are many meaningful things to do," "Possessions are always provided when needed/requested," and "Staff think about prisoners' circumstances when applying prison rules and regulations." The item with a majority indicating *Strongly Agree* was the negatively worded statement "There is not much physical space here." Taking the reverse coding into consideration, these results indicate that inmates view the prison environment negatively when it comes to activities and space.

Factor 3 contained six items related to "Prisoner/Staff Interaction" and included items related to knowing where staff are, talking with staff, and being held accountable by staff. This factor had a Cronbach's alpha of .354, indicating that the items did not hang together very well. Table 5 displays the number and percentage of individuals who responded in each answer category for each statement. Scores ranged from 12 to 26, with a mean of 18.93, and as with previous factors, higher scores indicate more negative perceptions. The means for the individual items ranged from 2.31 to 4.35, and three items were reverse-coded. For two statements, a majority of individuals responded with *Strongly Disagree*. The first of these statements was "There is enough personal space," a positively worded item to which 65.8% of the incarcerated individuals responded with *Strongly Disagree*. A negatively worded item also had the largest percentage of inmates (36.4%) indicate *Strongly Disagree*, however. This statement was "Prisoners have nothing to lose by behaving badly," indicating that incarcerated individuals perceive there to be sanctions for misbehavior. For three items, a majority of individuals indicated *Agree*. Two of these were in relation to knowing where and when staff will be present, and the third was "Prisoners talk to staff on a regular basis." Taken together, incarcerated individuals indicated they knew where and when staff would be present and that prisoners talk to staff regularly, and they acknowledged that prisoners do have something to lose if their behavior is not appropriate. These items are open for interpretation in terms of what they really mean in the prison environment. For example, one could interpret knowing when and where staff will be present as either positive or negative. Given the wording of these two items and the scoring in which higher scores indicate negative perceptions of the environment, the intention of these items appears to be that they are negative, but these particular items may be problematic, in that it is not clear they are interpreted by incarcerated individuals in the way intended.

Table 4. PES Factor 2: Activities and Space

Variables	***Strongly Disagree*** *n* (%)	***Disagree*** *n* (%)	***Neutral*** *n* (%)	***Agree*** *n* (%)	***Strongly Agree*** *n* (%)	**Missing Response** *n* (%)
There are many meaningful activities to do.[a]	54 (36.7)	39 (26.5)	35 (23.8)	14 (9.5)	5 (3.4)	7 (4.5)
Prisoners feel bored because of the lack of activities to do.	4 (2.6)	8 (5.3)	26 (17.1)	42 (27.6)	72 (47.4)	2 (1.3)
There are no activities to keep prisoners occupied.	17 (11.3)	39 (25.8)	30 (19.9)	34 (22.5)	31 (20.5)	3 (1.9)
Possessions are always provided when needed/requested.[a]	70 (46.4)	45 (29.8)	26 (17.2)	6 (4.0)	4 (2.6)	3 (1.9)
There is not much physical space.	3 (2.0)	7 (4.7)	23 (15.3)	36 (24.0)	81 (54.0)	4 (2.6)
There is an emphasis on treating and releasing prisoners here. [a]	30 (20.1)	24 (16.1)	61 (40.9)	23 (15.4)	11 (7.4)	5 (3.2)
Rules telling prisoners what they can have are clear.	27 (17.8)	38 (25.0)	38 (25.0)	31 (20.4)	18 (11.8)	2 (1.3)
Staff think about prisoners' circumstances when applying prison rules and regulations.[a]	60 (39.7)	39 (25.8)	28 (18.5)	13 (8.6)	11 (7.3)	3 (1.9)

Notes: PES=Prison Environment Scale (Allison and Ireland 2010). *N* = 154 respondents. Cronbach's alpha for this factor was .709.

[a] Item reverse-coded in the analysis. This table shows original responses.

Six items comprised Factor 4, "Security and Rules," which had a poor Cronbach's alpha (.164). Table 6 shows the number and percentage of incarcerated individuals who responded in each answer category for the six items. Two items were reverse-coded for the factor analysis and calculation of means. Scores ranged from 14 to 27, with a mean of 20.76, with higher scores indicating more negative perceptions of the prison environment. The means for the individual items ranged from 3.20 to 3.91, with a response of 3 indicating *Neutral* and 4 indicating *Agree*, so all six items had an average response between *Neutral* and *Agree*. As shown in Table 6, for four of the items, a majority of inmates indicated *Neutral*, and for two items, a majority responded with *Agree*. The *Neutral* items included statements such as "The hierarchy seen in staff grades

is seen between prisoners also" and the reverse-coded item "Prisoners generally follow prison rules and regulations here." The two items to which a majority of inmates responded with *Agree* were "There is an emphasis on prison rules and regulations here" and "There is a high turnover of prisoners." This factor had the lowest Cronbach's alpha, indicating that these items do not hang together very well. Because all the items had means above 3, incarcerated individuals generally had a more negative perception of the prison environment in terms of security and rules.

Table 5. PES Factor 3: Prisoner/Staff Interaction

Variables	***Strongly Disagree*** *n* (%)	***Disagree*** *n* (%)	***Neutral*** *n* (%)	***Agree*** *n* (%)	***Strongly Agree*** *n* (%)	**Missing Response** *n* (%)
Prisoners always know where staff will be present.	12 (7.9)	25 (16.6)	46 (30.5)	47 (31.1)	21 (13.9)	3 (1.9)
Prisoners always know when staff will be present.	11 (7.3)	26 (17.2)	40 (26.5)	46 (30.5)	28 (18.5)	3 (1.9)
Prisoners talk to staff on a regular basis.[a]	11 (7.3)	10 (6.6)	45 (29.2)	60 (39.7)	25 (16.6)	3 (1.9)
There is enough personal space.[a]	100 (65.8)	26 (17.1)	14 (9.2)	3 (2.0)	9 (5.9)	2 (1.3)
Prisoners have nothing to lose by behaving badly.	55 (36.4)	37 (24.5)	27 (17.9)	21 (13.9)	11 (7.3)	3 (1.9)
Prisoners know the other prisoners around them long enough to trust them.[a]	29 (19.2)	22 (14.6)	64 (42.4)	25 (16.6)	11 (7.3)	3 (1.9)

Notes: PES=Prison Environment Scale (Allison and Ireland 2010). *N* = 154 respondents. Cronbach's alpha for this factor was .354.

[a] Item reverse-coded in the analysis. This table shows original responses.

Factor 5 encompassed six items related to prisoner social interactions, including bullying and social contact. This factor had a poor Cronbach's alpha (.460). Table 7 shows the number and percentage of incarcerated individuals who responded in each answer category for each item. Two items required reverse coding. The full factor ranged from 10 to 26, with a mean of 17.30, and higher scores indicate a more negative perception of the prison environment. The individual items had means between 1.84 and 4.14, indicating a wide variety of responses. The item with the lowest mean was "Victims deserve to be bullied," with the majority of individuals (53.4%) indicating *Strongly Disagree*, interpreted as a positive evaluation of the prison environment. The item with the highest mean was "Prisoners come

into contact with many other prisoners every day," with 42.7% of incarcerated individuals responding with *Strongly Agree* and an additional 38% responding with *Agree*.

Table 6. PES Factor 4: Security and Rules

Variables	***Strongly Disagree*** *n* (%)	***Disagree*** *n* (%)	***Neutral*** *n* (%)	***Agree*** *n* (%)	***Strongly Agree*** *n* (%)	**Missing Response** *n* (%)
There is an emphasis on security and control here.	16 (10.7)	16 (10.7)	51 (34.0)	35 (23.3)	32 (21.3)	4 (2.6)
The hierarchy seen in staff grades is seen between prisoners also.	6 (4.0)	12 (8.1)	65 (43.6)	40 (26.8)	26 (17.4)	5 (3.2)
Prisoners generally follow prison rules and regulations here.[a]	24 (16.1)	28 (18.8)	59 (39.6)	30 (20.1)	8 (5.4)	5 (3.2)
There is an emphasis on prison rules and regulations here.	15 (9.9)	11 (7.2)	46 (30.3)	56 (36.8)	24 (15.8)	2 (1.3)
Prisoners would tell a member of staff if another had broken a prison rule or regulation.[a]	40 (27.2)	32 (21.8)	41 (27.9)	23 (15.6)	11 (7.5)	7 (4.5)
There is a high turnover of prisoners.	6 (4.0)	10 (6.6)	26 (17.2)	58 (38.4)	51 (33.8)	3 (1.9)

Notes: PES=Prison Environment Scale (Allison and Ireland 2010). *N* = 154 respondents. Cronbach's alpha for this factor was .164.

[a] Item reverse-coded in the analysis. This table shows original responses.

Incarcerated individuals indicated *Neutral* or *Disagree* for statements related to bullying, which indicated they may believe something can be done to stop bullying, all of which are more positive interpretations of the prison environment. For the statement "Bullying is just part of prison life, nothing can be done to stop it," 38.7% indicated *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree*, with another 30.0% responding with *Neutral*. Similarly, 39.6% responded to the statement "Bullying can't be stopped, so there is no point trying" with *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree*; however, 36.5% also responded to the statement "Prisoners would help someone who is being bullied" with *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree*, with an additional 39.1% responding with *Neutral*, indicating that while many incarcerated

individuals agreed that bullying could be stopped, they disagreed with the idea that prisoners would currently help someone who was a victim of bullying.

Table 7. PES Factor 5: Prisoner Social Interactions

Variables	***Strongly Disagree*** *n* (%)	***Disagree*** *n* (%)	***Neutral*** *n* (%)	***Agree*** *n* (%)	***Strongly Agree*** *n* (%)	**Missing Response** *n* (%)
Bullying is just part of prison life; nothing can be done to stop it.	30 (20.0)	28 (18.7)	45 (30.0%	29 (19.3)	18 (12.0)	4 (2.6)
The opportunity to have social contact is good.[a]	14 (9.3)	13 (8.6)	41 (27.2)	37 (24.5)	46 (30.5)	3 (1.9)
Bullying can't be stopped so there is no point trying.	24 (16.1)	35 (23.5)	47 (31.5)	24 (16.1)	19 (12.8)	5 (3.2)
Victims deserve to be bullied.	79 (53.4)	32 (21.6)	25 (16.9)	6 (4.1)	6 (4.1)	6 (3.9)
Prisoners come into contact with many other prisoners every day.	3 (2.0)	8 (5.3)	18 (12.0)	57 (38.0)	64 (42.7)	4 (2.6)
Prisoners would help someone who is being bullied.[a]	25 (16.6)	30 (19.9)	59 (39.1)	29 (19.2)	8 (5.3)	3 (1.9)

Notes: PES=Prison Environment Scale (Allison and Ireland 2010). $N = 154$ respondents. Cronbach's alpha for this factor was .460.

[a] Item reverse-coded in the analysis. This table shows original responses.

Several additional analyses were conducted to discover if bivariate relationships existed between two demographic variables (age and race/ethnicity) as well as security level (medium or maximum) and the full scale and Factors 1 and 2. Factors 1 and 2 had appropriately high Cronbach's alphas of .778 and .709, respectively, while the full scale was slightly below Nunnally's (1978) recommendation of .7 or higher, at .695. Due to the low Cronbach's alphas for Factors 3, 4, and 5, additional analyses for those factors were not conducted. One-way ANOVAs were calculated to examine the effect of age on the full scale, Factor 1, and Factor 2. Age was an ordinal variable, so one-way ANOVA allows a comparison of the mean on the full scale and on each factor by age group. As shown in Table 8, none of the ANOVAs were statistically significant; however, it should be noted that there were small sample sizes in each age group.

Race/ethnicity was also examined using one-way ANOVAs. The ANOVA comparing the means by each racial/ethnic group for the full PES was statistically significant ($F = 3.961$, $p < .01$). A post-hoc Tukey's HSD test was computed (results available upon request) and indicated that the difference is between the Other/Multiple Races/Ethnicities group and each

of the other racial/ethnic groups (White/Caucasian, Black/African American, and Hispanic/Latino), with the Other/Multiple Races/Ethnicities group averaging 151.8 on the total PES, compared to the low to mid-130s for the other three groups. Higher scores on the PES indicate a more negative perception of the prison environment, indicating that the Other/Multiple Races/Ethnicities group was significantly more likely than the other racial/ethnic groups to find the prison environment negative. It should be noted, however, that the Other/Multiple Race/Ethnicities group had seven individuals. This result should be interpreted cautiously, given the very low sample size for this group. The ANOVAs comparing the means of Factor 1 and Factor 2 by race/ethnicity were not statistically significant.

Table 8. ANOVA/*t*-Test Results for Age Groups, Race/Ethnicity, and Security Level on the Full PES, Factor 1, and Factor 2

Source of Variation—Age Groups	***SS***	***df***	***MS***	***F***
Between Groups—Full PES	1116.804	8	139.600	0.878
Between Groups—Factor 1	638.677	9	70.964	1.171
Between Groups—Factor 2	94.293	9	10.477	0.498
Source of Variation—Race/Ethnicity	***SS***	***df***	***MS***	***F***
Between Groups—Full PES	1746.259	3	582.086	3.961**
Between Groups—Factor 1	325.420	3	108.473	1.802
Between Groups—Factor 2	115.765	3	38.588	1.931
Source of Variation—Security Level				***t***
Full PES				–.0818
Factor 1				–2.329*
Factor 2				1.130

Note: PES=Prison Environment Scale (Allison and Ireland 2010).

*$p < .05$ **$p < .01$

Last, independent-samples *t*-tests were computed to compare the means on the full PES and Factors 1 and 2 by security level. Because security level had only two groups, an ANOVA was not necessary. Most ($n = 106$) participants in this analysis were housed in medium security, with only 25 housed in maximum security ($n = 131$, slightly lower than the overall total of 154). Although the full PES and Factor 2 were not statistically significant, the *t*-test comparing the means on Factor 1 by security level was statistically significant ($t = –2.329$, $p < .05$). This indicates that those in medium security were significantly more likely to find the prison environment negative in terms of power and

dominance, compared to those housed in maximum security (49.387 compared to 45.400). Again, given the small sample sizes, these results should be interpreted with caution.

DISCUSSION

Although scholars have acknowledged the importance of the prison environment (Schalast et al. 2008; Tonkin et al. 2012; Woessner and Schwedler 2014), most work in this area has focused on the creation and validation of scales (Ross et al. 2008; Saylor 1984; Tonkin 2015; Wright 1985). While several researchers include descriptions of what incarcerated individuals think about their prison environments, much of this research has taken place in countries other than the United States (Allison and Ireland 2010; Ireland et al. 2016; Molleman and van Ginneken 2015; Stasch et al. 2018; Woessner and Schwedler 2014) or is largely outdated (Saylor 1984; Waters and Megathlin 2002; for exceptions, see Bradford 2006 and Ross et al. 2008). The current research sought to provide an exploratory and descriptive account of what a sample of incarcerated men in three correctional facilities in a U.S. midwestern state thought about their prison environments in contemporary times. The results indicate that this incarcerated population perceived their environments more negatively than positively. Although these findings are not surprising, it is important to empirically measure these attitudes instead of assuming that incarcerated individuals find the prison environment negative.

Total scores on the PES ranged from 109 to 170, with a mean of 135.26. In their work on bullying in prison using the PES, Allison and Ireland (2010) found a mean of 125.68 in their inmate sample in the UK, and Ireland, Ireland, and Power (2016) found a mean of 132.9 for inmates in Canada. The U.S. mean is statistically lower than the UK mean ($t = 8.462$, $p < .001$) and the Canadian mean ($t = 2.085$, $p < .05$), indicating that incarcerated individuals in this U.S. sample may view correctional facilities as less hospitable environments than do inmates in UK and Canadian prisons. This finding may be situated in the differences in punishment philosophy and the high incarceration rates in the United States compared to those in the UK and Canada (Western 2006).

The five factors of the PES—"Power and Dominance," "Activities and Space," "Prisoner/Staff Interaction," "Security and Rules," and "Prisoner Social Interaction"—illustrate that incarcerated individuals hold more negative than positive perceptions of the prison environment. Incarcerated individuals were likely to agree with statements related to the existence of hierarchies among prisoners and the importance of possessions, indicating a more negative environment in terms of power and dominance. In terms of activities and space, the incarcerated held stronger views relating to negative prison environments, indicating that there were few meaningful things to do and little physical space. The items related to security and rules also indicated more negative perceptions of the environment. The acknowledgment of hierarchies, of few things to do, and of little physical space indicates that prison environments may be difficult ones in which to utilize rehabilitative programming or may even be an indicator that rehabilitative programming is not widespread or not viewed as useful, given that incarcerated individuals indicated there were not many meaningful things to do. Overcrowding, boredom, and a "pecking order" can create a hostile environment in which one must always watch one's back, making

engagement with rehabilitation programming more difficult. Correctional administrators must consider ways to improve correctional environments so rehabilitation programs can work more effectively. To that end, they must also work to provide more rehabilitative programming. Nearly all inmates will be released; their time in prison should be productive and prepare them for prosocial life in society.

The third factor, "Prisoner/Staff Interactions," contained items that could have differing interpretations. Prisoners knowing when and where staff will be and talking to staff regularly could be interpreted as contributing to either a positive or negative environment, depending upon how respondents interpreted the items. The reverse-coding instructions of the PES imply that these items are negative, but more research would shed light on how to best interpret them.

The fifth factor, "Prisoner Social Relations," indicated a promising avenue for improving the prison environment. Incarcerated individuals were likely to indicate that they did not believe other incarcerated individuals deserved to be bullied and that they didn't think bullying was just part of prison life or couldn't be stopped; however, most individuals either disagreed with, strongly disagreed with, or provided a neutral response to the statement that prisoners would help someone being bullied. These items indicate a useful place to target for change. If the incarcerated believe that bullying can be stopped and is not an inevitable part of prison life, they may be willing to help assist programming or interventions aimed at reducing bullying in the prison context. At present, incarcerated individuals indicated that they did not believe prisoners would help someone being bullied. Programming geared toward improving the social environment of prisons could be created to reduce bullying and other hierarchical conflicts between incarcerated individuals and to promote positive social relations within correctional facilities and as part of reentry programming aimed at helping the incarcerated to enact positive social interactions and relationships. Given the scholarship on difficulties of reentering society (Liem 2016; Petersilia 2003; Western 2018), such programming could be far-reaching inside and outside the prison. It should be noted that although bullying in prison has been examined in English prisons (Adams and Ireland 2018; Allison and Ireland 2010; Ireland 1999a, 1999b, 2000, 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012; Ireland and Archer 1996, 2002; Ireland and Ireland 2000, 2003; Ireland and Power 2004; Ireland et al. 1999, 2016), research on bullying in the United States seems limited to nonincarcerated children and adolescents and not focused on adult inmates. The participants in the current study indicated that bullying in prison was not inevitable, implying that it would be possible to intervene in this behavior. Correctional administrators and rehabilitative practitioners will need to create programming to address bullying in this specific population, which could be wrapped into larger programming to improve prosocial prison environments and relationships.

Although two statistically significant results were noted when comparing the means on the full PES, Factor 1, and Factor 2 across race/ethnicity and security level, the low sample sizes for these groups necessitate caution in interpretation; additionally, there is concern about Type I error, given the number of statistical tests computed. The significant result indicating that those responding that they were part of the group "Other/Multiple Races/Ethnicities" had more negative perceptions of the prison

environment is based upon a sample size of only seven individuals in that category. The sample sizes are a little better when considering the *t*-test result indicating that those in medium security ($n = 106$) have more negative perceptions than those in maximum security ($n = 25$) in terms of Factor 1 related to power and dominance. There are stark differences in these two security levels, notably in terms of housing design (single/double cells in maximum-security facilities versus dormitories in most medium-security facilities) as well as freedom of movement and ability to interact with others. It may be that those housed in maximum security are able to avoid or reduce their exposure to issues related to power and dominance because they are housed in cells rather than in the much more open environment of dormitories. More research is needed on this particular topic to flesh out whether these hypotheses are supported, though the researcher would anecdotally note that in her interviews with inmates in a different research project, several inmates made comments regarding their preference for being housed in maximum security because of the cell housing structure rather than being housed in dormitories.

Limitations and Future Research

There are several limitations that must be mentioned. The small sample size of 154 makes analyses unlikely to detect any statistical significance, such that the results presented here are necessarily exploratory and descriptive. Although a larger sample size was desired, this was not feasible because of the security restrictions within the facilities visited, so adjustments in sample size were made downward. Increasing the sample size is critical in future research so multivariate analyses can be conducted. All participants were male and confined within three correctional facilities within one midwestern state, thus limiting generalizability, given that different populations, such as incarcerated females, those housed in minimum-security facilities, and incarcerated individuals in other states, were not included. Expanding the number of facilities and the types of incarcerated individuals is necessary. Because the sample size was small, it was not feasible to split the sample by security level, but security levels may affect how the incarcerated perceive the prison environment. This study included close-ended quantitative survey questions, so more in-depth explanations were not possible to obtain. Scholars should consider expanding this type of research by utilizing qualitative interviews or open-ended questions on surveys in order to gain a more complete understanding of the perceptions of the physical and social environments of the prison held by incarcerated individuals. Given this type of research typically involves low sample sizes—often lower than the sample size of 154 in the present research—the attempt here was to provide a descriptive overview of how incarcerated individuals in this particular sample viewed the physical and social environments of the prison. There were also aspects of the prison environment that were not part of the PES that would be interesting to examine. The PES was selected for a variety of reasons already specified, such as its brevity, given concerns about survey fatigue, but including survey items related to sound, lighting, housing (cell versus dormitory), and other topics would provide additional insights.

Although bullying in prison has been heavily examined in England, particularly by Ireland and colleagues (Adams and Ireland 2018; Allison and Ireland 2010; Ireland 1999a,

1999b, 2000, 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012; Ireland and Archer 1996, 2002; Ireland and Ireland, 2000, 2003; Ireland and Power 2004; Ireland et al. 1999, 2016; South and Wood 2006), no research on this topic in the United States was located. Bullying is a major topic in research on children and adolescents, particularly in school and online contexts, and bullying in prison has been examined since the late 1990s in England, but so far, little research has been conducted examining bullying in American prisons. Given the results of the current research indicating that incarcerated individuals did not believe bullying was inevitable in the prison environment, future research should focus on bullying in prisons in the United States both to gain an idea of the nature of scope of bullying in American prisons and to provide cross-cultural comparisons with the research that has been conducted in English prisons.

CONCLUSION

In the years since the "nothing works" rhetoric of the 1970s, criminologists have found that many rehabilitative programs do, in fact, produce positive results (Latessa et al. 2002; Lipsey and Cullen 2007; Wilson et al. 2000), with scholars finding that positive therapeutic relationships can yield positive treatment outcomes such as reduced recidivism (Dowden and Andrews 2004; Stasch et al. 2018) and that a positive prison climate can reduce attitudes toward offending (Woessner and Schwedler 2014). This research sought to provide a descriptive analysis of how incarcerated individuals in a U.S. midwestern state think about the prison environment on physical and social dimensions. Given that the incarcerated are the ones who are living, working, recreating, and engaging in rehabilitative programming within the correctional environment, their perceptions are necessary for a full understanding of what that environment means to them. This is especially necessary in the United States, where prisons are viewed as harsh, Spartan environments and the public expect and policymakers have worked toward making those environments even more punishing. If effective treatment is more likely when the environment is perceived as safe and supportive (Schalast et al. 2008; Tonkin et al. 2012; Woessner and Schwedler 2014), however, then we need to understand how the incarcerated perceive the correctional environment and whether that environment is viewed as safe and supportive. The results of this exploratory research indicate that incarcerated individuals in this sample generally viewed prisons negatively, perceiving the environment as having hierarchies, little physical space, and few activities.

Devising ways to promote a more positive prison environment is key to creating the kind of environment in which rehabilitation programming can be more effective. In addition to reducing overcrowding, prisons need to provide meaningful activities that promote prosocial and constructive behavior. Given the responses that the incarcerated provided to questions regarding the bullying of inmates, particularly their indication that other inmates do not deserve to be bullied and they don't think bullying is just a part of prison life, changes in prison climate are possible. There appears to be at least one specific aspect of prison life in which interventions may be welcomed or at least considered by inmates: interventions that target a reduction in inmate bullying. Further, the culture of Therapeutic Communities (TCs) that promote supporting one another

within a structured and supportive community environment has been adopted within many prisons as a model for some prison housing units, often to assist with substance abuse recovery. While the effects of TC involvement on measures such as recidivism vary (Davidson and Young 2019), correctional administrators may want to consider expanding the TC culture to entire prisons as a way of improving the correctional environment in order to promote rehabilitative efforts, reduce institutional misconduct, and facilitate successful postrelease outcomes.

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