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Continuity of the "code": A review of the subcultures and informal social norms in prisons, streets, and schools

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Abstract

Over the last several decades, sociologists and criminologists have documented the presence of a subculture in prison and street settings. Recent scholarship has shed light on how failed safety measures and key institutional deprivations also contribute to the manifestation of a subculture in urban and suburban public schools. Within each setting, researchers have illuminated how a set of informal social norms, formally known as a "code," govern interpersonal communication and regulate violence. Considering the prevalence of violence in prison, street, and school settings, it is important to understand how the code operates, the social conditions that influence individual and group adherence, and whether the code in prison, street, and school settings reinforce one another. This review seeks to explore the inner workings of the inmate, street, and school codes, shed light on their utility in each respective setting, and reveal how the carceral state extends throughout each of the respective codes.

KEYWORDS
code of the school, convict code, incarceration, inmate code, policing, prison, school code, school safety, school to prison pipeline, school violence, street code, urban violence, violence

1 | INTRODUCTION

Early scholarship on violence and behavior in the U.S. focused on maintaining social order in correctional institutions (Clemmer, 1940; Street, 1965; Sykes, 1956). As prisons and inmate populations flourished throughout the U.S., scholars investigated the underlying factors that contributed to inmates' oppositional conduct and discovered an informal "code" regulated violence in prison settings. Sykes and Messinger (1960) describe the inmate code as a subculture that teaches incarcerated individuals to value loyalty to other inmates, doing their own time, and showing toughness when interacting with other inmates. Scholars acknowledge that adherence to or deviation from the inmate code plays a major role in prisoners' interpersonal relations, is associated with rewards and consequences, and influences inmates' social status within the institution (Irwin & Cressey, 1962; Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Wellford, 1967).

Subsequent studies on behavior and deviance in urban communities unveiled the presence of a street code that governed violence and interpersonal communication amongst impoverished men and women (Anderson, 2000; Drummond et al., 2011; Jones, 2009; Kurtenbach et al., 2021; Moule & Fox, 2021; Stewart & Simons, 2006). Similar to the inmate code, the street code values group alliances, a reluctance to snitch, and a willingness to use violence to gain social status (Anderson, 2000). Recent studies on punishment in urban and suburban public schools also have documented the presence of a "school code" that regulates violence and advises students on how to protect themselves in the absence of reliable safety measures (Bell, 2021). While prisons, streets, and schools are unique social environments, they do not operate in isolation (Lopez-Aguado, 2013; Wacquant, 2001). Specifically, the street serves as an interplay for schools and prisons (Anderson, 2000; Bell, 2021; Mears et al., 2013; Mitchell et al., 2021; Mitchell et al., 2017). Students encounter an assortment of street-level bureaucrats and street-oriented individuals as they travel to and from school. Regardless of their personal disposition, students must be prepared to protect themselves at any time (Bell, 2021; Brunson & Miller, 2009; Jones, 2009). Also, many inmates acquire some formal education and experience navigating the streets before entering the correctional system—potentially introducing them to the school and street codes (Duke, 2018; Irwin & Cressey, 1962).

While the existing literature suggests that urban impoverished youth primarily encounter the code in street settings, recent scholarship specified in Bell (2021) indicates that public schools may be the first site in which youth engage with and adopt the code. Despite the availability of literature on other informal codes, we limited our review to the codes in school, street, and prison settings because the socio-political relationship between these contexts suggests that code adoption in schools may facilitate code adoption in street and prisons. Therefore, if code adoption in school settings is rooted in failed safety measures and students' fear of being harmed—as Bell (2021) suggests—students may adopt the school code, establish a violent identity, and engage in violent behavior as a defense mechanism. Bearing in mind that violent altercations are increasingly criminalized in school and street settings, code adoption in school settings may facilitate a pathway to prison. As scholars and practitioners construct interventions to decrease school suspension and mass incarceration, it may be helpful to understand the relationship between the aforementioned codes, the social factors that contribute to code adoption in each setting, and how the codes potentially introduce a cycle of violence into students' lives that facilitates criminalization and incarceration. Thus, the purpose of this review is to explore the innerworkings and utility of the inmate, street, and school codes; discuss how they conceivably reinforce each other; and conceptualize how the codes complement the carceral state.

2 | THE CARCERAL STATE AS FRAMEWORK FOR THE SUSTAINMENT OF A CULTURAL CODE

Foucault (1979) indicates that the carceral state extends beyond prison walls and is linked deeply within the fabric of society. Every inmate within carceral spaces is subjected to elements of surveillance and control. Foucault (1979) coined the term "panopticism" to describe continuous supervision and power subjugation over prisoners in real space-time, which could be considered a form of incapacitation. The Panopticon—a prison model based on the

writings of Bentham from the 18th century—was "a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it" (Foucault, 1979, p. 201). This machine was a literal representation of the training the human body endures in carceral spaces, with an infinitesimal attention to detail. Discipline and control were enacted to surveil and control prisoners with the intent of eliminating future criminal behavior (Foucault, 1979).

Consistent with Foucault (1979), several studies have demonstrated that the control mechanisms embedded within the carceral state extend beyond the inmate and negatively impact their families. Comfort (2007) notes that people who are suspected or convicted of committing crimes are typically members of social networks. Consequently, these individuals also experience intense contact with criminal justice practitioners and are subjected to a variety of sanctions. For example, correctional institutions often regulate women's attire and authorize intense surveillance during visitations to discourage physical contact with their incarcerated romantic partners (Comfort et al., 2005). Studies also indicate that incarceration impacts family members' communication, mental health, physical health, and finances (Comfort, 2009; DeHart et al., 2018).

In many ways, the carceral state is embedded within the normal functioning of public schools. Shedd (2015) states that urban youth experience surveillance and police contact at much younger ages and the intense school safety measures present in public schools operate as a "universal carceral apparatus." Similar to the panopticism Foucault (1979) describes, youth are criminalized and closely monitored in street and school settings. Despite the criminalization and constant surveillance youth endure, Rios (2011) offers the overpolicing-underpolicing paradox to remind us that youth are often vulnerable to harm despite their extensive monitoring by law enforcement officers. Thus, the adoption of codes within society are a way for common people to push back against the carceral state, create a form of self-governance, and protect themselves in the absence of reliable safety measures.

Foucault (1979) reminds us that the economy of power relationships and law enacted under the old disciplinary strategies are either redeployed to serve a retributive function or establish an increasingly marginalized population of the condemned. Gottschalk (2014) describes individuals subjected to the carceral state as being the most oppressed within society. Gottschalk (2014) further notes that correctional institutions utilize slave labor of prisoners, through the enactment of the U.S. Constitution's 13th amendment, and that these individuals are subjected to dehumanization as well as the loss of their liberties. Foucault (1979) describes how the idea of spatial organization has a deep connection to power. Space and time in carceral settings are different than in society and this concept plays a key role in social, economic, and political contexts (Foucault, 1979). The surveillance of people who are oppressed becomes particularly important when we look at how space and time is controlled by the carceral state (Foucault, 1979).

Crime within communities is a multi-faceted problem that needs a more systemic solution involving key stakeholders from the private, state, and federal sectors. The carceral state has an exponential growth in the development of punitive policies and control over impoverished communities of color (Rios, 2006). Many communities of color, particularly those who identify as Black and Latino, face both criminalization and carceralization (Rios, 2006). Impoverished educational institutions in the community facilitate a school to prison pipeline culture and the frequent surveillance and control of students (Giroux, 2011). Education is rooted in socially constructed paradigms that are intended to control the masses through overt and hidden curriculums and establishes a hierarchy of those who rule and those who serve in society (Giroux, 2011).

Meiners (2010) discusses the ever-expanding role of the carceral state and the potential pedagogical opportunities to educate and decarcerate America simultaneously. The prison industrial complex has become the response to extreme poverty and oppressed communities (Meiners, 2010). Possessing a criminal record is another barrier to further educational advancement for individuals who come from marginalized communities. The collateral consequences of conviction and other unjust policies prohibit many incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals from participating in post-secondary educational programs (Gottschalk, 2014). The lack of access to post-secondary educational opportunities could be connected to impoverishment and mass incarceration by limiting the economic stability of people and making it more difficult to find gainful employment within their communities. In 2015, the Chronicle of Higher Education released data showing that approximately 70% of 1400 undergraduate post-secondary institutions used criminal history as a screening process for academic admissions (Custer, 2016). These punitive

policies push people onto the fringes of society and encourage them to adopt oppositional codes to find structure and meaning within their lives.

3 | CULTURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF A CODE

Many actors who follow a cultural code are often locked out of mainstream educational and social opportunities that help individuals thrive in society. Culture is the life blood of any organizational environment and is necessary for the smooth operation of social institutions (Hickman, 2016). Border pedagogy is a concept that allows individuals to connect with cultural codes, languages, and lived experiences (Giroux, 2005). Those who adopt border pedagogical techniques in shared spaces can cross culturally historic borders and ascend beyond traditional and oppressive narratives. This is an example of how prison, street, and school codes can interact with and inform other sub-cultures. The concept of culture is used as a tool to normalize the different incarnations of organizational phenomena (Hickman, 2016). Culture is an essential component of critical pedagogy, and it should be used to define the ways in which a social group makes sense out of their circumstances (Giroux, 2011). School, street, and inmate codes can be viewed as informal educational and organizational environments with hierarchies, rules, and regulations. Agents of change can collect cultural information and share transformative ideas as a mechanism of self-reflection and a potential catalyst for progressive social change within a sub-group of people (Giroux, 2011).

Those who are in positions of power and seek to continue their psychological domination over individuals, attempt to fundamentally change perspectives to oppress them and make them subjects of the dominant culture (Freire, 1973). The development of informal codes is the process of common people, particularly those who live in impoverished and marginalized communities, creating informal public policy that is not directly controlled by a government entity. Power relations are established between institutions as economic and social processes that can impact the behavioral patterns as well as norms within systems of government (Foucault, 1972). Relations must be considered independent of the object of discourse between institutions and the average citizen (Foucault, 1972). In the *Archeology of Knowledge*, Foucault (1972) discussed the concept of an archive that stores information for society and individuals. Foucault defines the archive as a "general system of the formation and transformation of statements." Neither individual nor society can be fully exhausted within an acquisition of knowledge attainment, but both are continuously refined to develop more power which is established through the formation of knowledge such as creating culturally specific codes (Foucault, 1972). Marginalized individuals face many negative environmental stimuli and may seek out structure from various school, street, and inmate codes as a mechanism to better establish an identity and social connection to the world around them.

Crises of a psychosocial nature will involve the needs of the individual which often conflict with the needs of society and can create an increased likelihood of arrested development and anti-social behavior (Erikson, 1980). This may explain why some individuals adhere to what most in society perceive as negative cultural codes. Many followers of various codes are at a disadvantage and lack access to resources within their communities, as education is one of the pillars of society that socially reproduces power and privilege.

4 | CODE SHARING AS A PEDAGOGY

The oppressed in society have an innate ability to teach others and rise against their oppressors. They are often denied the opportunity to fully develop a critical consciousness from which they could change their own lives and potentially shape the outcomes of their communities (Freire, 1973). Developing and maintaining codes through teaching and learning is a way in which people can create structure within politically neglected environments. Critical pedagogy is important for challenging individuals to learn from each other, as well as to gain a critical understanding of their lives and relationships with one another (Giroux, 2011). Freire (1973) described critical consciousness development as a

process in which we gain knowledge about various systems of oppression, privilege, and inequality in a social context and the marginalization of certain populations. According to Freire (1973) interactions are meant to be more than an expression of opinions, but also a way to utilize active listening skills to gain an understating of each other and a shared situation such as giving or receiving information about a code.

5 | ORIGINS OF THE INMATE CODE

Prisons are political institutions that are designed to physically and symbolically isolate inmates from society while controlling every aspect of their lives (Goffman, 1961a). Beginning with Clemmer (1940), researchers have questioned the social factors that influence inmates' adjustment in prison settings. Clemmer introduced the term "prisonization" to indicate the ways in which inmates adopt the customs and culture of the correctional institution. Although administrators in prisons communicate expected behaviors for inmates, criminologists acknowledge that administrative rules often oppose the conduct expectations inmates establish for themselves. Clemmer's case study of prisons throughout Illinois led him to theorize that the length of an inmate's prison sentence was the primary determinant of their conformity to the customs and general culture of the institution (Clemmer, 1940). Precisely, prisonization would be at its lowest point during the early stage of incarceration and the longer the inmate remained incarcerated the greater their adherence to oppositional conduct guidelines established within the inmate code (Clemmer, 1940).

Opposing Clemmer, Wheeler (1961) suggested that prisonization occurred in a nonlinear "U" shaped manner. Specifically, he proposed that inmates were more likely to adopt the administrative rules during the early and late phases of their sentence and more likely to abide by the inmates' oppositional conduct guidelines during the middle phase. As scholars focused on prisonization, they concluded that a set of informal social norms, or a "code," regulated inmate behavior in prisons. Sykes and Messinger (1960) describe characteristics of the inmate code (also known as the "convict code") as including 1) loyalty to other inmates, 2) doing your own time, and 3) showing toughness when interacting with other inmates. Sykes and Messinger (1960) suggest social relations among prisoners is highly reliant upon conformity to and deviation from the inmate code. For example, an inmate who violates their loyalty to other inmates by cooperating with corrections officials is labeled a "rat," and detested by fellow inmates (Sykes & Messinger, 1960). Prisoners also label thieves, aggressive individuals who fight, individuals who use violence to gain possessions from other inmates, and inmates who prefer to abide by the normative institutional guidelines (Irwin, 1970; Sykes, 1956, 1958). As inmates are stripped of the traditional indicators of social status upon entrance into prison settings, the labels inmates assign and the roles they adopt help establish a new social status system and build an identity (Goffman, 1961a; Sykes, 1958).

Wheeler, Sykes, Messinger, and several other scholars developed a "deprivation model" to explain the origins of the inmate code. Specifically, the deprivation model proposes that inmates developed the code to help alleviate the "pains of imprisonment" brought on by the burden of institutional deprivations. In his classic study of prisons, Sykes (1958) implies that the loss of liberty via imprisonment is intended to function as punishment along with other conditions, such as violence, unsanitary surroundings, the inability to formulate heterosexual relationships, restrictions on store purchases, and the obligation to abide by administrative guidelines. In this environment, every inmate's behavior is subjected to constant scrutiny given their proximity to one another. Inmates routinely lose their right to vote, access to family, autonomy, and security (Sykes, 1958). Collectively, these deprivations diminish inmates' self-image and reduce them to the dependent status reminiscent of childhood (Sykes, 1958). In the face of these frustrating deprivations, Sykes (1958) suggests inmates have two choices: a) establish an alliance with fellow inmates that relies on offers of reciprocated aid, respect, and loyalty in unified opposition to correctional staff or, b) engage in a free for all in which every inmate fends for themselves. In cases where the inmate code prevails, Sykes (1958) proposes that the institutional deprivations inmates experience create solidarity and promote a collectivistic approach towards overcoming oppression. Thus, Freire (1973) helps us understand that inmates adopt the

code and use it strategically to demonstrate their masculinity, earn status, and reclaim power in an environment that is designed to constrain their autonomy.

While some scholars have emphasized that dire prison conditions and institutional deprivations shaped inmate behavior, critics constructed an opposing "importation model" to explain the root of the inmate code. Collectively, they argued that inmates import a culture with them into the prison setting that influences their social status and behavior (Irwin & Cressey, 1962). They expressed that inmate behavior, and the characteristics of the inmate code are not unique to carceral spaces, implying that a relationship may exist between subcultures like those subsequently identified in street and school settings. Specifically, the ideals identified in the inmate code, such as "don't snitch, be weak, or exploit another inmate" are also evident in codes that regulate behavior in street and school settings (Anderson, 2000; Bell, 2021). Irwin and Cressey (1962) posit that inmates are oriented to three different subcultures prior to their incarceration, which largely determine their behaviors and social roles in prison settings. Inmates oriented towards a criminal subculture, such as career criminals and professional thieves, are more likely to value individuals who are trustworthy, reliable, and unwilling to cooperate with authority figures (Irwin & Cressey, 1962). Prisoners oriented towards a convict subculture, such as hardened individuals from lower social classes and those who have a long history of confinement, are more likely to attribute high status to those who are manipulative and utilitarian. These individuals seek positions of power, influence, possessions, and information as leaders in the institution. Finally, those oriented to a legitimate subculture focus on differentiating themselves from other inmate populations by completing the time and seeking status through normative means (Irwin & Cressey, 1962; Ross & Richards, 2003).

Studies that have tested the institutional deprivation and importation models have found support for both. Wellford (1967) investigated whether the *length of time served*, *phase of institutional career*, or *criminal social type* were correlated with adoption of the inmate code. The findings showed the relationship between *length of time served* and inmates' adoption of the code was not significant. Wellford identified a weak correlation between *phase of institutional career* and inmates' adoption of the code. Finally, the *criminal social type* variable was found to have the strongest correlation to adoption of the inmate code. Consequently, Wellford concluded that adoption of the inmate code was influenced by institutional deprivations and characteristics of the prisoner, such as their subculture orientation prior to incarceration.

Subsequent studies that attempted to explain adoption of the code amongst male and female inmates have also found support for the deprivation and importation models (Akers et al., 1974; Hartnagel & Gillan, 1980; Schwartz, 1971; Thomas, 1977a; Thomas & Zingraff, 1976). Walker (2016) examined racial classification and segregation methods in a contemporary jail system. He raised important concerns about how racial segregation may increase violence in prison settings because prison officials fail to recognize intra-racial conflicts. He also conceptualized racialization and subsequent segregation as a "contemporary pain of imprisonment" because a) racially integrated environments allow more access to privileges and greater freedom and b) the fate of each inmate is connected to their counterparts. Existing scholarship has noted that in some correctional institutions "doing your own time" has been replaced with street and gang culture, which focuses on serving "gang time" (Wacquant, 2001). Lopez-Aguado (2016) investigated how the identities Latino inmates adopted due to geographical sorting practices in carceral settings spilled over into high-incarceration Latino/a communities. He found many probationary youths' carceral identities were shaped by the high concentration of incarceration in their communities and formerly incarcerated relatives and friends. Specifically, the geographical sorting practices in adult correctional facilities created carceral identities that influenced communities outside of the adult prison and youth imported these identities into juvenile detention centers. As support for the importation model has flourished, it points towards a potential relationship between other subcultures found in street and school settings.

6 | EMERGENCE OF THE STREET CODE

Escalating tensions in urban cities shifted attention on violence and behavior to street settings (Sugrue, 1996). Anderson (2000) identified the street code and characterized it as an oppositional culture rooted in the search for respect. He suggests the burden of racial inequality, systemic disadvantage, poverty, and distrust of law enforcement create a social environment in which impoverished Black men use violence as a tactic to earn social status. In *Code of the Street*, Anderson describes how manhood is associated with toughness and a willingness to use violence, which is very similar to the tenets delineated in the inmate code. He also implies that fighting in the street deters confrontations and offers protection in the absence of reliable law enforcement.

Studies that investigated the street code theory have found support and contradictions. Brunson and Stewart (2006) explored African American women's experiences living in a neglected community within Chicago. They found women used violence to develop, enhance, and maintain their reputations. Also, women viewed violence as a tactic to ensure self-defense and they believed that constructing a violent identity would deter potential confrontations. Stewart et al. (2006) investigated whether the tenets outlined in the street code explained victimization among a longitudinal study of 720 African American adolescents from 259 neighborhoods. They found that individuals who adopted the street code had higher victimization levels, which opposes Anderson's argument that the street code increases safety and deters confrontation. Jones (2009) demonstrated how the street code regulates interpersonal violence among African American girls and described the strategies girls use to navigate violence in street and school settings. Finally, Kurtenbach and Rauf (2019) explored whether the street code extended to other racial groups in impoverished communities. They concluded that German, Turkish, Arab, and Eastern European teenage and young adult males use violence to obtain higher social status and respect.

7 | HOW THE STREET AND INMATE CODES POTENTIALLY REINFORCE EACH OTHER

As individuals navigate prison and street settings, it is important to consider whether the codes that regulate violence in both environments reinforce one another. Studies confirm that at least 85% of incarcerated individuals will be released at some point and suggests that nearly two-thirds of them will return to prison (James, 2014; Scott, 2016). The high level of interaction between streets and prisons coupled with similarities in the subcultures warrants consideration of a potential reciprocated relationship between the inmate and street codes. For example, the street and inmate codes emphasize exhibiting toughness to gain respect and social status, discourage cooperating with law enforcement, and incentivize establishing alliances with other individuals who abide by the code. Additionally, Anderson (2000) established a dichotomy between parents who orient their children to the oppositional culture (e.g., "street) and those who encourage their children to abide by normative values (e.g., "decent"). He described the strategies parents enact to protect their children from the street code and street-oriented individuals, such as promoting church attendance and utilizing strict child-rearing practices. The normative value system Anderson (2000) described is similar to the legitimate subculture Irwin and Cressey (1962) outline. Individuals who are socialized to abide by normative values, may be more likely to reject the street and inmate codes and focus on seeking status through normative methods.

As Sykes, Messinger, and other scholars suggest institutional deprivations contribute to adoption of the inmate code, we conceptualize racial inequality, poverty, hyper-segregation, and unreliable law enforcement as a similar "deprivation model" that attempts to explain adoption of the street code. The presence of a potential deprivation model raises the question of whether adherence to the street code also relies on imported characteristics from other deviant subcultures found in prisons and schools. Mitchell et al. (2021) investigated the relationship between the inmate and street codes. They identified a strong correlation between the street code and the *masculinity factor* embedded in the inmate code, which the authors defined as "never showing fear." The authors also found moderate correlations between the street code and other tenets of the inmate code, such as *social distance*, *invisibility*, and

strategic survival. Specifically, 47% of the adult male prisoners included in their sample indicated that they possessed similar beliefs regarding the inmate and street codes. Mears et al. (2013) studied whether adoption of the street code increased the likelihood of engaging in violence once incarcerated and if the effects of the street code would be amplified by adverse carceral experiences. The results confirmed that adherence to the street code increases violence in prison settings. They also found inmates who lacked family support, experienced disciplinary sanctions, and joined gangs were more likely to engage in violence. Thus, the inmate and street codes may not function in isolation of each other. Instead, incarceration and high recidivism rates potentially facilitate a continuous relationship between the inmate and street codes and suggest that a bidirectional importation process reinforces them (Figure 1).

8 | THE CODE OF THE SCHOOL

Over the last 2 decades researchers and policymakers have focused on the prevalence of violence in K-12 schools (Benbenishty & Astor, 2021; Fisher et al., 2017; Klein, 2012; Kupchik, 2010, 2016; Peterson & Skiba, 2000). Bullying, fighting, and school shootings have threatened the foundation of public education and researchers have been tasked with investigating the origins of school violence. Bell (2021) investigated Black students' perceptions of school punishment and whether out-of-school suspension deterred violent altercations on school grounds. His findings revealed that a similar "code" influences the use of violence in urban and suburban public high schools regardless of their racial demographics or social class. Students expressed that the threat of receiving an out-of-school suspension would not deter them from fighting other students for several reasons. First, the student participants stated that the existing school safety measures (e.g., metal detectors, guards, and law enforcement officers) did not protect
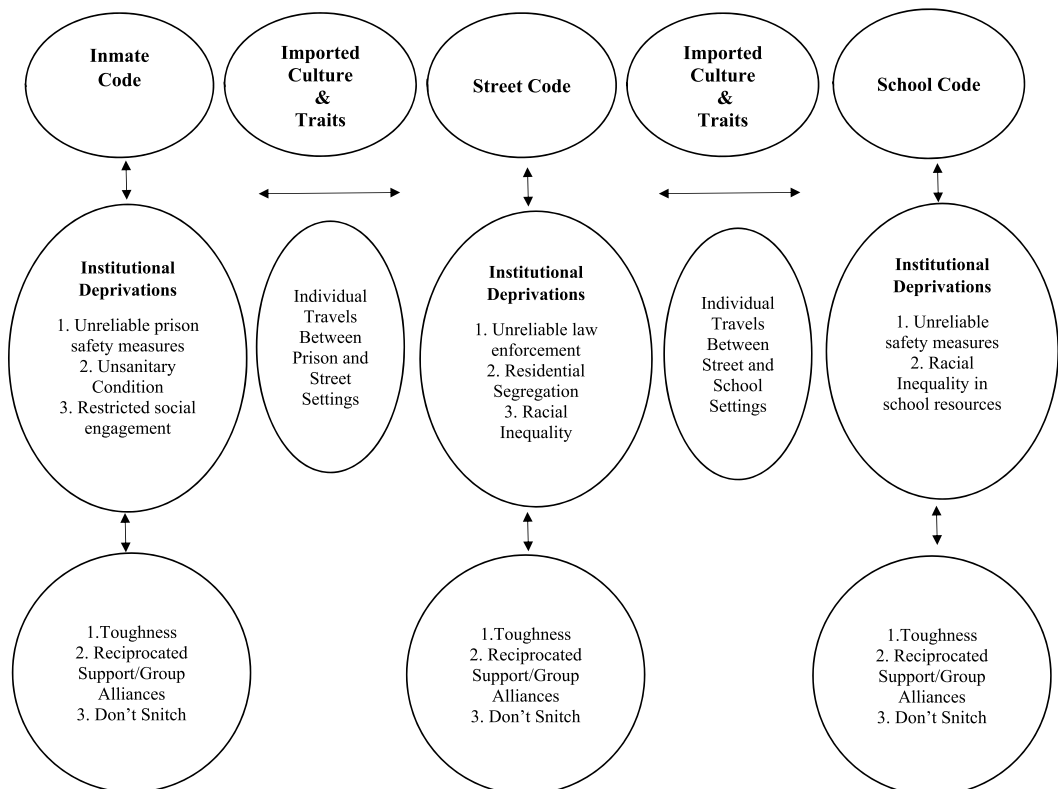

FIGURE 1 Bidirectional importation and deprivation model for the inmate, street, and school codes

them from violent encounters on school grounds. Instead, school safety measures criminalized Black students and rendered them vulnerable when they needed protection. Secondly, the code in school settings dictates that refusing to use violence in self-defense or informing school authority when attacked by other students functions as an indicator of weakness and fear, which invites attacks from other students. Also, students learned that using violence to defend themselves discouraged attacks from some students and invited attacks from others depending on their position in the school's social hierarchy (Bell, 2021). Students expressed frustration because school officials issued suspensions for using violence irrespective of the students' position as the victim or aggressor—exacerbating the sentiment of being trapped in a lose-lose situation.

Similar to the institutional deprivation and importation models established within the inmate code literature, Bell (2021) suggests the school code is the product of imported knowledge from the street code and grave school-based deprivations. He documents parents' dilemma as they balanced their desire for their children to abide by the normative school culture and the realization that school safety measures routinely fail to protect students, which necessitates that they use violence to protect themselves. As he delineates the school code, Bell describes how school-based deprivations, such as a lack of textbooks, decrepit building conditions, broken metal detectors, and unfair assessment practices create frustration and lead students to lash out at teachers. Furthermore, he describes how the social norms embedded in the school code compel some educators to use violence to protect themselves or risk victimization.

9 | RECIPROCATED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STREET AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Several studies and school violence investigations point towards a bidirectional relationship between streets and public schools. Mateu-Gelabert and Lune (2003) investigated the relationship between community and school violence in New York City and found that youth conflicts feature a bidirectional pathway, often originating in the street and carrying over into the school or originating in the school and spilling over into the street. The researchers also found that a youth's allies and adversaries mirror their neighborhood and school's social organization. Youth participants conveyed that neighborhood and peer alliances played a critical role in deterring physical altercations in school and on the street. Brunson and Miller (2009) interviewed 38 African American boys and concluded that violent encounters were more likely to start outside of school and spillover into the school setting. The students in their study emphasized that neighborhood affiliation, students' gang membership, and ineffective security measures contributed to violence in school settings. Recent scholarship on school violence has found that students carry weapons to school because of fear associated with navigating unsafe spaces in the street and a lack of protection from violent altercations in school—accentuating the relationship between street and school settings (Lu, Avellaneda, & Torres, 2020; Moore et al., 2020; Pham et al., 2017).

10 | CONCLUSION

While early scholarship conceptualized the inmate and street codes in isolation of one another, recent studies point toward a reciprocated relationship between the codes and subcultures that arise in prison and street settings. Also, development of the school code theory and the identification of similar importation and deprivation models as seen in the inmate code literature suggests the inmate, street, and school codes are closely associated with one another. The argument presented in this paper raises important questions about the role of the government in creating institutional deprivations in schools, streets, and prisons that encourage adoption of the oppositional codes in each setting. Specifically, if the aforementioned settings featured reliable safety measures, racial equity in resources, and humane conditions, individuals may not rely on the informal regulations embedded in each code to settle disputes

and navigate the environment. However, Irwin (1970) suggests the inmate code exists partly because it complements the normative carceral system. For example, Irwin (1970) states:

> Certain special privileges are granted by the administration to inmate leaders in exchange for order. The "politician" is often involved in a direct conspiracy where lip service is paid to the convict code while the convicts are secretly betrayed for the "politician's" personal gain. The "right guy" is afforded special consideration even though he appears to be completely hostile to the administration because, by his enforcement of the convict code, he in effect helps to control other convicts.

Considering the analysis Irwin (1970) offers regarding how the inmate code complements the official prison regulations, scholars should consider how the street and school codes potentially fulfill a similar objective. We propose that the criminalization and institutional deprivations evident in school and street settings are designed to create a secluded environment in which violence and victimization occur continuously. For example, in the absence of reliable safety measures code adoption facilitates violence and victimization and invites criminalization (Bell, 2021; Stewart et al., 2006). The criminalization marginalized communities endure because of code adoption provides a rationale that policymakers can use to justify inequity in the distribution of resources. It also allows practitioners and policymakers to strategically remove Black and Latino youths from public schools and place them in carceral settings. This analysis is consistent with Nunn (2002) "surplus pool of criminality" concept, which suggests that African Americans "constitute a pool of surplus, or inchoate criminals in the collective psyche of white America" (pg. 385). Thus, policymakers, law enforcement officers, and school officials may utilize code adoption in street and school settings as a rationale to strategically employ the carceral state with the goal of recreating the racial segregation schools and urban communities exhibited prior to the civil rights movement. A model of our conceptualization is presented in (Figure 2).

11 | FUTURE RESEARCH

Subsequent studies should address the following questions: a) At what age range or grade level do students learn about the significance of fighting, respect, and social status? B) Also, at what age range or grade level do parents begin advising their children to use violence to defend themselves? C) Bell (2021) proposes that students who are not aware of the street code first learn about fighting, status, and respect in public schools. How does the school environment convey these norms to students who do not import a street-oriented culture? D) Finally, what other imported characteristics or institutional deprivations shape adherence to or deviation from the "code of the school." While extensive research has been conducted on the inmate and street codes, much research is needed on the school's code and how it shapes punishment and interpersonal conduct in this setting.

Seemingly negative associations for the prison, street, and school codes may also have a connection to carceral citizenship in which people with a criminal record are expected to abide by different rules than the typical citizen with no contact with the criminal justice system (Miller & Stuart, 2017). Smith and Kinzel (2021) expanded on Miller and Stuart's (2017) framework and found that formerly incarcerated individuals embraced their shared justice-involved narratives which often include elements of prison, street, and school cultural code norms. These individuals then attempt to shape public policy and practices that impact people who have been subjected to the power of the carceral state (Smith & Kinzel, 2021). Future studies should also investigate how exposure to prison, street, and school codes influence formerly incarcerated individuals' quality of life and political engagement efforts post-incarceration.
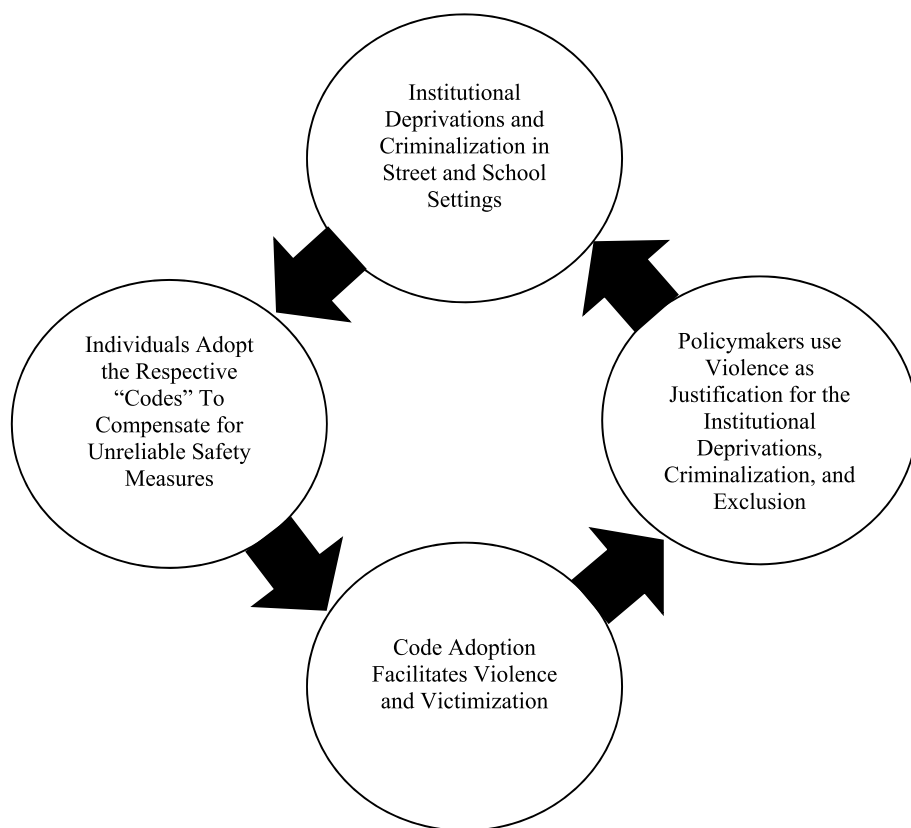
FIGURE 2 Code adoption in street and school settings complements normative system

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