

# CRIMINAL THINKING AND IDENTITY IN MALE WHITE-COLLAR OFFENDERS

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Thirty-four male white-collar offenders without a prior history of non-white-collar crime, 23 male white-collar offenders with at least one prior arrest for a non-white-collar crime, and 66 male non-white-collar offenders housed in a minimum security federal prison camp completed the Psychological Inventory of Criminal Thinking Styles and Social Identity as a Criminal scale and were rated on the Lifestyle Criminality Screening Form–Revised. Significant group differences were noted on the Psychological Inventory of Criminal Thinking Styles Self-Assertion/Deception scale, Social Identity as a Criminal Centrality subscale, Social Identity as a Criminal In-Group Ties subscale, and Lifestyle Criminality Screening Form–Revised, which showed that white-collar offenders with no prior history of non-white-collar crime registered lower levels of criminal thinking, criminal identification, and deviance than white-collar offenders previously arrested for non-white-collar crimes.

*Keywords:* PICTS; social identity; white-collar crime

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**W**hen Edwin Sutherland coined the term *white-collar crime* in 1939, one of his chief goals was to expose the inadequacies of traditional theories of crime causation (e.g., biological and sociologi-

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cal determinism) in modeling the antisocial behavior of the well to do. Sutherland (1949/1983) would later define white-collar crime as "crime committed by a person of respectability and high social status in the course of his occupation" (p. 7). Although some scholars took issue with Sutherland's definition (Coleman, 1987; Shapiro, 1990), choosing to define white-collar crime according to the offense rather than the offender, there is no disputing the fact that white-collar crime, however defined, threatens the social fabric of modern-day society, as evidenced by the recent Enron and WorldCom scandals. Surveys indicate that businesses in the United States incur losses of U.S.\$1 billion per annum from employee theft of pens, pencils, paper clips, postage, and stationary (Wells, 1994), and health care fraud, abuse, and waste are estimated to run as high as \$100 billion a year, approximately 10% of the total U.S. health care budget (Andrews, 1994). Computer crime, embezzlement, corporate crime, and fraud may have an even more devastating effect on society. Whereas the cost of white-collar crime is undeniable, debate continues to rage over whether white-collar offending should be considered distinct from other categories of criminal conduct.

Most scholars conceptualize white-collar and non-white-collar crime as discrete clinical and theoretical entities. Adopting a contrary view, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) posited that the differences between white-collar and non-white-collar crime are more apparent than real based on the assertion that all crime is a product of low self-control. In their general or low self-control theory of white-collar crime, Gottfredson and Hirschi argued that white-collar offenders are just as criminally versatile and deviant as their non-white-collar counterparts. What this means is that white-collar offenders do not specialize in white-collar crime any more than robbers confine themselves to robbery or thieves restrict themselves to theft. In addition, white-collar and non-white-collar offenders are equally likely to own a prior record of criminality and poor social adjustment. There is research that corroborates aspects of Hirschi and Gottfredson's general theory of white-collar crime. Nagin and Paternoster (1994), for instance, uncovered a significant relationship between white-collar crime and low self-control. Weisburd, Waring, and Chayet (1995), in another study that supports Gottfredson and Hirschi's position, determined

that imprisonment may be no more effective in deterring white-collar crime than it is in deterring other forms of criminality.

Weisburd, Chayet, and Waring (1990) tested Gottfredson and Hirschi's theory of white-collar crime in a large group of federal offenders divided into eight categories of white-collar crime (antitrust offenses, securities and exchange fraud, postal and wire fraud, false claims and statements, credit and lending institution fraud, bank embezzlement, IRS fraud, and bribery). With the exception of prisoners serving time for antitrust violations, many inmates in this sample showed evidence of prior criminality. Of these prisoners, 43% had been arrested at least once before, 34% had prior convictions, and 15% had been previously incarcerated. Even after paring their sample down to white-collar offenders who held either elite positions or were in possession of significant assets at the time they committed their offenses, Weisburd et al. (1990) still observed lifetime arrest and conviction rates of 25% and 10%, respectively. Despite a moderate degree of versatility and deviance, participants in this sample evidenced an older age of onset and lower frequency of offending than is generally observed in non-white-collar offenders. When Weisburd et al. (1990) restricted their sample to the most chronic white-collar offenders (three or more prior arrests), they nevertheless discovered that the career pattern of crime was hard to distinguish from that of the average street criminal.

Benson and Moore (1992) subjected Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) versatility and deviance hypotheses to empirical scrutiny by comparing federal white-collar offenders with persons convicted of narcotics violations, bank robbery, and postal forgery. The results revealed that white-collar offenders were 4 times more likely to have been previously arrested for a white-collar crime than non-white-collar criminals, thereby contradicting Gottfredson and Hirschi's versatility hypothesis in the sense that white-collar offenders maintained a higher level of specialization than non-white-collar offenders. Furthermore, the non-white-collar offenders were significantly more deviant than the white-collar offenders on indices of past problem drinking, drug use, poor grades, and social maladjustment. By the same token, a subsample of high-rate white-collar criminals, each with four or more prior arrests, displayed a level of versatility and

prior deviance that approached the level attained by non-white-collar offenders. In line with findings from an earlier study by Wheeler, Weisburd, Waring, and Bode (1988), Benson and Moore uncovered two separate pathways to white-collar crime, one marked by low self-control and prior non-white-collar offending and the other characterized by high self-control and no prior non-white-collar offending.

As the studies reviewed in this section suggest, there are at least two groups of white-collar offender. One group may be indiscernible from the common street criminal, a finding congruent with Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) low self-control theory of white-collar crime. The other group, by comparison, is significantly more specialized and less deviant than the first. To the extent that white-collar and non-white-collar crimes are divergent, it would make sense that these offenses are perpetrated by individuals who differ in their thoughts, identifications, and actions toward crime, a possibility that may reflect divergent programming needs for white-collar offenders with and without a history of non-white-collar crime. Walters (2003) utilized the Psychological Inventory of Criminal Thinking Styles (PICTS) (Walters, 1995) and Social Identity as a Criminal (SIC) (Cameron, 1999) Scale to discriminate between medium security inmates with and without a prior history of incarceration. Two of the four PICTS factor scales, Interpersonal Hostility and Self-Assertion/Deception, and one of three SIC subscales, Centrality, demonstrated significant time (initial assessment, 6-month follow-up) by group (novice, experienced) interactions, whereby scores on these scales rose in novice inmates after 6 months but remained stable in experienced inmates.

The purpose of the current study was to ascertain whether prisoners who have only ever been arrested for a white-collar crime deviated from white-collar offenders previously arrested for a non-white-collar crime and inmates confined for non-white collar offenses on measures of criminal thinking, criminal identity, and criminal lifestyle involvement. Research assessing Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) theory of white-collar crime denotes that white-collar crime occurs along two distinct and separate lines, one of which (white-collar offenders with a prior history of non-white-collar crime) may be largely indistinguishable from non-white-collar crime and the other of which (white-collar offenders without a prior history of non-white-collar crime) is less

versatile and deviant than the pattern traditionally found in non-white-collar offenders. Employing an offense-based definition of white-collar crime it was predicted that (a) white-collar offenders with no history of prior non-white-collar crime would receive significantly lower scores than white-collar offenders with a history of non-white-collar crime and non-white-collar offenders on measures of criminal thinking (PICTS factor scores), criminal identity (Self-Identity as a Criminal), and criminal lifestyle involvement (Lifestyle Criminality Screening Form [LCSF]) and (b) white-collar offenders with a history of prior non-white-collar crime and non-white-collar offenders would perform similarly on these criminal thinking, identity, and lifestyle measures.

## METHOD

### PARTICIPANTS

In a population of 327 male inmates assigned to a minimum security federal prison camp over a 3-month period, 86 (26.3%) were serving time for a white-collar offense.<sup>1</sup> Comparing inmates serving time for white-collar and non-white-collar crimes, it was noted that the white-collar offenders ( $M = 47.20$ ,  $SD = 10.78$ ) were significantly older,  $t(325) = 4.28$ ,  $p < .001$ , than non-white collar offenders ( $M = 41.41$ ,  $SD = 10.79$ ) and significantly more likely to be White,  $\chi^2(3, N = 327) = 23.56$ ,  $p < .001$ , than the non-white-collar offenders. Originally, it was hoped that it might be possible to match white-collar and non-white-collar participants on age and ethnic status; however, it soon became apparent that this was an impractical approach in that many of the white-collar offenders had no reasonable matches. Therefore, an alternate strategy was pursued in which all inmates 29 years of age and older (the lower limit of the age range in the white-collar group) serving time for nonviolent, non-white-collar offenses were approached about participating in the current study.

Over a 4-month period, 93 male inmates serving time for white-collar offenses were invited to participate in the current study.<sup>2</sup> Of these individuals, 57 agreed to participate, 34 declined, and 2 were unable to complete the survey because of reading/language difficul-

ties. There were no significant age, sentence, ethnicity, or offense discrepancies ( $p > .10$ ) between the 57 participating white-collar offenders and 34 white-collar offenders who were able but unwilling to participate in the current study. There were also no significant age, education, sentence, race, marital status, confining offense, PICTS factor scales, SIC subscales, or LCSF-R (LCSF-Revised) total score differences between the 26 white-collar offenders who were first-time offenders and 8 white-collar offenders with a prior record of white-collar offending ( $p > .10$ ; except for PICTS Interpersonal Hostility scale,  $p = .06$ ). Accordingly, these two clusters of inmates were merged into a single group of 34 white-collar offenders with no prior history of non-white-collar crime, in contrast to the 23 white-collar offenders who presented with at least one prior arrest for a non-white-collar crime.

Every minimum security male prisoner, 29 years of age and older, incarcerated in the same facility as the white-collar offenders for a nonviolent, non-white-collar offense, 136 in all, was approached about participating in the current study. Of this number, 66 agreed to participate, 59 refused to participate, and 11 could not read English well enough to complete the survey. As was the case with the white-collar offenders, there were no significant age, sentence, ethnic status, or offense disparities ( $p > .10$ ) between the 66 comparison participants who took part in this investigation and the 59 inmates who chose not to participate. Overall, 123 of the 216 English-speaking male minimum security inmates initially approached about participating in the current study (56.9%) eventually completed the survey. Although a higher percentage of white-collar inmates than non-white-collar offenders participated in the current investigation (62.6% vs. 52.8%), the proportions were not significantly different,  $\chi^2(1, N = 123) = 2.09$ ,  $p > .10$ .

#### MEASURES

*PICTS*. All inmates participating in the current study were administered Version 4.0 of the PICTS (Walters, 1995, 2003). The PICTS is an 80-item self-report measure composed of (a) two validity scales including Confusion-revised (Cf-r) and Defensiveness-revised (Df-r); (b) eight thinking-style scales including Mollification (Mo), Cutoff

(Co), Entitlement (En), Power Orientation (Po), Sentimentality (Sn), Superoptimism (So), Cognitive Indolence (Ci), and Discontinuity (Ds); (c) two content scales including Current Criminal Thinking (CUR) and Historical Criminal Thinking (HIS), and (d) four factor scales including Problem Avoidance (PRB), Interpersonal Hostility (HOS), Self-Assertion/Deception (AST), and Denial of Harm (DNH).<sup>3</sup> The validity and thinking-style scales contain 8 items each, the factor scales 10 items each, the CUR scale 13 items, and the HIS scale 12 items. There are four options per item with *strongly agree* = 4, *agree* = 3, *uncertain* = 2, and *disagree* = 1 with the exception of Df-r, which was scored in the reverse direction (i.e., *strongly agree* = 1 and *disagree* = 4). The test-retest reliability and empirical/predictive validity of the PICTS are well documented (Walters, 2002).

*SIC.* The 12 items that constitute the Cameron (1999) social identity scale were modified to assess participants' social identity as a criminal.<sup>4</sup> Each item was scored on a 6-point scale with attitudinal anchors at each point: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *moderately disagree*, 3 = *slightly disagree*, 4 = *slightly agree*, 5 = *moderately agree*, 6 = *strongly agree*. One half the items on Cameron's social identity scale are scored in a positive direction, whereas the other one half are scored in a reverse direction (i.e., *strongly disagree* = 6 and *strongly agree* = 1). Cameron recommended that the 12 social identity items be grouped into three factor subscales. The In-Group Ties subscale measures a respondent's level of personal bonding with in-group members (i.e., other criminals) and manifest internal consistency, as measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ), on the order of .76. The Centrality subscale ( $\alpha = .78$ ), on the other hand, is designed to assess the psychological salience of a respondent's group identity. The final subscale, In-Group Affect ( $\alpha = .78$ ), is believed to reflect a respondent's felt attitude toward in-group members. These three factor subscales were scored for the purposes of the current investigation where they earned internal consistency (alpha) coefficients of .50 (In-Group Ties), .48 (Centrality), and .58 (In-Group Affect).

*LCSF-R.* The LCSF-R (Walters, 1998; Walters, White, & Denney, 1991) is a 14-item chart audit form designed to assess the four interactive styles associated with lifestyle patterns of criminal conduct (irre-

sponsibility, self-indulgence, interpersonal intrusiveness, and social rule breaking) that is scored from information found in an inmate's presentence investigation (PSI) report. The Irresponsibility subscale lists items for dropping out of school, failure to provide financial support for a biological child, length of prior employment, and episodes of quitting or being terminated from a job. A history of substance misuse, divorce, and the presence of tattoos are assessed on the Self-Indulgence subscale. The Interpersonal Intrusiveness subscale asks whether the instant or confining offense was intrusive, a weapon was used in the commission of that offense, a history of intrusive crime exists, and the participant ever physically abused a significant other. Finally, the Social Rule Breaking subscale delimits the number of prior offenses, the age at first arrest, and the existence of any school disciplinary problems. The total LCSF-R score may range between 0 and 22, while removing the arrest-related items (arrests for intrusive crime, total number of arrests, age at first arrest) from the LCSF-R results in a scale with scores ranging from 0 to 16. Twenty randomly selected participants were independently rated on the LCSF-R by the second author, the outcome of which yielded an interrater reliability coefficient ( $r$ ) of .91.

#### PROCEDURE

The files of all inmates in admissions status at a federal minimum security prison camp located in the northeastern United States were reviewed over a 4-month period. Inmates serving time for the following white-collar crimes—antitrust violations, securities and exchange fraud, postal and wire fraud, health care fraud, IRS fraud, credit and lending institution fraud, bank embezzlement, counterfeiting, false claims and statements, and bribery—were approached about participating in the current study. In a group of 93 inmates serving sentences for white-collar crime, 57 were recruited into the study. A group of 136 non-white-collar offenders, 29 years of age and older, were also approached about enrolling in the study, from which a sample of 66 control participants was assembled. Voluntary consent to participate in the current study was obtained from all participants based on the understanding that the data would be kept confidential and that there would be no negative consequences should they choose not to partici-



pate. When voluntary consent was secured, participants completed the PICTS (Version 4.0) and SIC scale in groups of 2 to 10 inmates. The first author then conducted a file review, completed the LCSF-R, and gathered pertinent demographic data (number of prior white-collar offenses and number of prior non-white-collar offenses) on each participant. Basic demographic information on the 34 male white-collar offenders with no history of non-white collar crime, 23 male white-collar offenders with at least one prior arrest for a non-white-collar crime, and 66 male non-white-collar offenders appears in Table 1.

## RESULTS

As outlined in Table 1, white-collar offenders without a history of non-white-collar crime (WC-only) were significantly older, more highly educated, and serving shorter sentences than the non-white-collar control group (NWC). The WC-only group also possessed significantly more years of education than white-collar offenders with one or more prior arrests for a non-white-collar crime (WC-prior). Significant ethnic status differences were noted between all three groups,  $\chi^2(4, N = 123) = 14.53, p < .01$ , however, the groups were roughly equivalent on marital status,  $\chi^2(6, N = 123) = 10.12, p > .10$ . A disparity between the groups on confining offense was anticipated given that this was the criterion used to assign participants to conditions, though a comparison of the two white-collar groups revealed that significantly more WC-only inmates were serving sentences for postal and wire fraud, whereas a greater portion of the WC-prior group was incarcerated for credit and lending institution fraud,  $\chi^2(8, N = 57) = 17.88, p < .05$ . Correlations between the five demographic variables (age, education, sentence, ethnic status, marital status) and eight dependent measures (Problem Avoidance, Interpersonal Hostility, Self-Assertion/Deception, Denial of Harm, In-Group Ties, Centrality, In-Group Affect, and LCSF-R) were significant in several cases (see Table 2).

Significant group differences were observed on four of the eight dependent measures (see Table 3). As predicted, WC-only inmates attained significantly lower scores on the PICTS Self-Assertion/Deception scale and SIC In-Group Ties subscale relative to partici-

**TABLE 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Three Groups**

Variable	Group			F (2, 120)
	WC-Only	WC-Prior	NWC	
Participants ( <i>n</i> )	34	23	66	
Age (years)				
<i>M</i>	50.06 <sup>a</sup>	43.61 <sup>b</sup>	41.59 <sup>b</sup>	8.91***
<i>SD</i>	10.60	9.40	9.01	
Education (years)				
<i>M</i>	16.03 <sup>a</sup>	14.09 <sup>b</sup>	12.39 <sup>c</sup>	27.71***
<i>SD</i>	3.10	2.66	1.65	
Ethnic status (%)				
White	70.6	73.9	39.4	
African American	17.6	21.7	48.5	
Other	11.7	4.3	12.1	
Marital status (%)				
Single	17.6	26.1	31.8	
Married	50.0	43.5	45.5	
Divorced	23.5	30.4	22.7	
Widowed	8.8	0.0	0.0	
Instant offense (%)				
Theft	0.0	0.0	9.1	
Drug offenses	0.0	0.0	78.8	
Firearms violations	0.0	0.0	7.6	
Other non-white-collar	0.0	0.0	4.5	
Antitrust violations	2.9	0.0	0.0	
Securities/exchange fraud	8.8	4.3	0.0	
Postal and wire fraud	41.2	13.0	0.0	
Health care fraud	8.8	0.0	0.0	
IRS fraud	14.7	21.7	0.0	
Credit/lending institution fraud	5.9	34.8	0.0	
Bank embezzlement	2.9	8.7	0.0	
Counterfeiting	0.0	8.7	0.0	
False claims/statements	14.7	8.7	0.0	
Sentence (months)				
<i>M</i>	40.94 <sup>a</sup>	30.17 <sup>a</sup>	95.44 <sup>b</sup>	25.93***
<i>SD</i>	34.46	17.34	55.87	

Note. WC-only = white-collar offender with no prior history of non-white-collar crime; WC-prior = white-collar offender with at least one prior arrest for a non-white-collar crime; NWC = non-white collar, non-violent non-white-collar offender. Superscripts (following the mean of each group) represent the results of the Duncan Multiple Range Test. Means with different subscripts differ significantly at  $p < .05$ .

\*\*\* $p < .001$ .

**TABLE 2: Intercorrelations Between the Five Demographic Variables and Eight Dependent Measures for the Entire Sample (N = 123)**

	<i>Age</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Sentence</i>	<i>Ethnic</i>	<i>Marital</i>
Problem avoidance	-.13	-.16	-.01	-.05	-.10
Interpersonal hostility	-.07	-.18*	.02	.16	-.14
Self-assertion/deception	-.27**	-.17	.09	.03	.03
Denial of harm	-.22*	-.13	.07	.15	-.08
In-group ties	-.13	-.14	.00	.10	-.24**
Centrality	-.06	.06	-.15	-.06	-.12
In-group affect	-.00	-.14	.07	.03	-.04
LCSF-R	-.30**	-.48***	.41***	.14	-.04

*Note.* LCSF-R = Lifestyle Criminality Screening Form–Revised. Ethnic status was dichotomized as White (1) versus Non-White (2) and marital status was dichotomized as single (1) versus nonsingle (2).

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

pants in the WC-prior and NWC conditions, whereas WC-prior and NWC inmates failed to differ on these two measures. Second, WC-prior inmates scored significantly higher than WC-only and NWC inmates on the SIC Centrality subscale. Finally, all three groups varied on the LCSF-R, with NWC participants scoring significantly higher than WC-only and WC-prior inmates and WC-prior participants scoring significantly higher than WC-only inmates on this measure. Because the majority of WC-only participants had no record of prior arrest, the three arrest items (prior arrests for intrusive crime, total number of prior arrests, and age at first arrest) were removed from the LCSF-R, and the scale reanalyzed. The findings, as outlined in Table 3, were comparable to the results obtained with the full LCSF-R. Furthermore, when the number of prior arrests was made a covariate in an ANCOVA of the significant dependent measures, outcomes showed that the PICTS Self-Assertion/Deception scale became nonsignificant,  $F(2, 119) = 1.08, p > .10$ , whereas the In-Group Ties subscale,  $F(2, 119) = 7.58, p < .01$ , Centrality subscale,  $F(2, 119) = 3.98, p < .05$ , and LCSF-R,  $F(2, 119) = 18.67, p < .001$ , remained significant.

Owing to the fact that the WC-only, WC-prior, and NWC conditions deviated on several key demographic dimensions, these variables were entered as covariates in a series of analyses of covariance of the four significant dependent measures. After controlling for age,

**TABLE 3: Group Performance on the Psychological Inventory of Criminal Thinking Styles (PICTS), Social Identity as a Criminal (SIC) scale, and Lifestyle Criminality Screening Form–Revised (LCSF-R)**

Variable	Group			F(2, 120)
	WC-Only	WC-Prior	NWC	
PICTS factor scales				
Problem avoidance				
M	14.59	18.26	16.30	2.65
SD	5.72	7.37	5.49	
Interpersonal hostility				
M	10.97	11.57	11.58	0.88
SD	1.77	2.43	2.41	
Self-assertion/deception				
M	12.65 <sup>a</sup>	16.09 <sup>b</sup>	15.30 <sup>b</sup>	4.32*
SD	4.06	7.22	4.38	
Denial of harm				
M	21.79	23.96	23.44	1.65
SD	4.60	5.83	4.89	
Social identity as a criminal subscales				
In-group ties				
M	7.09 <sup>a</sup>	9.48 <sup>b</sup>	9.61 <sup>b</sup>	5.58**
SD	2.49	3.58	4.21	
Centrality				
M	11.24 <sup>a</sup>	13.43 <sup>b</sup>	10.59 <sup>a</sup>	3.92
SD	4.78	3.67	4.05	
In-group affect				
M	6.06	6.52	7.11	0.87
SD	3.34	4.81	3.70	
LCSF-R total score				
M	1.12 <sup>a</sup>	4.22 <sup>b</sup>	5.76 <sup>c</sup>	37.09***
SD	1.32	2.61	2.97	
LCSF-R score (w/o arrest items)				
M	1.12 <sup>a</sup>	2.74 <sup>b</sup>	3.88 <sup>c</sup>	27.79***
SD	1.32	1.63	1.98	

Note. WC-only = white-collar offender with no prior history of non-white-collar crime; WC-prior = white-collar offender with at least one prior arrest for a non-white-collar crime; and NWC = non-white collar, non-violent non-white-collar offender. Superscripts (following the mean of each group) represent the results of the Duncan Multiple Range Test. Means with different subscripts differ significantly at  $p < .05$ .

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

education, sentence length, ethnic status, and marital status, initial group differences on the PICTS Self-Assertion/Deception scale,  $F(2, 115) = 1.70$ ,  $p > .10$ , and SIC Centrality subscale,  $F(2, 115) = 2.27$ ,

$p > .10$ , vanished whereas significant group contrasts on the SIC In-Group Ties subscale,  $F(2, 115) = 4.81, p < .05$ , and LCSF-R,  $F(2, 115) = 12.03, p < .001$ , persisted. Using the PICTS validity scales as indices of test-taking set, it was noted that the three groups failed to diverge on the Confusion (Cf-r) scale,  $F(2, 120) = .65, p > .10$ , however, participants in the WC-only group recorded significantly higher PICTS Defensiveness (Df-r) scale scores than participants in the other two conditions,  $F(2, 120) = 8.60, p < .001$ . Controlling for Df-r scores with an ANCOVA design, it was ascertained that the In-Group Ties,  $F(2, 119) = 5.12, p < .01$ , Centrality,  $F(2, 199) = 3.59, p < .05$ , and LCSF-R,  $F(2, 119) = 30.64, p < .001$ , effects retained significance, whereas the Self-Assertion/Deception effect,  $F(2, 119) = .36, p > .10$ , disappeared.

Besides testing the significance of group deviations on individual dependent measures, the current study also sought to determine whether a multivariate composite of the four PICTS factor scales, three SIC subscales, and LCSF-R significantly differentiated between inmates in the WC-only, WC-prior, and NWC conditions. A MANOVA of the eight dependent measures (Problem Avoidance, Interpersonal Hostility, Self-Assertion/Deception, Denial of Harm, In-Group Ties, Centrality, In-Group Affect, and LCSF-R) produced a statistically significant group effect, Pillai's Trace: approximate  $F(16, 228) = 5.24, p < .001$ . A MANCOVA was also computed, with age, education, sentence, ethnic status (White vs. Non-White), marital status (single vs. nonsingle), and Df-r serving as covariates, the results of which revealed a reduced but nonetheless statistically significant difference between the three groups, Pillai's Trace: approximate  $F(16, 216) = 2.08, p < .05$ . The first function of a multiple discriminant function analysis revealed a significant difference between the three groups on all eight dependent measures,  $\chi^2(16, N = 123) = 79.74, p < .001$ , with 65% of the total sample being correctly identified (88.2% of WC-only, 47.8% of WC-prior, 59.1% of NWC).

## DISCUSSION

Congruent with past research (Weisburd et al., 1990, 1995) the current study identified two general categories of white-collar offender: a

larger group of white-collar specialists who had never before been arrested for a non-white-collar crime and a smaller group of versatile white-collar offenders who had been arrested at least once for a non-white collar crime. When these two groups were compared to a control group of inmates convicted of nonviolent, non-white-collar crimes on measures of criminal thinking, identity, and lifestyle it was discovered that the white-collar offenders with no history of non-white-collar crime (WC-only) were less inclined to endorse criminal thoughts, identify with other criminals, and exhibit signs of a criminal lifestyle than white-collar offenders with prior arrests for non-white-collar crime (WC-prior) and non-white-collar offenders (NWC). The WC-prior and NWC groups, as predicted, failed to differ from each other on measures of criminal thinking and identity, except for the Centrality subscale of the SIC, where WC-prior inmates scored significantly higher than WC-only and NWC participants. On the other hand, NWC inmates registered significantly higher scores on a measure of criminal lifestyle (LCSF-R) than participants in the WC-prior group. As hypothesized, white-collar offenders with a history of prior non-white-collar crime were largely indistinguishable from NWC offenders but featured stronger criminal thinking, identity, and general deviance than white-collar offenders with no history of non-white-collar crime. Of course, the results may have differed had white-collar crime been defined, à la Sutherland, by the offender rather than by the offense.

Demographic variables such as age, education, sentence length, and ethnic status discriminated between the three groups of inmates, and except for ethnic status, correlated with at least one of the eight dependent measures included in this investigation. The ANOVA results were therefore supplemented by a series of ANCOVAs in which the five demographic measures served as covariates. The outcome of these analyses disclosed that group differences on the SIC In-Group Ties, LCSF-R total score, and the LCSF-R persisted even after controlling for the five demographic variables. Self-Assertion/Deception, the one PICTS scale demonstrating a significant ANOVA effect, by comparison, was no longer significant after controlling for initial demographic discrepancies between the groups. It may well be that the significant group contrast on the Self-Assertion/Deception scale is a consequence of the WC-only inmates being older than participants

in the WC-prior and NWC conditions, coupled with the fact that age was negatively correlated with Self-Assertion/Deception. Group variations on the SIC In-Groups Ties subscale and LCSF-R (with and without the arrest items) appeared to be more robust because they displayed minimal change after age, education, sentence, ethnic status, marital status, and Df-r scale scores were accounted for. Differences on the SIC Centrality subscale remained stable after controlling for initial group differences on the Df-r scale, however, not when the five demographic variables were entered as covariates in an ANCOVA design.

One could argue that the disparities in criminal thinking and identity found to exist between WC-only and WC-prior participants were a function of the greater number of arrests attained by the WC-prior group. After all, the WC-prior group ( $M = 4.43$ ,  $SD = 4.44$ ) had accrued a substantially greater number of prior arrests than the WC-only group ( $M = .24$ ,  $SD = .43$ ,  $t(53) = 5.50$ ,  $p < .001$ ). There are two problems with this argument. First, there were no significant group differences found for any of the dependent measures when first-time offending WC-only participants were compared with WC-only inmates who had a previous arrest for a white-collar crime. Second, when the number of prior arrests was employed as a covariate in an ANCOVA of the dependent measures achieving significant ANOVA results (i.e., PICTS Self-Assertion/Deception, SIC In-Group Ties, SIC Centrality, LCSF-R) only the PICTS Self-Assertion/Deception scale fell to nonsignificance, as it did when the five demographic measures and PICTS Df-r scale were incorporated as covariates in an ANCOVA of the dependent measures. These findings suggest that there is more to the outcome of the current study than a simple confounding of demographic/criminal arrest variables and white-collar status (WC-only and WC-prior), even though the power of the statistical tests was hindered by a relatively small number of participants in the WC-prior condition and moderately low internal consistency in the SIC subscales.

An effect that remained stable after the five demographic measures, PICTS Defensiveness scale, and prior arrests were controlled was the SIC In-Group Ties subscale. The robustness of the In-Group Ties effect suggests that white-collar offenders with a history of non-white-collar crime and persons convicted of non-white-collar crimes

are significantly more likely to report feeling connected and tied to a deviant subgroup (i.e., formally labeled criminals) than white-collar offenders who have never before been arrested for a non-white-collar crime. An interesting and unanticipated finding was the moderately strong inverse relationship that surfaced between In-Group Ties and marital status, ( $r = -.24, p < .01$ ). Seeing as marital status was coded 1 for single individuals and 2 for nonsingle inmates, a significant negative correlation indicates that single participants scored higher on the In-Group Ties subscale than persons currently or previously married. Furthermore, this significant effect persisted even after age was controlled for with the aid of a partial correlation ( $r = -.21, p < .05$ ). Hence, relationships or the capacity to form relationships, whether with a person or a profession, in the past or in the present, may protect against the construction of a criminal social identity, or conversely, a criminal social identity may inhibit the development of relationships with conventional people and professions.

Another unanticipated finding from the current study was that inmates from the WC-prior group achieved significantly higher scores on the SIC Centrality subscale than WC-only or NWC inmates. This outcome suggests that a criminal social identity is more central to the self-views of white-collar offenders with a prior history of non-white-collar crime than it is to the self-views of white-collar offenders with no record of non-white-collar crime and persons convicted of non-white-collar offenses. In an earlier study on novice and experienced medium security federal prisoners it was determined that novice, but not experienced, inmates registered significant gains on the SIC Centrality subscale after 6 months of incarceration (Walters, 2003). Perhaps white-collar offenders previously arrested for non-white-collar crimes experience a greater sense of cognitive dissonance between their self-view and actual behavior than participants in the other two groups, thereby encouraging them to become preoccupied with a criminal social identity. A second possibility is that WC-prior inmates were more criminally versatile than men in the other two conditions because they committed an average of 1.7 white-collar crimes and 3.7 non-white-collar crimes, compared to a mean of 1.2 white-collar crimes and 0.0 non-white-collar crimes for WC-only inmates and 0.1 white-collar crimes and 6.0 non-white-collar crimes for NWC participants. Thus, relative to inmates in the WC-only and



NWC groups, WC-prior participants were dually deviant (white-collar and non-white-collar crime), which, in turn, may have served to inflate the salience of their deviant self-views.

An underpinning assumption of Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) general theory of white-collar crime is that white-collar criminals are as versatile and deviant as non-white-collar offenders. Using prior arrests for non-white-collar crime as a proxy for versatility we uncovered support for Gottfredson and Hirschi's position in the smaller group of white-collar offenders who possessed at least one prior arrest for a non-white collar crime. This group of white-collar offenders displayed criminal thinking and identity on par with inmates serving time for non-white-collar crimes and posted levels of prior non-white-collar arrest ( $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = 3.92$ ) comparable to the non-white-collar group ( $M = 4.97$ ,  $SD = 5.12$ ),  $t(87) = 1.05$ ,  $p > .10$ . Be this as it may, 60% of the white-collar criminals participating in the current study had only ever been arrested for a white-collar crime. Therefore, Gottfredson and Hirschi's versatility hypothesis is only partially supported by the results of this investigation. Seeing as the LCSF-R assesses prior substance misuse, general occupational/school adjustment, and marital/relationship difficulties, removing the three arrest items would seem to make the LCSF-R the ideal proxy for general deviance. When the modified LCSF-R was used for this purpose it was determined that even less of a relationship existed between deviance and white-collar crime than between criminal versatility and white-collar crime, as the more versatile white-collar offenders (WC-prior) showed greater deviance than the nonversatile white-collar offenders (WC-only) but were themselves less deviant than the non-white-collar control group (NWC).

Outcomes from the current investigation indicate that white-collar offenders can be grouped into two general categories: a larger group of individuals, constituting 60% of the current sample of white-collar offenders, with no history of non-white-collar crime and a smaller group of individuals serving time for a white-collar offense, but with at least one prior arrest for a non-white-collar crime. These findings further denote that the three groups differed modestly on measures of criminal thinking, moderately on measures of criminal identity, and widely on measures of lifestyle involvement. Although not all the comparisons were statistically significant, they were reasonably con-

sistent with the hypotheses established at the onset of the current study. It will still be necessary to determine how well these findings generalize to other groups, particularly female inmates, because research suggests that a fair number of white-collar offenders are women (Daly, 1989). This notwithstanding, one implication of the current findings is that white-collar offenders do not form a homogeneous group with respect to their pattern of offending, level of deviance, attitudes toward crime, or social identity. Such dissimilarities need to be taken into account when developing and implementing programs with white-collar offenders, perhaps by emphasizing criminal thinking and identity with white-collar offenders who have a history of prior non-white-collar crime and highlighting a different set of factors (e.g., stress, greed, and identity as a businessman) with individuals who have only ever committed white-collar crime.

## NOTES

1. White-collar crime was defined by the presence of one or more of the following ten criminal acts: antitrust offenses, securities and exchange fraud, postal and wire fraud, false claims and statements, credit and lending institution fraud, bank embezzlement, IRS fraud, bribery, health care fraud, and counterfeiting. The first eight offenses were adapted from Weisburd, Chayet, & Waring (1990), whereas the last two offenses were obtained from a review of criminology textbooks on what constitutes white-collar crime.

2. The 3-month period in which most of the white-collar participants and all the non-white-collar participants were recruited was extended for 1 month to maximize the number of white-collar offenders in the study.

3. The PICTS (Psychological Inventory of Criminal Thinking Styles) thinking style and factor scales indicate the following: mollification = tendency to blame others; cutoff = rapid elimination of deterrents to crime; entitlement = sense of ownership and privilege; power orientation = desire to exert control over others; sentimentality = performing good deeds to justify one's behavior; superoptimism = sense of invulnerability; cognitive indolence = lazy thinking; discontinuity = lack of consistency in thought; problem avoidance = impulsive, irresponsible approach to life; interpersonal hostility = anger toward others; self-assertion/deception = asserting one's will over environment; and denial of harm = minimizing impact of one's behavior on others.

4. Modification of Cameron's social identity scale to create the SIC (Social Identity as a Criminal) scale consisted of replacing the word *student* with the word *criminal*. A Social Identity as a Businessman scale was also constructed for the purpose of the current study and administered to all participants. However, many of the inmates reported that they encountered difficulty rating themselves on this scale because they had trouble applying the concept of a businessman to themselves. In fact, 19 participants failed to complete one or more items on the Social Identity as a Businessman scale. No such concerns were raised by participants in response to the SIC scale. Consequently, the Social Identity as a Businessman scale was dropped from the current study.

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