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DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE  
MILITARY OFFENDERS:  
A STUDY OF SOCIOECONOMIC, FAMILIAL,  
PERSONALITY, AND MILITARY CHARACTERISTICS  
OF INMATES AT THE UNITED STATES  
DISCIPLINARY BARRACKS AT FORT LEAVENWORTH

by

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Summer 1993

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Minority involvement in the military justice system is a significant issue. Military authorities, civil rights activists, and researchers have been concerned for some time about the high level of black discipline rates in the military (Dansby, 1992).

A number of studies have substantiated higher discipline rates for blacks (e.g., Polan & Thomas, 1985; Walker, 1992). These types of study have examined aggregates of data (percentages of blacks and whites in various discipline areas) from large data bases. While providing valuable descriptive information, this type of study cannot show any linkages with antecedent variables that may provide explanations. In other words, it is difficult to answer why blacks have higher discipline rates.

An alternative approach is to examine data derived from individual discipline cases. For example, Edwards and Knouse (1990) found blacks had higher discipline rates among first-term Navy enlistees, but found that a number of variables, such as grade and time in service, were related to these rates. They called for discipline data bases tracking a number of these types of background variables.

The present study is a first effort in this direction. Background characteristics of a sample of black and white inmates at the United States Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth were examined as possible influences on disparate offense rates between blacks and whites. Fort Leavenworth was chosen because it contains in one place serious offenders, found guilty in a general court martial, from all the military services.

A random sample of 51 black and 51 white inmates was taken from the mental health files of the United States Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Data were coded from these files on inmate demographics, education, family history, ability, personality, military experience, and offense for which they had been incarcerated.

Results showed that black inmates in comparison to white inmates had lower ability test scores; were more apt to come from larger families where the parents were divorced, separated, or had been single parents; showed personality test profiles displaying interpersonal problems; had a larger number of prior military discipline problems; had less time in military service at the time of the incarceration offense; and were more apt to be incarcerated for violent crimes against others (assault, attempted murder, murder, rape, and robbery). White inmates in comparison to black inmates had higher ability test scores; were more apt to come from smaller families with divorced, separated, or step parents; showed personality test scores displaying internal problems; had received fewer Article 15 nonjudicial punishments; had more time in service at the time of the incarceration offense; and were more apt to be incarcerated for sex crimes (sodomy and indecent acts with minors). There were no significant differences between black and white inmates on age, socioeconomic status, education level, birth order, military grade, prior civilian problems, military occupational specialty, or length of sentence.

Results were discussed in terms of family and military environments that might influence the tendency of some blacks in the military to encounter problems with the military justice system. Recommendations for dealing with black discipline problems included providing early help, being more selective on recruit ability levels, providing socialization inoculation, providing foreign culture inoculation, and providing early mentors.

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# LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a growing literature identifying a number of background variables in both the civilian and military justice systems that may influence offense rates between blacks and whites. The basic profile, if you will, of the black offender is a young single male from a disadvantaged socioeconomic, educational, and familial background.

## Age

**Civilian Justice System.** The highest incidence of violent crimes (rape, robbery, and assault) according to the National Crime Survey is among black males in the 18 to 20 year old group (Hindelang, 1981). In addition, Christianson (1982) reported that blacks in prison were younger than white prisoners for all crimes except drug-related offenses. In a longitudinal study of crime in Columbus, Ohio, Schuster (1981) found young black males were more apt to be arrested for multiple violent crimes.

**Military Justice System.** In a study of Marine offenders, Perry (1981) found a higher rate of violent offenses among young black males than young white males. Hayles and Perry (1981) also found higher incarceration rates among young black sailors than among young whites in the Navy.

## Socioeconomic Status

In a review of 35 studies, Tittle, Villemez, and Smith (1978) found a slightly negative association between social class and crime. Interestingly, they found that the association appears to be becoming weaker over time. On the other hand, Bridges and Crutchfield (1988) reported in a national study that blacks with lower social standing in the community were more apt to be imprisoned than whites.

On the economic side, Sampson (1987) in a study of 171 large American cities found consistently higher rates of violent crime (robbery and homicide) among blacks who were unemployed and at the bottom of the economic ladder. In addition, in his longitudinal study, Schuster (1981) found that the strongest association between race and crime was accounted for by socioeconomic status. Lower socioeconomic status blacks were more apt to commit violent crimes. Moreover, Joe (1987) argues that the reason that black youth are more apt to be in the criminal justice system is that they perceive poor prospects for economic success in the traditional employment route.

One of the best indicators of socioeconomic status is one's own and one's parents' employment status and occupation, which reflects economic power and social status (Gordon, 1978). Blacks who come from a background of welfare, unemployment, and low status jobs may perceive that the traditional work route does not yield results and turn to alternative routes, including crime (Pepinsky, 1986).

## Education

**Civilian Justice System.** Perkins and Reeves (1975) found that Virginia inmates who committed crimes against persons had completed fewer grades in school regardless of race.

**Military Justice System.** In parallel fashion, Hayles and Perry (1981) found that incarceration rates in the Navy decreased as education level increased for all races. In another Navy study, Conway (1983) found that high school graduates had fewer courts-martial than nongraduates.

It would appear logical than blacks from disadvantaged educational backgrounds would have lower academic abilities and hence score lower on ability tests, such as the Armed Forces Qualifying Test (AFQT) (Dansby, 1992). Polan and Thomas (1985) found that black Navy offenders had lower AFQT scores than did white offenders. Similar findings occurred for Army and other military recruits (Flyer, 1990; Nordlie, Sevilla, Edmonds, & White, 1979).

## **Family**

**The Disrupted Family.** Disruption in some black families can be a factor in crime. Family instability and marital conflict influence juvenile delinquency among blacks (Ensminger, Kellam, & Rubin, 1983; Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986). In a study of violent crime (robbery and homicide) in US cities, Sampson (1987) found that rates of black violent juvenile offenses were most strongly influenced by family disruption.

Troubled families can produce a number of problems eventually leading to crime. Disrupted families have lower participation in the community (e.g., neighborhood watches) and in the educational process (Bloom, 1966; Kellam, Adams, Born, & Ensminger, 1982). Disrupted families and single parent families may be less able to control negative peer influences (e.g., hanging out and vandalism) that may lead to more serious crime (Sampson, 1987). Moreover, the family is a primary conduit of society values. In a study of incarcerated and nonincarcerated black men, Parson and Midawa (1988) reported that incarcerated blacks were less apt to have had come from a family environment of strong family values (e.g., working hard to support their families) and active participation in black churches. And in a recent study examining children's behavioral problems and quality of parent-child relations at home, Parcel and Menaghan (1993) found that for both black and white families lower parental self-esteem can lead to less effective parenting styles, while less frequent, lower quality parental interaction with children may lead to less internalization of parental values, such as self control, in their children.

**Birth Order.** An interesting tangent is birth order (Dansby, 1992). There is some research that shows that first born children have higher expectations from their parents and are more apt to internalize their problems, which produces perhaps more internal physical problems but less societal problems. Younger children, on the other hand, particularly from larger families, who simultaneously get less interest from their older (and more weary) parents and who have to deal with pressures from older siblings, may be less well adjusted and more apt to externalize their problems in socially unacceptable ways (Green, 1978). In the disrupted larger family where the parents are separated or divorced or there is only a single parent, the lack of structure and hence control may produce even more problematic behavior in the younger black child.

**Military Justice System.** While there are relatively few military studies examining family influence, Horne (1988) reported black Marines who had higher disciplinary rates were less apt to be from traditional family backgrounds.

## **Personality**

It has been suggested that personality may be a factor explaining some of the difference between black and white offenders (Laufer & Day, 1983; Nettler, 1982). If personality is a function of socioeconomic, education, and family factors, then for some blacks, a disadvantaged background may influence certain personality variables. It has been suggested that black offenders may have different orientations to authority (Nordlie, et al, 1979), moral values (Laufer & Day, 1983; Dansby, 1992), tolerance for frustration, and self-esteem (Dansby, 1992; Nordlie, et al, 1979) than do whites. In addition, some studies show that blacks are more apt to show external locus of control (feel others control their lives) during adolescence and early adulthood (Tashakkori & Thompson, 1991), which is the primary age for offenses to occur.

## **Prior Offenses**

**Civilian Justice System.** It has already been pointed out that prior offenses, particularly juvenile delinquency, are related to subsequent offenses of a more serious nature (Sampson, 1987; Schuster, 1971). Welch, Fruhl, and Spooohn (1984) reported that prior records of arrest and convictions are more strongly related to subsequent convictions for blacks than for whites. Moreover, Farrell and Swigert (1978) argue that there may be a self-fulfilling prophesy operating here. Blacks tend to receive more severe sentences because they are more apt to have prior records, but they are more apt to have prior records because they are more apt to be arrested and convicted differentially in the criminal justice system.

**Military Justice System.** In the military justice system, an indicator of initial tendency toward serious offenses may be the nonjudicial punishment system (NJP). NJPs, such as Article 15s and letters of reprimand, may be given out for less serious offenses, such as drunkenness, missing a formation, or leaving one's duty station for a short period of time. Studies show that blacks in the Navy received more NJPs than had whites (Culbertson & Magnusson, 1992; Polan & Thomas, 1985). Further, Edwards and Knouse (1990) found that the blacks who were more apt to be separated from the Navy with other than honorable discharges had a higher frequency of NJPs than whites separated with misconduct discharges. Moreover, Horne (1988) reported that black Marines received more NJPs than did white Marines, regardless of the race of the local commander. There is evidence, then, that black NJPs are a function of factors other than bias. For example, blacks have received more NJPs for confrontational offenses, such as insubordination, than have whites (Conway, 1983; Culbertson & Magnusson, 1992).

## **Quality of Employment and Occupation**

**Civilian Sector.** Based on the Uniform Crime Reports, Allan and Steffensmeier (1989) found that low quality of employment (low pay and poor working hours) was associated with higher rates of property crime among both blacks and whites.

**Military Sector.** Two studies of Marines reported that black Marines in the lower grades (E1-E3) who were older than their colleagues were more apt to commit violent crimes (Hayles & Perry, 1981; Perry, 1980). The authors speculate that these older blacks in the lower grades had lower levels of education which hindered their advancement. Carrying this idea further, it could be argued that some blacks who enlist from educationally deprived environments (lower levels of education completed from financially and academically poorer schools) receive lower scores on initial ability tests and hence are routed into the lowest status military occupations. The high degree of boredom, lack of advancement opportunities, and accompanying frustration may be factors precipitating the tendency toward criminal offenses.

## Type of Offense

**Blacks and Violent Crime.** There is substantial evidence that blacks tend to be associated with a different type of offense than whites. Blacks tend to be arrested and incarcerated more often for violent crimes against persons (murder, rape, robbery, and assault), while whites are more apt to be associated with less violent property crimes (theft, auto theft, and drug use) (Christianson, 1982).

Of course, there are many possible reasons for this disparity. Because of psychological and sociological factors, blacks may actually commit more of this type of crime (e.g., Dansby, 1992). Or there may be bias. Individuals and institutions may believe that some blacks, because of economic, educational, and familial disadvantage, have a greater tendency toward violent offenses and may even live in a "subculture of violence" (Hindelang, 1978). Such bias may occur at any or all points along the criminal justice process from eyewitness testimony (witnesses more apt to perceive black involvement), to police discretion (police more apt to arrest blacks), to discretion in prosecution (prosecutors less apt to plea bargain, more apt to go to trial with blacks), to discretion of judges in sentencing (longer sentences for blacks) (Christianson, 1982; Hindelang, 1981). In fact, such bias may result in an "accumulated disadvantaged status" where initial differential treatment may become magnified as the individual moves through the criminal justice process (Pope & McNeely, 1981). Moreover, attempts to reduce bias, such as mandatory sentencing, which removes discretion (and hence potential bias) from the judge, may actually increase discrimination in the system by concentrating discretion (and hence possible bias) earlier in the process (i.e., with initial police and prosecutor decisions) (Christianson, 1982).

**Military Justice System.** In a Navy study, Polan and Thomas (1985) found that blacks were more apt to commit major Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) offenses (e.g., murder, manslaughter, rape, larceny, robbery) than whites.

## HYPOTHESES

Based upon the literature review, a number of hypotheses are presented to be tested with the Fort Leavenworth data.

- Hypothesis 1. Black offenders (inmates) are younger than are white offenders.
- Hypothesis 2. Black offenders are from lower socioeconomic status backgrounds than are white offenders.
- Hypothesis 3. Black offenders have lower educational accomplishments than do white offenders.
- Hypothesis 3a. Black offenders have completed fewer grades in school than have white offenders.
- Hypothesis 3b. Black offenders have lower ability test scores than do white offenders.
- Hypothesis 4. Black offenders are more apt to come from nontraditional family backgrounds than do white offenders.

- Hypothesis 4a. Black offenders are more apt to come from "broken homes" (divorced, separated, single parent) than do white offenders.
- Hypothesis 4b. Black offenders are more apt to come from larger families than do white offenders.
- Hypothesis 4c. Black offenders are more apt to be lower in birth order status (be a younger sibling) than are white offenders.
- Hypothesis 5. Black offenders have different personality orientations toward authority, interpersonal problems, and control than do white offenders.
- Hypothesis 6. Black offenders have a larger number of prior offenses than do white offenders.
- Hypothesis 6a. Black offenders have a larger number of prior civilian offenses than do white offenders.
- Hypothesis 6b. Black offenders have a larger number of prior military discipline problems than do white offenders.
- Hypothesis 7. Black offenders have had lower status in the military than did white offenders.
- Hypothesis 7a. Black offenders had a lower grade than did white offenders.
- Hypothesis 7b. Black offenders had less time in service at the time of the offense than did white offenders.
- Hypothesis 7c. Black offenders had lower status military occupations than did white offenders.
- Hypothesis 8. There is a difference in type of offense between white and black offenders.
- Hypothesis 8a. Black offenders are more apt to be incarcerated for violent crimes (murder, rape, assault, robbery) than white offenders.
- Hypothesis 8b. Black offenders have longer sentences than do white offenders.

## **METHOD**

### **Data Site**

Data were collected from the United States Disciplinary Barracks (USDB) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The mission of the USDB is to incarcerate those persons sentenced to confinement under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and to provide treatment, care, and training to return inmates to civilian life (United States Disciplinary Barracks, 1993). The USDB was chosen for this study because it houses offenders of major crimes (sentenced under a general court martial) for all the military services.

## Data Collection

Data were collected on 25 May - 27 May 1993 by the author from the Mental Health Files of the Mental Health Directorate. A listing of the black and white inmates was generated on 25 May. From that list a random sample of 51 blacks and 51 whites was determined by selecting those inmates with a 0 in the first place of their registration number.

The Mental Health Files yielded data on inmate background (age, education, family, and prior civilian problems), inmate military experience (military branch, entry date, time in service, grade, and military specialty), and offense information (type of offense, general court martial adjudication date, sentence, and incarceration date).

The files also contained ability test information. For Army inmates the General Technical Test (GT) scale of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) was available, which is used for occupational placement and whose score is given as an intelligence quotient (IQ) equivalency. In addition, the USDB had academic equivalency test data for all inmates in reading, mathematics, and English, which are scored in academic grade level equivalents.

For some recent inmates psychological test data were included. A few inmates in the sample had taken the Anger Inventory to determine level of anger relative to the average USDB inmate and the Buss-Durkee Hostility Inventory, a 75-item true-false scale used to predict assaultive behavior (Brodsky & Smitherman, 1983). Thirty-eight of the inmate sample had completed the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory - 2 (MMPI-2), a 566-item true-false personality test that is the most widely used test in criminal justice (Brodsky & Smitherman, 1983). Among the MMPI scales that were available in the files were Amoralty, Authority Problems, Hostility, Impulsivity, Inhibition, Overcontrol, Masculinity, Projecting Blame, Self Alienation, Self Esteem, Self Indulgence, Social Alienation, and Viewing Others as Dishonest.

## Data Coding

**Socioeconomic Status.** One of the most direct indicators of socioeconomic status is occupation (e.g., Gordon, 1978; Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, 1992). Therefore, the occupation of the inmates' parents was used to determine socioeconomic status of the family environment in which the inmate grew up. If the parents were listed as on welfare or unemployed, socioeconomic status was coded as lower class. If the parents' occupations were blue or white collar for which a lower level of formal education was sufficient (e.g., manufacturing assembler, mechanic, carpenter, beautician, teacher's aide, nurse's aide, seamstress, truck driver, clerk), socioeconomic status was coded as working class. If the parent's occupations were white collar for which advanced education was required (e.g., teacher, social worker, nurse, engineer, accountant, manager), socioeconomic status was coded as middle class. If there was a discrepancy between mother's and father's occupational level, the focus was placed on the father's occupation for determining socioeconomic status, considering that the father's occupation was probably more influential on the family's life style. If father's occupation was listed as retired, deceased, or not given, socioeconomic status was coded as Other.

# RESULTS

## Comparison of Population to Sample Characteristics

Table 1 (page 8) shows inmate characteristics for the entire population of the Disciplinary Barracks as compared to the inmates in the sample drawn for the present study. It can be seen that there were no appreciable differences between the sample and the population characteristics. Therefore, it can be concluded that the sample was fairly representative of the inmate population.

### Age

Table 2 (page 9) shows a summary of analyses of variance for the inmate continuous (nonfrequency) data. For the variable age, black inmates (M age = 30.02 yrs) were somewhat younger than white inmates (M age = 32.33 yrs), although this difference was nonsignificant,  $F(1,100) = 2.51$ . These ages are at the time of the present study, however. There may be differences due to the time served between the commission of the offense and the present time. When inmate age at the date of the court martial adjudication is examined, which is perhaps the closest indicator of offender age at the time of the offense, black offenders (M age = 26.57 yrs) are shown to have committed their offenses at a younger age than white offenders (M age = 29.14 yrs), although the significance is marginal,  $F(1,100) = 3.56$ ,  $p < .10$ .

### Socioeconomic Status

Table 3 shows inmate socioeconomic status. Very few whites or blacks had parents who were unemployed or on welfare. The largest category for both blacks and whites was working class background. Somewhat more whites compared to blacks came from a middle class background. These differences were not significant, however,  $X^2(3) = 4.93$ .

---

**Table 3**

#### Socioeconomic Status of Black and White Inmates

<u>Socioeconomic Status</u>	<u>Number of Blacks</u>	<u>Number of Whites</u>
Welfare or Unemployed	4	1
Working Class	31	24
Middle Class	10	18
Other	6	8

---

### Educational Background

**Educational Level.** Table 4 (page 10) shows highest educational level completed by inmates. An equal number of black and white inmates had dropped out of high school, entered the service, and then completed their General Education Diploma (GED). About the same number of blacks as whites were high school graduates. Few blacks and whites had gone to college or beyond. These slight differences were nonsignificant,  $X^2(3) = 4.74$ .

**Table 1****Comparison of Characteristics of Disciplinary Barracks  
Inmate Population to Study Sample**

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Disciplinary Barracks</u>	
	<u>Population</u>	<u>Study Sample</u>
Number of Inmates	1379	102
Black Inmates	44%	50%
White Inmates	48%	50%
Percentage of Males	96%	99%
Average Inmate Age	30.5 years	31.2 years
Average Inmate Education	High school	High school
Average General Technical Test Score	105	106.9
Average Time in Service	6.3 years	7.6 years
Average Grade	E5	E4/E5
Marital Status	46% married	46% married*
Offense Profile		
Crimes against Persons	75%	80%
Sex related Crimes (pedophilia, rape#)	50%	32%
Violent Crimes (assault, murder, robbery)	25%	48%
Drug related Crimes	13%	7%
Crimes against Property	11%	13%
Military related Crimes	1%	0%
Average Sentence Length	13.8 years	12.9 years
Inmates with Life Sentences	6%	9%

Source: Fort Leavenworth United States Disciplinary Barracks

\*Separated inmates were included in the married category as they are technically still married.

#The Disciplinary Barracks in their categorization scheme includes rape among sex-related crimes. The present study, however, used the category of sex-related crimes only for sex crimes against minors (pedophilia) and included rape in the category of violent crimes against others.

**Table 2**

**Summary of Analyses of Variance on Inmate Continuous-Type Data**

Variable	Black		White		F	df	p	eta <sup>2</sup>
	Mean		Mean					
Inmate Age at Present	30.02 yrs (6.88)		32.33 yrs (7.84)		2.51	1,100	ns	
Inmate Age at Date of Adjudication	26.57 yrs (6.07)		29.14 yrs (7.60)		3.56	1,100	.10	.03
GT Score (IQ equivalent)	103.49 (10.36)		111.12 (14.70)		6.63	1,70	.05	.09
Reading Test Score (grade level)	11.81 (1.40)		12.38 (1.06)		5.24	1,99	.05	.05
Math Test Score (grade level)	9.56 (2.21)		11.26 (2.07)		15.78	1,99	.001	.16
English Test Score (grade level)	9.21 (2.65)		10.57 (2.52)		7.07	1,99	.01	.07
Time in Service at Offense	5.76 yrs (4.64)		9.53 yrs (6.54)		11.30	1,100	.001	.10
Sentence	13.47 yrs (12.25)		12.36 yrs (12.17)		0.16	1,91	ns	

Note. Numbers in parentheses under the means are the standard deviation for that racial group. eta<sup>2</sup> gives the variance accounted for by the effect. It is comparable to R<sup>2</sup> in regression.

**Ability Level.** Table 2 (page 9) also shows ability test scores. Overall ability level as measured by the General Test score showed blacks ( $M = 103.49$ ) to be significantly lower than whites ( $M = 111.12$ ),  $F(1,70) = 6.63$ ,  $p < .05$ . The smaller sample size here ( $n = 72$ ) is due to the fact that test data were only available for Army inmates.

**Table 4**

**Educational Level of Black and White Inmates**

Highest Level of Education Completed	Number of Blacks	Number of Whites
Quit High School, GED Later	10	10
High School Graduate	33	30
Some College	6	9
College Graduate	2	0
Post Graduate	0	2

The Disciplinary Barracks administers an academic equivalency test during in processing which gives scores on inmate reading, mathematical, and English ability, in terms of academic grade levels. Blacks were significantly lower than whites in all three areas: black  $M = 11.81$ , white  $M = 12.38$  for reading,  $F(1,99) = 5.24$ ,  $p < .05$ ; black  $M = 9.56$ , white  $M = 11.26$  for math,  $F(1,99) = 15.78$ ,  $p < .001$ ; black  $M = 9.21$ , white  $M = 10.57$  for English,  $F(1,99) = 7.07$ ,  $p < .01$ .

**Home Background**

**Marital Status of Parents.** Table 5 (page 11) shows the marital status of the inmates' parents. A majority of both black and white inmates came from homes where the biological parents were no longer married. More blacks came from homes where the parents were separated or divorced or had been single parents. More whites came from homes with stepparents,  $X^2(5) = 11.96$ ,  $p < .05$ .

**Family Size.** Table 6 (page 11) shows the number of children in the inmates' families. The majority of blacks ( $n = 28$ ) grew up in larger families of five or more children. The majority of whites ( $n = 33$ ) grew up in smaller families of four or fewer children,  $X^2(1) = 3.96$ ,  $p < .05$ .

**Inmate Birth Order.** Table 7 (page 11) shows the birth order of inmates among their siblings. The pattern of birth for blacks and whites is surprisingly similar; there were no significant differences,  $X^2(8) = 4.14$ . The modal birth place was first for both whites and blacks. The majority of both whites and blacks were either first or second born.

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**Table 5****Marital Status of Black and White Inmates' Parents**

<u>Status</u>	<u>Numbers of Blacks</u>	<u>Numbers of Whites</u>
Married	14	18
Separated	7	2
Divorced	19	16
Single Parent	3	0
Parent Deceased	7	7
Stepparent or Other	1	8

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**Table 6****Family Size for Black and White Inmates**

<u>Number of Children in Family in Which Grew Up</u>	<u>Number of Blacks</u>	<u>Number of Whites</u>
1	4	0
2	7	6
3	4	16
4	8	11
5	6	5
6	5	3
7	7	7
8	4	0
9	2	1
>9	4	2

---

**Table 7****Birth Order for Black and White Inmates**

<u>Birth Order</u>	<u>Number of Blacks</u>	<u>Number of Whites</u>
First	16	16
Second	12	12
Third	9	6
Fourth	3	6
Fifth	3	4
Sixth	3	1
Seventh	2	3
Eighth	1	0
Not Given	2	3

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**Table 8****Offense and MMPI-2 Profile for 38 Black and White Inmates**

<u>ID* of Black Inmates (n = 18)</u>	<u>Offense</u>	<u>MMPI-2 Profile</u>
003	Attempted murder	Overreacting, oversensitive
010	Larceny	Inhibition of hostility, emotional overcontrol
012	Rape	Social, presents self as very masculine
014	Robbery, aggravated assault	Hostile, overreacting, unfriendly
016	Rape, sodomy	Anger, authority problems, presents self as very masculine
019	Drug use, distribution	Rigid, sociable, confident
052	Larceny	Problems with authority, social conflict
053	Larceny	Self-indulgent, project blame for problems on others, amoral
057	Drug use, distribution	Authority problems, aloof, uninvolved
058	Rape, kidnapping	Antisocial
059	Aggravated assault	Project blame for problems on others, view others as dishonest
060	Attempted rape, assault	View others as dishonest, nonconformist, interpersonal problems
071	Use and distribution of drugs	Project blame for problems on others, view others as dishonest
073	Rape	Project blame for problems on others, social alienation, ego inflation
075	Larceny	High strung, anxious, withdrawn
080	Attempted murder, robbery	Hyperactive, views others as dishonest
092	Rape, desertion, communicating a threat	Social conflict, amoral, assertive
094	Use and distribution of drugs	Social alienation, amoral, ego inflation, nonconforming
<u>ID* of White Inmates (n = 20)</u>	<u>Offense</u>	<u>MMPI-2 Profile</u>
001	Assault, sodomy	Overreactive, presents self as very masculine
004	Murder	Weak internal control, authority problems
005	Carnal knowledge	Oversensitive, overreaction

**Table 8 continued**

<u>ID* of White Inmates (n = 20)</u>	<u>Offense</u>	<u>MMPI-2 Profile</u>
007	Sodomy	Confused, isolated, depressed
024	Indecent acts with a minor	Overcontrol, presents self as very masculine
025	Indecent acts with a minor	Impulsive, passive, dependent
028	Larceny	Self indulgent, amoral
030	Sodomy, indecent acts with a minor	Overcontrolled, manipulative
046	Sodomy, indecent acts with a minor	Overcontrol, anxious, shy
047	Sodomy, indecent acts with a minor	Intense, high strung, presents self as very masculine
049	Murder	Obsessive, low self esteem
066	Fraternalization, indecent acts with adults	Inhibition, egocentric, impulsive
082	Sodomy, conduct unbecoming	Authority problems, egocentric, impulsive
084	Use and distribution of drugs, larceny	Rigid, dislike contact with others
088	Indecent acts with a minor	Self centered, naive
089	Larceny, housebreaking	Hostile, brooding, unfriendly, withdrawn, social isolation
090	Indecent acts with a minor	Depressed, hostile, isolated, limited sociability
097	Larceny	Antisocial, amoral, self indulgent
100	Sodomy, indecent acts with a minor	Self indulgent, presents self as very masculine
101	Sodomy, indecent acts	Amoral, social conflict, presents self as very masculine

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\* Note. The author arbitrarily assigned inmate IDs while coding the data

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## Personality Data

There were very few high inmate scores on the Anger Inventory (black n = 3, white n = 3) and the Buss-Durkee Hostility Inventory (black n = 3, white n = 0).

Of the 38 inmates who completed the MMPI-2, 18 were black and 20 were white. Table 8 (page 12) shows a summary of offenses and MMPI profiles for these inmates. Table 9 shows a breakdown of inmate MMPI profiles according to internal problem profile (internal controls and problems with the self) and external problem profile (problems with others and with societal norms). It can be seen from Table 9 (below) that more blacks fit the external profile, while more whites fit the internal profile,  $X^2(2) = 10.29, p < .01$ .

**Table 9**

### Internal and External Personality Emphasis of MMPI-2 Black and White Inmate Profiles

<u>Emphasis</u>	Inmates	
	Black (n=18)	White (n=20)
Inmates Whose Profiles Contain Scales Reflecting Largely Internal Problems	1	10
Internal Control		
Overcontrol		
Low Self Esteem		
Egocentric		
Self Centered		
Self Indulgent		
Impulse Control		
Inhibition		
Inmates Whose Profiles Contain Scales Reflecting Largely External Problems	9	3
Authority Problems		
Project Blame for Problems on Others		
View Others as Dishonest		
Social Alienation		
Social Conflict		
Amoral		
Hostile toward Others		
Interpersonal Problems		
Inmates Whose Profiles Contain Scales Reflecting Both Internal and External Problems	8	7

## Prior Legal Problems

**Prior Civilian Problems.** Table 10 (page 16) shows the numbers of inmates with prior civilian problems (school suspension, skipping school, and problems with the legal system, such as DUI, charges, arrests, and convictions). The pattern for blacks and whites is fairly similar. There were about equal numbers of inmates who experienced prior problems (black  $n = 29$ , white  $n = 30$ ). When the different types of problems are examined, there were no differences found in school problems. Interestingly, more whites ( $n = 20$ ) than blacks received traffic tickets ( $n = 11$ ), although this difference was not significant,  $X^2(1) = 2.62$ .

When prior civilian legal problems (DUI, charges, arrests, and convictions) are examined, there again are similar patterns. About the same number of blacks ( $n = 14$ ) as whites ( $n = 15$ ) experienced some type of legal difficulty. The types of problems were also very similar. In particular, violent interpersonal acts (charges of rape, arrests for assault or assault and battery, arrests for carrying a concealed weapon) were relatively infrequent and equally distributed among blacks ( $n = 5$ ) and whites ( $n = 5$ ).

**Prior Military Discipline.** Table 11 (page 19) shows the numbers of inmates who had received prior military disciplinary procedures (Article 15, letters of reprimand or counseling, or prior courts martial). Although a larger number of black inmates ( $n = 36$ ) than white inmates ( $n = 24$ ) received prior military discipline, the numbers of inmates were not significantly different,  $X^2(1) = 2.40$ . On the other hand, as a group blacks received almost twice as many Article 15s ( $n$  of Article 15s = 55) as did whites ( $n$  of Article 15s = 30),  $X^2(1) = 7.35$ ,  $p < .01$ .

When the number of inmates receiving prior discipline for military confrontation offenses (disrespect to an officer or NCO, disobeying an order, according to the classification by Nellum and Associates, 1973) is examined, there were a larger number of black inmates ( $n = 8$ ) than white inmates ( $n = 2$ ), although these small numbers are not significant,  $X^2(1) = 2.40$ . When the total number of military-related offenses (confrontation offenses and other military offenses including AWOL, missing or late for duty, unattended or lost government property, drunk or sleeping or faking sickness on duty, female in room, fraternization, poor attitude, dereliction of duty) is examined, however, there were a significantly greater number of black offenders ( $n = 24$ ) than white offenders ( $n = 12$ ),  $X^2(1) = 4.00$ ,  $p < .05$ .

Tables 10 and 11 together show the inmates who encountered both prior civilian problems and prior military discipline. There was no difference between black inmates ( $n = 20$ ) and white inmates ( $n = 15$ ),  $X^2(1) = 0.71$ .

## Military Service

**Branch of Service.** Table 12 (page 22) shows branches of the military for inmates. Most black and white inmates were from the Army. There were, however, a number of whites ( $n = 14$ ) compared to few blacks ( $n = 5$ ) from the Air Force. There were few numbers of either Marine or Navy inmates. The number of whites versus blacks in the Air Force subsample was not enough to make a significant difference in the larger sample,  $X^2(3) = 6.91$

This white Air Force subsample should still be briefly examined, however. It tended to be older (average age = 36.9 years) and had more time in service (average time = 12.9 years) than the larger sample. Most of the inmates were sentenced for sodomy for an average sentence of 13 years. This was a sizeable number of the total number of inmates sentenced for sodomy.

**Table 10****Prior Civilian Problems of Black and White Inmates**

<u>ID - Black Inmates (n=29)</u>	<u>Offense</u>	<u>School Suspension</u>	<u>Number Skipping School</u>	<u>Number Traffic Tickets</u>	<u>Type of Legal Problems</u>	<u>Legal Problem</u>
002	Sodomy, assault			4		
003	Attempted murder			2		
006	Murder	1			1	Grand theft auto
010	Larceny			4		
011	Assault, striking officer	1			1	Assault & battery
012	Rape	1	1			
013	Attempted murder				1	Assault
015	Murder		1			
016	Sodomy, rape				1	Assault & battery
017	Larceny	1				
018	Robbery		1		1	Trespassing
019	Drug use, distribution	1	1	8	1	Assault
020	Rape				2	2 rape charges
031	Assault, attempted murder				1	Shoplifting
032	Larceny			2		
039	Sodomy		1			
040	Rape			5		
051	Murder			1		
052	Larceny				1	DUI
054	Rape	2				
057	Drug use, distribution				1	DUI
060	Attempted rape				3	2 DUI, jailed for child support
070	Larceny			1		

**Table 10 Continued**

<u>ID - Black Inmates (n = 29)</u>	<u>Offense</u>	<u>School Suspension</u>	<u>Number Skipping School</u>	<u>Number Traffic Tickets</u>	<u>Type of Legal Problems</u>	<u>Legal Problem</u>
074	Sodomy				1	Shoplifting
075	Larceny			2		
076	Murder				4	4 DUI
079	Murder			3		
080	Attempted murder, robbery				1	Pay court costs on accident
094	Drug use, distribution			3		
Totals		7	5	35	20	
<u>ID - White Inmates (n = 30)</u>						
001	Sodomy, assault	1		5	1	Sex with a minor
004	Murder	1			2	Reckless driving, carrying concealed weapon
005	Carnal knowledge	1	1	2		
007	Sodomy	1			1	Loitering
009	Rape		1	1		
028	Larceny			1		
042	Sodomy			3		
043	Larceny				1	Theft
045	Robbery				2	Shoplifting, theft
047	Sodomy			3		
049	Murder		1	1		
050	Rape			4		
062	Sodomy			2	1	Runaway
063	Indecent acts			3		

**Table 10 Continued**

<u>ID - White Inmates (n=29)</u>	<u>Offense</u>	<u>School Suspension</u>	<u>Number Skipping School</u>	<u>Number Traffic Tickets</u>	<u>Type of Legal Problems</u>	<u>Legal Problem</u>
065	Murder			2		
066	Fraternization			2		
068	Indecent acts			1		
069	Burglary, sodomy				3	Grand theft, assault, breaking & entering
082	Sodomy				1	Shoplifting
083	Sodomy				1	Possession of alcohol
085	Assault			1	1	Carrying a concealed weapon
087	Sodomy			3		
088	Indecent acts			2		
090	Indecent acts			1	1	Injuring a child
096	Murder		1		4	4 auto theft
098	Rape				1	Assault
099	Sodomy			4	1	Drug possession
100	Sodomy			4		
101	Sodomy				1	Sex with a minor
103	Robbery			1		
Totals		4	4	46	22	

**Table 11****Black and White Inmates with Prior Military Discipline Problems**

<u>ID - Black Inmates (n = 36)</u>	<u>Offense</u>	<u>Number of Article 15s</u>	<u>Letters of Reprimand, Counseling</u>	<u>Prior Courts Martial</u>	<u>Reasons</u>
002	Assault, sodomy	1		1	Drug use (both)
003	Attempted murder	2			Sleeping on duty, misuse phone
008	Rape	3			Late for formation, driving with suspended license
011	Assault, striking officer			2	Disrespect to NCO, striking officer
012	Rape	1			Disobeying order
013	Attempted murder	1			Assault
014	Robbery	2			DUI, overindulgence
016	Sodomy	2			(not given)
017	Larceny	1			Disrespect to NCO
020	Rape	1			AWOL
031	Assault, attempted murder			1	Arson
032	Larceny	1			AWOL
033	Rape	2			Disrespect to NCO, missing headcount
034	Forgery	1			Assault
036	Carnal knowledge	2			Late to formation, disobeying order
040	Rape	2			Female in room, AWOL
051	Murder	2			Disrespect, assault
052	Larceny	4			Larceny (3), fighting
053	Larceny	1			Overdrawn account
055	Rape	1	1		Missing duty

**Table 11 Continued**

<u>ID - Black Inmates (n = 36)</u>	<u>Offense</u>	<u>Number of Article 15s</u>	<u>Letters of Reprimand, Counseling</u>	<u>Prior Courts Martial</u>	<u>Reasons</u>
057	Use, distribution of drugs	1			Female in room
059	Aggravated assault	1			Bar fight
060	Attempted rape	2	1		Concealed weapon, assault, DUI
070	Larceny	3			Bad checks, late for formation (2)
071	Use, distribution of drugs	1	2		Late for formation, on duty without gear
072	Use, distribution of drugs	5			Drug use (2), adultery, asleep on duty
073	Rape	2			Disobeying order, dereliction of duty
074	Sodomy	1			Fraternization
075	Larceny	1			Failure to report for duty
076	Murder			1	DUI
078	Aggravated assault, distribution of drugs	2			Missed formation, assault
080	Attempted murder, robbery		1		Poor attitude
091	Espionage	1			Bad checks
092	Rape	3			Fighting, AWOL, failure to repair
093	Murder	2			Fighting, blackmarketing
095	Sodomy		2		Disrespect to NCO, dereliction of duty
Totals		55	7	5	

**Table 11 Continued**

<u>ID - White Inmates (n = 24)</u>	<u>Offense</u>	<u>Number of Article 15s</u>	<u>Letters of Reprimand, Counseling</u>	<u>Prior Courts Martial</u>	<u>Reasons</u>
001	Sodomy, assault	2			Disrespect to NCO, officer
004	Murder	2			Fighting, DUI
009	Rape	2			Failure to sign in, drunk on duty
023	Indecent acts	1			Adultery
024	Indecent acts	1			Drinking on duty
027	Murder	1			Driving unlicensed vehicle
028	Larceny	1			Staff harassmer.
041	Assault	1			Assault
042	Sodomy		1		Failure to complete paper work on child care
043	Larceny	2			Missing class (2)
047	Sodomy		1		Leaving material unattended
048	Sodomy	4			Shoplifting, DUI, drunk on duty, fighting
049	Murder	2			Disobeying order, missing duty
064	Larceny		1	1	Bad checks
065	Murder	1			(not given)
086	Murder			1	AWOL
087	Sodomy	1			Drinking
088	Indecent acts	1			Loaned truck to friend who received ticket
089	Larceny	2			Lost equipment, several FTRs
090	Indecent acts	1			Dereliction of duty
097	Larceny	2			Drinking, failure to go
098	Rape	1			Leaving duty
099	Sodomy	1			Domestic disturbance
103	Robbery	1			Faking sickness
Totals		30	3	2	

**Table 12****Branch of Military Service of Black and White Inmates**

<u>Service</u>	<u>Number of Blacks</u>	<u>Number of Whites</u>
Army	43	33
Air Force	5	14
Marines	2	1
Navy	1	3

**Grade.** Table 13 shows the grade distribution for black and white inmates. Although the average grade for black inmates was E4 and for white inmates was E5, there were no significant differences in the overall distribution of grades by race,  $X^2(9) = 7.81$ .

**Table 13****Highest Military Grade Achieved by Black and White Inmates**

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Number of Blacks</u>	<u>Number of Whites</u>
E2	3	0
E3	15	10
E4	16	15
E5	9	10
E6	4	9
E7	1	4
E8	1	1
O2	1	0
O4	0	2
Unknown	1	0

**Time in Service.** Table 2 shows that blacks had significantly less time in service at the time of the offense ( $M = 5.76$  yrs) than did whites ( $M = 9.53$  yrs),  $F(1,100) = 11.30$ ,  $p < .001$ .

**Military Occupational Specialty.** Table 14 (page 23) shows inmate military occupational specialty categorized according to lower ability, moderate ability, and higher ability jobs. More blacks tended to be in lower ability jobs, while more whites were in higher ability jobs, although these differences were not significant,  $X^2(3) = 3.66$ . It should be noted that the author created this ability classification. To the author's knowledge, there is no consistent ability classification for occupations across the services.

**Table 14****Categories of Military Occupational Specialty for Black and White Inmates**

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of Blacks</u>	<u>Number of Whites</u>
<b>Lower Ability</b>		
Gunner	3	1
Cannon Crew	9	1
Vehicle Driver	1	3
Tank Crew	3	1
Rifleman/Infantryman	2	7
Cook/Food Service	2	0
Total	20	13
<b>Moderate Ability</b>		
Combat Engineer	4	3
Supply	9	5
Communication	1	3
Mechanic	3	6
Fire Specialist	1	2
Scout	1	0
Military Police	2	3
Administrative/Personnel	3	1
Aircraft Crew	0	2
Ground Crew	0	2
Total	24	27
<b>Higher Ability</b>		
Computer Operations	2	0
Trainer	1	0
Legal Specialist	1	0
Leader (platoon leader/ first sergeant)	1	3
Medical Technician	0	5
Military Band	0	1
Professor	0	1
Total	5	10
Not Given	2	1

**Incarceration Offense**

**Type of Offense.** Table 15 (page 24) shows the distribution of type of crime by race. The majority of the whites were sentenced for sex crimes against minors (sodomy or indecent acts), while almost twice as many blacks as whites were sentenced for violent crimes against others (assault, attempted murder, murder, rape, robbery),  $X^2(3) = 24.89$ ,  $p < .001$ .

**Sentences.** Table 2 shows that blacks ( $M = 13.47$  yrs) had slightly longer sentences than whites, although the difference was nonsignificant ( $M = 12.36$  yrs),  $F(1,91) = 0.16$ . The number of life sentences was equivalent for blacks ( $n = 5$ ) and whites ( $n = 4$ ).

**Table 15**

**Type of Incarcerated Offense for Black and White Inmates**

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number of Blacks</u>	<u>Number of Whites</u>
Sex Crime with Minor (sodomy, indecent acts with a minor)	5	28
Violent Crimes against Persons (assault, attempted murder, robbery, rape)	32	17
Property Crimes (larceny, forgery)	8	5
Drug related Crimes (use, distribution of drugs)	6	1

**Intercorrelations**

Table 16 (page 25) shows the intercorrelations of age, socioeconomic status, educational level, test scores (GT, reading, math, and English), family size, birth order, military discipline (the sum of Article 15s, letters of reprimand, and prior courts martial), time in service, grade, and years sentenced for the entire sample of blacks and whites combined. Besides the obvious correlations, such as age with grade and time in service, several significant correlations stand out. Socioeconomic status is related to General Technical Test score; i.e., middle class inmates scored higher. In addition, birth order is related to family size (inmates from larger families tended to be further down in birth order) and English test score (higher order born, like first and second, scored higher).

Unfortunately, these significant correlations tended largely to be a function of the white sample. Black data did not significantly correlate for socioeconomic status and General Technical Test score ( $r = .11$ ) nor for birth order and English test ( $r = -.16$ ). This may reflect fairly widespread educational disadvantage among the black inmates (their test scores were lower across the board compared to whites).

There were two significant correlations, however, important to this analysis. First, there was a significant correlation for the black subsample for birth order and family size,  $r(32) = .59$ ,  $p < .01$ . This may be a statistical artifact (e.g., you cannot be the sixth child unless you come from a large family). On the other hand, this may be still another indicator that family background is a set of factors to consider further. A number of black inmates tended to be younger siblings in the larger families.

Second, unlike the white subsample, time in service was negatively related to math test score,  $r(32) = -0.37$ ,  $p < .05$ , and English test score,  $r(32) = -0.36$ ,  $p < .05$ . Shorter time in service generally means a more recent date of entry into the military. And these "newer" enlistees had higher test scores. This no doubt reflects that services have become increasingly more selective in ability levels of enlistees.

It should be pointed out that these intercorrelations were based on small subsamples due to the fact that many of the variables, such as socioeconomic status and General Technical Test score, did not have data for all inmates.

**Table 16**

**Intercorrelations for the Total Inmate Sample**

Variables	Variables											
	Socio Econ Status	Age	Educ	GT Score	Read	Math	English	Family Size	Birth Order	Mil Disc	TIS	Grade
Age	-.03	.22	.31*	-.05	-.16	-.07	.11	-.08	-.16	.76**	.68**	.36**
SEStatus	-.01	.37*	.17	.14	-.23	-.12	.02	-.02	.08	.47**	.13	
Educ	.28	.23	.17	.11	-.13	-.01	-.02	-.13	.36*	.32*	.12	
GTScore	.39**	.33*	.35**	.41**	-.09	-.15	.01	.08	.11	-.09		
Read	.46**	-.10	.01	-.08	-.07	-.00	.07					
Math	-.29*	.25	.11	.06	-.11							
English	.62**	.00	.25	.11	.01							
Family	-.02	-.06	-.12									
Birth	-.10	-.22	-.03									
MilDisc	.63**	.11										
TIS	.10											
Grade												
Sentence												

n = 62  
 \*p < .05  
 \*\*p < .01

# SUMMARY OF TESTS OF HYPOTHESES

## Hypotheses Receiving Support from the Data

Hypothesis 3b. Black offenders have lower ability test scores than do white offenders.

Blacks scored significantly lower than whites on the General Technical Test and the grade equivalency tests for reading, mathematics, and English.

Hypothesis 4a. Black offenders are more apt to come from "broken homes" (divorced, separated, single parent) than do white offenders.

A majority of both blacks and whites came from homes where the parents were no longer married. More blacks came from homes where the parents were divorced, separated, or had been single parents. More whites came from homes with stepparents.

Hypothesis 4b. Black offenders are more apt to come from larger families than do white offenders.

The majority of blacks came from families with five or more children, while the majority of whites came from families of four children or less.

Hypothesis 5. Black offenders have different personality orientations toward authority, interpersonal problems, and control than do white offenders.

MMPI-2 profiles showed black offenders more oriented toward external problems with society and interpersonal relations and white offenders more oriented toward internal problems with internal control and the self.

Hypothesis 6b. Black offenders have a larger number of prior military discipline problems than do white offenders.

Black offenders had a larger number of Article 15s. In addition, black offenders had more prior disciplinary problems with military-related offenses, such as disrespect toward an officer or NCO, disobeying an order, AWOL, drunk or sleeping on duty, and dereliction of duty.

Hypothesis 7b. Black offenders had less time in service at the time of the offense than did white offenders.

Black offenders had close to half the time in service of white offenders at the time of the offense.

Hypothesis 8a. Black offenders are more apt to be incarcerated for violent crimes (murder, rape, assault, robbery) than white offenders.

Almost twice as many blacks as whites were sentenced for violent crimes against others, while a majority of the whites were sentenced for sex acts against minors.

### **Hypotheses not Supported by the Data**

Hypothesis 1. Black offenders (inmates) are younger than are white offenders.

For both their present age and their age at their court martial adjudication date, blacks were slightly younger than whites, although the differences were not significant.

Hypothesis 2. Black offenders are from lower socioeconomic status backgrounds than are white offenders.

More blacks and whites came from a working class background than from any other socioeconomic status. Slightly more whites than blacks came from a middle class background.

Hypothesis 3a. Black offenders have completed fewer grades in school than have white offenders.

Most black and white offenders had a GED or had completed high school as their highest level of education.

Hypothesis 4c. Black offenders are more apt to be lower in birth order status (be a younger sibling) than are white offenders.

The birth order pattern for blacks and whites was very similar. The majority of both blacks and whites were either first or second born.

Hypothesis 6a. Black offenders have a larger number of prior civilian offenses than do white offenders.

There were no differences between black and white offenders on school problems or civilian legal problems. Whites were slightly more apt to have had a larger number of traffic tickets.

Hypothesis 7a. Black offenders had a lower grade than did white offenders.

The average grade for blacks was E4 and for whites E5. There was about an even distribution among the various enlisted grades, however.

Hypothesis 7c. Black offenders had lower status military occupations than did white offenders.

Blacks had slightly lower status occupations than whites, although both groups tended to have moderate to lower ability occupational specialties.

Hypothesis 8b. Black offenders have longer sentences than do white offenders.

Blacks had slightly longer sentences than whites. The numbers of life sentences were about equal between blacks and whites.

## DISCUSSION

### Education and Ability Level

There were no real differences in education level. On the other hand, blacks had significantly lower ability test scores than whites. It should be noted, however, that if the General Technical Test score is an indicator of overall intelligence and thus reflects overall IQ, both blacks and whites fell more or less within the average IQ range (90 - 110). At the same time the academic skills of blacks (reading, math, and English) were significantly lower than whites indicating that many of the blacks came from educationally disadvantaged environments.

### Home Environment

**Parents' Marital Status.** A majority of both blacks and whites came from homes where the parents were no longer married. One difference, however, is that more blacks came from homes where a parent was missing, while in some white homes the missing biological parent had been replaced with a stepparent. Moreover, several black inmates claimed that they had actually been raised by a grandparent, which perhaps meant that they did not even have access to one parent. On the other hand, having a stepparent was not necessarily always beneficial as several white inmates claimed that their stepparents had abused them as children.

**Family Size.** Blacks tended to come from larger families than whites. And many tended to be the younger children in these larger families. While the data do not give definitive answers, several possible linkages between family size and tendency toward problems can be suggested. One speculation is that larger families create more tensions among siblings as they compete for parental attention and scarce family resources. Indeed, several inmates in their in processing interviews claimed that siblings had physically abused them as they were growing up. This might be an indicator of family tension.

A larger family may also mean that a child may spend more time away from the crowded family environment. This time may be spent on the street in the company of peers and thus there may be more opportunity to learn peer-influenced problematic behaviors.

For black offenders, in many cases the absence of one parent coupled with the fact that they tended to come from larger families may have resulted in less individual attention and perhaps less control overall when they were growing up, a pattern identified in other studies (Sampson, 1987). In other words, the lack of attention and concomitant lack of guidance and at the same time the greater freedom earlier in life may have led to more opportunities to learn maladaptive behaviors and eventually to get into trouble.

## Personality

The MMPI-2 data show a trend for white inmates toward personality traits associated with internal problems of control and self and for black inmates traits associated with external problems with others and society. Two cautions should be pointed out at this time. First this is a small subsample of inmates (only 38). Second the internal-external dichotomy may reflect factors associated with race, but it may also reflect type of offense. The majority of blacks committed violent crimes against persons, while the majority of whites committed sex crimes with minors. These personality profiles, then, may be representing the type of individual who commits a certain type of crime; i.e., a person with interpersonal problems may be more apt to commit violent crimes against others, while a person with internal psychological problems may be more apt to be involved in incest or pedophilia.

The important point is that these preliminary personality data show a need for more research in this area. More extensive personality data should be collected from larger offender samples.

## Prior Problems

**Prior Civilian Problems.** There were no differences found between blacks and whites on problems at school and prior legal difficulties. About 30% of both black and white offenders had a record of prior DUIs, charges, arrests, or convictions. There was no difference, however, between blacks and whites on confrontational interpersonal violent acts (rape, assault, battery, or carrying a concealed weapon). Therefore, based on these data, there does not appear to be a greater propensity toward prior civilian legal problems among black offenders. And there does not appear to be a greater propensity among these black offenders toward a history of violence.

**Prior Military Discipline.** A large majority of black inmates (71%) had a history of prior military discipline in the form of Article 15s, letters of reprimand or counseling, or prior courts martial, although almost half of the whites (47%) also had prior experience with military discipline. On the other hand, blacks received almost twice as many Article 15s as did whites, which reflects the findings of a number of military studies (Culbertson & Magnusson, 1992; Edwards & Knouse, 1990; Polan & Thomas, 1985). This could indicate that this particular group of blacks was more apt to get into trouble. The data on prior civilian problems, however, show no greater propensity for prior legal difficulties for blacks than for whites. Moreover, only 34% of blacks who had prior civilian problems went on to have military discipline problems prior to their incarceration offense. In other words, these data do not show a pattern of blacks who have a long history of getting into trouble.

A second explanation is that there is some type of problem in the system, perhaps institutional bias, whereby blacks as a group were more apt to get an Article 15 for a problem, while whites were apt to get some other type of perhaps less visible punishment, such as an informal reprimand.

A third explanation espoused by some in the military is that the large number of black military disciplinary problems may be a function of the difficulty of some blacks in dealing with the predominantly white authority structure of the military; these blacks may react with an "in your face" confrontational attitude toward military authority. While more blacks than whites received discipline for confrontation offenses to military authority (disrespect to an officer or NCO or disobeying an order), the small numbers were not significant. When the total number of military-related offenses was examined (confrontation offenses and other offenses such as AWOL, missing duty, dereliction of duty), however, significantly more blacks than whites experienced disciplinary problems. Therefore, there may be a problem of adjustment for some blacks to the military, which is exhibited in some type of clash with the military environment, which in turn results in disciplinary actions, such as Article 15s. The present data reflect small numbers of these problematic instances, however. Future research should examine larger data sets to verify this speculation.

## **Military Service**

**Branch of Service.** Although a majority of both black and white inmates were from the Army, a number of white inmates were from the Air Force. This subsample tended to be older, more senior, and to have been convicted almost exclusively of sodomy. This may possibly indicate a tendency for the Air Force to look particularly closely and harshly at this offense.

**Time in Service.** Blacks tended to commit the major offense for which they were incarcerated earlier in their military career. For many it was during their first enlistment. It must be noted, however, that the difference between blacks and whites is partly due to the fact that many whites were incarcerated for a sex crime against a minor that occurred much later in their military careers. In other words, these white offenders may be skewing the time in service data.

**Military Occupational Specialty.** There was a slight tendency for blacks to have had a lower status occupational specialty than did whites. This is no doubt due partially to their lower test scores which would direct them into lower ability and hence lower status specialties.

## **Offense**

**Type of Offense.** These data show a trend identified in a number of civilian and military studies (e.g., Christianson, 1982; Polan & Thomas, 1985); i.e., blacks are more likely to be sentenced for violent crimes against others (assault, murder, rape, robbery). On the other hand, the majority of whites were sentenced for sex crimes against minors, which may reflect the unique tendency of all the military services, not simply the Air Force, to look more harshly on this offense than does the civilian justice system.

**Sentence.** Blacks were given slightly longer sentences than whites, which may possibly be attributed to the nature of their offense. More blacks had been convicted of violent crimes, which would result in a longer sentence. Moreover, the intercorrelational data did not show any significant correlates with sentence length for the black subsample. From this data, then, there does not appear to be bias in sentencing.

## **Future Research**

**Examination of Personality Test Data.** In addition to the demographic data in its files, the Mental Health Directorate at the Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth maintains extensive inmate data on a number of personality and behavioral tests. It would be fruitful to study the relationship of this test data to various background factors. For example, the present study showed indications of interpersonal problems in some black inmates based upon the limited test data available in the basic mental health file. Further research could examine linkages between potentially significant problematic family variables, such as one or both parents not at home and family size, and problematic educational variables, such as truancy, suspensions, and low academic achievement, and the subsequent influence upon personality and behavioral variables and ultimately the influence upon initial problems in the military, such as nonjudicial punishments.

**Larger Sample Sizes.** There are patterns of differences found here between blacks and whites, which must be deemed tentative, however, because of the small sample sizes. To reiterate what has already been stated several times, future research should examine larger data bases to confirm these findings.

**Comparison of Black Offenders and Nonoffenders.** It should be pointed out that the basic comparisons examined here were between black inmates and white inmates. A number of these differences might be alternatively explained as not due to factors associated with race, but rather with various social and psychological background factors that may predispose individuals to problems with the criminal justice system. And these individuals also happen to be black. In other words, there may be certain factors in the life experiences of individuals regardless of race, such as a disadvantaged upbringing and disadvantaged education, that cause them to get into legal troubles. In order to test this alternative explanation, it is necessary to focus not so much on differences between black and white offenders, but rather differences within subgroups of blacks. Specifically, it is important to compare the differences between black offenders who come from disadvantaged environments with a matched group of blacks who come from the same type of environment but have not had trouble with the law. Recent studies have shown, for example, that incarcerated black males had more childhood problematic behavior, less involvement with black churches, less family influence on values, and associated more with peers who got into trouble than nonincarcerated black males who came from similar environments (Parson & Mikawa, 1988).

It would be fruitful, although perhaps not easy, to create a data base of black offenders in the military matched to a group of black nonoffenders in the military with similar demographic characteristics and then examine unique differences in their backgrounds, such as differences in upbringing, educational experiences, and peer relationships, which may contribute to their problems with the military justice system.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Overall the data show indications that the tendency to commit an offense in the military relates to two antecedent areas: family and educational background and early experience in the military. Recommendations are presented for these two areas.

## **Family and Educational Background**

### **1. Provide early help to enlistees**

The data show that some black inmates came from larger families particularly where one parent was absent. The data also show from ability test scores that a number of blacks came from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. Therefore, some blacks may not have learned the requisite interpersonal skills for effectively dealing with others in various types of social environments.

The military certainly cannot prevent individuals from enlisting because they come from a "broken" home. After all divorce is almost becoming the norm. But the military can be aware of certain factors that *may* predispose some individuals to trouble in their first tour of duty and provide early help, such as counseling, to circumvent these potential problems (Horne, 1988).

Such early help may be particularly important when blacks from troubled backgrounds are sent overseas in their first tour of duty. Among the black inmates in the present study, their intake interviews showed that a number committed their offense overseas, particularly in Europe during their first tour. The sudden cultural change coupled with perhaps inappropriate social skills for dealing with the resultant stress may have precipitated the frequently violent response that led to their court martial.

### **2. Be more selective on ability levels of recruits**

The data show that blacks had lower ability scores across the board than whites, which perhaps reflects the larger societal problem of educational disadvantage for many blacks. At least for the military, however, this problem may be partially resolving itself. The data show that more recent inmates tended to have somewhat higher scores on some ability measures, which may mean that the military has been recruiting higher ability blacks than in the past. In addition, with the recent force reductions, the emphasis in future recruiting will most likely be in highly technical areas, which demand higher ability recruits. In other words, after the military has stabilized from its present downsizing, it may have higher ability blacks (and whites) than in the past. To the extent that disciplinary problems are due to lower educational levels of individuals (i.e., lower education places them in boring dead end jobs, and lower education may provide them fewer psychosocial mechanisms for dealing with frustration and stress), disciplinary problems among both whites and blacks may decline in the future in the military.

## **Early Experience in the Military**

### **1. Provide socialization inoculation**

These data and that of other studies (e.g., Culbertson & Magnusson, 1992; Edwards & Knouse, 1990; Polan & Thomas, 1985) show that blacks, who were largely first term, had more NJPs than whites, even when they had fewer prior civilian problems. This points to something in their early military experience that triggers disciplinary problems.

Some type of device that inoculates them to military rigor and stress early in their process of being socialized into the military is important. The Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) has proposed such a device (Dansby, 1992, 1993). The socialization inoculator is a series of videotapes and vignettes that present appropriate and inappropriate interpersonal responses in military situations, such as dealing with an NCO or officer. The emphasis is upon avoiding aggressive confrontational approaches that may be effective in an urban inner city environment but may be considered disrespectful and even insubordinate in the military environment

2. Provide foreign culture inoculation

A combination of socialization inoculation and cultural sensitivity training might reduce the sense of frustration and stress caused when first term blacks from the urban environment of large cities encounter very different foreign cultures when they are posted overseas.

3. Provide early mentors

Mentors provide help both for psychosocial problems and for career problems (Kram, 1988; Zey, 1984). Mentors can serve as guides, coaches, teachers, resource experts, and supportive persons for new persons in organizations. In addition, minorities can receive special understanding and special help from minority mentors (Knouse, 1991, 1992).

The military might consider using older more experienced black NCOs as mentors to newly trained black enlistees. Research shows that mandating formal mentoring programs where mentors are assigned to proteges many times does not work (Kram, 1988). The crucial chemistry between mentor and mentoree does not develop. At the same time, organizations have been successful in providing situations, such as formal and informal gettogethers, where potential mentors and proteges can meet, get to know one another, and let the mentoring process take its course. In like fashion, the military could provide formal and informal functions where first term black enlistees could meet experienced black NCOs, who could serve as their guides through the military bureaucracy, their coaches on appropriate interpersonal behaviors, and their support persons for dealing with stress and frustration.

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