Evaluating the Construct Validity of Psychopathy in Black and White Male Inmates: Three Preliminary Studies

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Although Black inmates represent almost half the population of United States prisons and have been included in several studies of psychopathy, there appear to be no published studies to date addressing the validity of the psychopathy construct in Black inmates. Three studies were conducted to assess the validity of the construct in Black male inmates using Hare's Psychopathy Checklist (PCL). In Study 1, we examined the internal structure of the PCL and the relation of checklist scores to several constructs relevant to psychopathy. We observed differences between Blacks and Whites in the distribution of psychopathy scores, the relation of psychopathy to measures of impulsivity, and in the congruence of the underlying factor structure of the PCL. In Study 2, Black psychopaths were found to manifest a pattern of passive avoidance deficits similar but not identical to that reported for White psychopaths in Newman and Kosson. Study 3 demonstrated that psychopaths of both races receive more criminal charges in a wider variety of offense categories than do nonpsychopaths. The psychopathy construct appears tentatively applicable to Black, although its components may be somewhat different than for White.

Despite clinical agreement and empirical evidence that psychopathy is an important construct modulating the relation between personality and antisocial behavior (e.g., Hare, 1970), research on psychopathy has long been plagued by a lack of agreement about who the psychopath is and how he or she may be identified (e.g., see Hare & Cox, 1978). Hare and his colleagues have developed a new measure of psychopathy, the Psychopathy Checklist (PCL: Hare, 1980, 1985b), which appears to permit reliable and valid ratings of psychopathy in incarcerated White males (Schroder, Schroder, & Hare, 1983). Subjects selected on the basis of PCL ratings have been shown to display a variety of behaviors associated with psychopathy, including passive avoidance learning deficits in specific situations (Newman & Kosson, 1986), perseveration of dominant responses (Newman, Patterson, & Kosson, 1987), and high levels of violent and nonviolent criminal activity (Hare & McPherson, 1984). The consistency of these findings has helped to build a cumulative framework for understanding psychopathy and for elaborating further predictions of mechanisms underlying psychopathic behavior.

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We are very grateful for extensive help by Sharon Nichols in data collection and analysis of Study 1. We also thank Peter Kozowyk, Suzanne Waskoc, Randy Bunt, Eric Howland, and C. Mark Patterson for their help in collecting data reported here. Finally, we thank Arnold Blahnik, Pam Weedell, Beverly Maris, Deborah Murch, the staff of Oakland Correctional Institution, and the Wisconsin Division of Corrections for their consistent cooperation throughout this project.

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For some time, researchers in the United States have been applying the psychopathy construct to non-White as well as White populations usually without addressing the generality of the construct across race. For example, Black inmates have been included as subjects in studies of delay of gratification (Blanchard, Busis, & Koshland, 1977), information-processing deficits (Fainton, 1961), and violence proneness (Fagan & Lira, 1980). None of these studies addressed the possibility of Group X Race interactions. In fact, a search of the literature for studies that explicitly examined the validity of the psychopathy-antisocial personality disorder construct in Black inmates located only one relevant study. In that study, Walters (1985) reported no race effects in a comparison of the Psychopathy Deviate Scale of the MMPI with a behavioral measure of antisocial personality disorder.

Given that approximately 45% of United States prisoners are Black (Brown, Fisman, & McLeod, 1984), the investigation of behavioral and personality factors associated with the criminality of Black offenders appears to be an important task. However, there is no evidence that overrepresentation of Blacks in American prisons may reflect, in part, the social and economic inequities that many Blacks suffer (Farrington, 1987) as well as the racial discrimination in the criminal justice system (e.g., see Degeger, 1988; Hacker, 1988). As such, personality variables and disorders, including psychopathy, may be less powerful determinants of antisocial behavior among non-Whites. Thus, investigation of the validity of the psychopathy construct in Blacks represents an important step in determining the relative influence of various etiological factors implicated in the development of criminality in this important offender population. It is this question to which the present work is addressed.

Examination of the psychopathy construct in non-White populations is complicated by the fact that most measures of psychopathy have been developed using White inmates as subjects (e.g., Hare, 1980). It is an empirical question whether non-
Whites who are diagnosed as psychopaths with these measures resemble White psychopaths in fundamental ways. In the present investigation, we focus on the PCL primarily because of its demonstrated reliability and validity in White male inmates. In theory, the validation of the psychopathy construct in both White and non-White populations should rest upon the observation of predicted relations using several different measures of psychopathy. However, there are at present no other well-validated measures of psychopathy that are independent of PCL ratings. Consequently, in the context of the present study, we address simultaneously evaluation of the psychopathy construct in Blacks and validation of the PCL as a measure of that construct in Blacks.

The construct of psychopathy is valid in a new population to the extent that examination of the new population yields similar relations between psychopathy (operationalized by a particular measure) and the properties of states with established links to the psychopathy construct. Thus, we examine the validity of the psychopathy construct in Black inmates by comparing their performance on dependent measures linked to psychopathy with that of White inmates. Although it is possible that psychopathy exists in Blacks in the same way it exists in Whites, it may be that no syndrome like psychopathy exists in Blacks at all. It is also possible that psychopathy exists in Blacks in a different way. In either case, it may not manifest somewhat differently than in Whites. For example, cultural differences in socialization and behavior may influence the pattern of behaviors associated with psychopathy in non-White populations. Consequently, the psychopathy construct may reflect a different clustering of the various components, and may even involve more or fewer components in Black than in White inmates.

As part of an ongoing program of psychopathy research at a minimum security prison, we have collected personality and behavioral data on several hundred inmates who were assessed using the PCL. The results of several experiments conducted at this prison have been reported in this journal (Kosson & Newman, 1986; Newman & Kosson, 1986; Newman et al., 1987). In all of these investigations, only the data for White subjects were reported because the PCL was originally developed using only White inmates (Hare, 1984). The current investigation capitalized on the availability of extensive personality and behavioral data for both White and Black inmates.

To explore the validity and reliability of the psychopathy diagnosis in Black male inmates, we conducted three studies: (a) Study 1 focused on the measurement properties, underlining factor structure, and validity of the PCL in White and Black inmates; (b) Study 2 compared the passive-avoidance learning of Black psychopaths and nonpsychopaths with data previously reported for White psychopaths and nonpsychopaths (Newton & Kosson, 1986); and (c) Study 3 compared White and Black psychopaths and nonpsychopaths on the number and type of criminal charges they received.

Approximately one-half of the subjects in the ongoing research program were assessed using the original 22-item PCL (Hare, 1980). The other half were assessed using the 20-item revised PCL (Hare, 1984). According to Hare (1984b), the revised Psychopathy Checklist and the original 22-item scale are substantively identical and . . . . the two versions classify prison inmates in the same way (p. 2). In the present investigation, all of the subjects in Study 1 were assessed with the 22-item PCL; all of the White subjects and most of the Black subjects in Study 2 were assessed with the 22-item PCL (4 black subjects were assessed with the 20-item revised PCL). Finally, all of the subjects in Study 3 were assessed with the 20-item revised PCL. In sum, the subjects in Study 2 consisted of a subset of the subjects in Study 1 with the exclusion of 14 Black subjects. These same 14 subjects constitute the only overlap of subjects in Study 2 and Study 3.

Study 1

Our first study was designed to provide information on a wide range of issues relevant to the assessment of psychopathy in Black male inmates. The data provide information within three broad categories: First, we examined the reliability of measurement and distribution of PCL scores in Black and White male inmates. Second, we examined the internal structure of the PCL in several different ways: (a) item-to-total correlations and alpha coefficients for PCL items for White and Black male inmates, and (b) congruence between the factor structure of the PCL (cf. Harpur, Hakstan, & Hare, 1988) for White and Black inmates. Finally, we examined the relationship between psychopathy ratings and scores on a variety of self-report measures that have been reported to be relevant in predicting psychopathy in White.

Both the Cleckley (1976) and Hare (1984) concepts of psychopathy characterize psychopaths as impulsive. We therefore predicted significant correlations between psychopathy and impulsiveness. We also predicted significant correlations between PCL scores and a measure of delinquent proneness, the Socialization scale (Gough, 1960; Hare, 1984). In addition, we investigated the relation between psychopathy and anxiety using three measures of anxiety/irritability constructs used in psychopathy research. However, because different and conflicting claims have been made about this relation (e.g., Blackburn, 1971; 1975; Schalling, 1975; Hare, 1984), we made no predictions regarding group differences. Finally, we investigated the relation between psychopathy and intelligence using a brief self-report IQ test, the Shipley Institute of Living Scale (HLS) (Shipley, 1940; Zabary, 1986). The relation between psychopathy and intelligence is ambiguous (e.g., Goodwin & Gaze, 1984), although the classes made have been more modest than those for IQ. As such, no predictions were made for this relationship.

Method

Subjects. Subjects were 252 White and 124 Black inmates at a state correctional facility minimum security in southern Wisconsin. Inmates were nominated by selecting every fifth name on the institution register, screening out those men who were older than 40 or who appeared unsuitable for use in behavioral research (e.g., likely to show self-report measures more vulnerable to self-presentation bias. The criteria may therefore be inappropriate to rate indicators of psychopathy (Hare, 1956). Because correspondence with global ratings of psychopathy based on Cleckley's concept of the psychopath was a criterion in the initial development of the PCL, such objections do not provide independent evidence for the validity of the checklist.

(a) Subjects in Study 1 included, but are not limited to, subjects in our previous Journal of Abnormal Psychology articles (Kosson & Newman, 1986; Newman & Kosson, 1986; Newman et al., 1987).
Results

Reliability

The correlation between interviewers' and observers' PCL ratings of Black subjects was .85 ($N = 232$), whereas the correlation for Black subjects was .78 ($N = 124$).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Psychopathy Checklist Scores in White and Black Inmates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>White Inmates</th>
<th>Black Inmates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>25.74</td>
<td>28.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>26.50</td>
<td>28.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard deviation</td>
<td>6.85</td>
<td>5.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skewness</td>
<td>-3.06</td>
<td>-6.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurtosis</td>
<td>-4.50</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>40.50</td>
<td>38.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$N$</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Scores consist of averaged ratings, that is, the mean of interviewer and observer Psychopathy Checklist ratings.

The reliability of ratings for White subjects was similar to, although lower than, values reported by Hare (1980) ($r$ range: .89-.92). A test of the difference between the correlations for White and Black subjects was nonsignificant ($z = 1.905$, $n$s.

Distribution. In accord with the informal recommendations of Robert Hare (personal communication, March, 1983), Black and White subjects were classified into three groups on the basis of PCL scores: psychopaths, with scores of 31.5 or greater; nonpsychopaths, with scores of 20 or below; and "middle" subjects, with scores falling between 20 and 31.5. For Whites, 23.7% were diagnosed as psychopaths, 21.6% as nonpsychopaths, and 54.7% as middle subjects. Corresponding percentages for Black subjects were 36.3%, 8.9%, and 54.8%. A chi-square test confirmed a significant association between group membership and race, $x^2(2, N = 256) = 12.14, p < .01$. This apparent difference in distribution of PCL scores is discussed later.

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for PCL ratings for White and Black subjects. A one-way analysis of variance (ANCOVA) with race as the between-groups factor was computed to test for a mean difference in PCL ratings for Blacks and Whites. Preliminary analyses revealed significant higher psychopathy ratings than did White inmates, $F(1, 352) = 10.00, p < .01$.

Internal structure. Alpha coefficients were computed for independent ratings by interviewers and observers as noted previously, and ranged from .80 to .84 for White subjects and from .76 to .82 for Black subjects. The alpha coefficients based on averaged scores for each item (across raters) were .86 and .81 for White and Black subjects, respectively. Thus, the internal consistency

1 Between-groups analyses (psychopaths vs. control) for all dependent measures produced similar results and are available upon request.

2 One researcher expressed concern that early drug abuse may "contribute more variance to the PCL scores of Black than White inmates. An item in the 22-item PCL is directly relevant to this issue: "Drug or alcohol abuse not direct cause of antisocial behavior. Subjects earn a score of 2 if the "injury of deviant behavior is not preceded by or a clear result of, alcohol/drug abuse." (p. 15, Hare & Frizzelle, 1980). The percentage of Black and White inmates earning a score of 2 were .51.6% and .39.7%, respectively. Thus, relative to Whites, fewer Black subjects displayed drug use substance abuse before the onset of deviant behavior.
Table 2
Psychopathy Checklist Corrected Item-to-Total Correlations
for Whites and Blacks and a Test for the Difference
Between Independent Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Whites (n = 230)</th>
<th>Blacks (n = 123)</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Glibness/superficial charm</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Previous diagnosis as psychopath</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>2.84*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Egocentric/drug-ridden sense of self-control</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Predispositional boredom/low frustration tolerance</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pathological lying and deception</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>2.12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Conning/lack of sincerity</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Lack of remorse or guilt</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Lack of affect and emotional depth</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Callousness/lack of empathy</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Paranoid life-style</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Short-tempered/poor behavioral control</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Promiscuous sexual relations</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Early behavior problems</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Lack of realistic long-term plans</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Impulsivity</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Irresponsible behavior as parent</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Frequent marital relationships</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Jealousy/delinquency</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Poor probation or parole</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Failure to accept responsibility for own actions</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Many types of offenses</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Drug or alcohol abuse not direct cause of antisocial behavior</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

* Most of the subjects in the six samples examined by Harpur et al. (1988) were White and Sample 2 consisted of the White subjects in the present study.

** One reviewer noted that the lower congruence may be due to the smaller sample size for Blacks. To address this potential problem, the two-factor solution for Whites was recomputed on a randomly selected subsample of 124 Whites (matching the sample size of the Black subjects) and the congruence coefficients were recomputed. For Factor 1, the congruence coefficient was .64; for Factor 2, the congruence coefficient was .54. The congruence coefficient for Whites' Factor 1 and Blacks' Factor 2 was .52, while the congruence coefficient for Whites' Factor 2 and Blacks' Factor 1 was .02. This appears that different sample sizes did not affect the magnitude of the congruence coefficients.

Harpur et al. (1988) reported a robust two-factor structure for the PCL. Factor 1 was labeled "selfish, callous, and remorseless use of others," and Factor 2 was labeled "chronically unstable and antisocial lifestyle" (p. 345). Harpur et al. (1988) examined the congruence of factor solutions across six independent samples (including our White subjects) and found fairly high coefficients of congruence for both factors. In addition, cross-factor congruence coefficients (e.g., Sample 1, Factor 1 with Sample 2, Factor 2) were generally low, indicating good differentiation of the factor structure (see Harpur et al., 1988, p. 744). To examine the factor structure of the PCL in our Black subjects, independent two-factor solutions for our White and Black-subjects' PCL data were computed according to the method used by Harpur et al. (1988). Coefficients of congruence between the factor solutions for Blkwa and White subjects were computed to assess similarity of the PCL factor structure in Whites and Blacks.

For Whites' Factor 1 compared with Blacks' Factor 1, the coefficient of congruence (r) was .67; for Whites' Factor 2 compared with Blacks' Factor 2, r was .93. Whereas r, for Whites' and Blacks' Factor 2 compares favorably with values reported by Harpur et al. (1988), r for Factor 1 failed to meet the most strict criterion of .87 suggested by Schneidman and Cantell (1970, cited in Cantell, 1978). In addition, r for White Factor 1 with Blacks' Factor 2 was .59 and r, for Whites' Factor 2 with Blacks' Factor 1 was .05. Although the latter coefficient suggests good differentiation, the other coefficients (.59) is unexpectedly high.

Relation to constructs associated with psychopathy: The relationship between PCL scores and impulsivity, as assessed by two self-report measures, Irritability and Monotony Avoidance (Stekelberg, 1978), was examined correlatively. Both correlations were statistically significant for Whites but, for Blacks, both correlations were lower and nonsignificant (see Table 3). A z-test revealed that the correlations for Blacks and Whites were significantly different only for Impulsivity. Among both White and Black subjects, there were significant associations between psychopathy ratings and Socialization scores. For Whites, the correlation between PCL scores and Socialization was .43, p < .001; the corresponding correlation for Blacks was .27, p < .05. The correlations for Whites versus Blacks were not significantly different.

Relation to other constructs: Correlations between psychopathy and anxiety/neuroticism were nonsignificant for subjects of both races (see Table 3). In addition, there were no significant
correlations between psychopathy and IQ as measured by the SILS. There were no significant differences between Blacks and Whites for any of these correlations. Correlations between PCL scores and the remaining scales from the EPQ and Schal-


tug (1978) measures are also presented in Table 3.

Discussion

The present study indicates that the PCL may be used reli-
ably with Black male inmates. However, it also points to appar-
ent differences between PCL ratings of White and Black sub-
jects: in the distribution of PCL scores, in the factor structure

underlying psychopathy ratings, and in the strength of the asso-
ciation between psychopathy and impulsivity. These differ-
ences will be considered later in the general discussion.

Some other findings of this study merit brief discussion. For

example, the replication of the association between psychopa-
thy and socialization (for both White and Black) provides addi-
tional support for theoretical links between these two con-

structs (Gough, 1966). The significant correlation between the

Psychoticism scale of the EPQ and PCL scores for Whites (but

not for Blacks) also merits further study. Whereas Hare (1962)

reported a small but significant correlation between Psychotic-

ism and PCL scores, Raine (1986) found no significant associa-
tion. Further research is needed to understand the relation

between psychopathy and this construct.

On the other hand, the apparent independence of psychopa-

thy and anxiety fails to support theoretical predictions that

psychopathy is less anxious than nonpsychopaths (Gray, 1985;

Schalling, 1978). This result also has practical significance.

Although Hare and Harpur (1986) asserted that so-called sec-

ondary psychopathy (individuals whose antisocial behaviors are sec-

ondary to underlying emotion conflict) do not receive high

PCL scores (p. 150), subjects with high PCL scores frequently

obtain anxiety scores that would have been considered indica-
tive of secondary psychopathy in past research. Given the em-

pirical differences between high-anxiety and low-anxiety psy-

chopaths (e.g., Sittenau, 1970; Widom, 1976a, 1976b), re-

searchers using the PCL may want to administer anxiety

measures in addition to conducting interviews and lie reviews to

evaluate the effects of self-reported anxiety.

Finally, current results suggest that psychopathy and intelli-
gence are also orthogonal, and this independence has practical

implications as well. Despite the lack of differences between

psychopaths and nonpsychopaths on a variety of performance-

measures (see, for example, S. G. Miller, & C. C. Holm, 1981), behavioral differences between psychopathic and nonpsychopathic off-

enders are still commonly misinterpreted as reflecting general-

ized performance deficits. The apparent independence of PCL

ratings and IQ scores augurs well for the use of the PCL for

selecting subjects for behavioral research.

Study 2

Whereas the previous study focused on the internal structure of

the PCL and its self-report measures, Study 2 examined

group differences in a laboratory situation. In particular, we pre-

sented Black psychopaths and nonpsychopaths with a pas-

sive avoidance learning task that had yielded differences be-

tween White psychopaths and nonpsychopaths (Newman &

Kossen, 1986). The task itself is described in detail elsewhere

(Newman & Kossen, 1986). In brief, it required subjects to

learn when to respond (via a button press) to visual stimuli pre-

sentd on a video monitor and when to inhibit responding.

One condition (reward + punishment) provided rewards for
correct guesses and punishments for incorrect guesses. The other

condition (punishment only) provided punishments for
incorrect responses and incorrect response inhibitions.

Newman and Kossen (1986) argued that the reward + pun-

ishment condition serves to establish an initial set to respond

for reward, which must then be modulated in the light of punish-

ments for inappropriate responding. Newman and Kossen pre-
dicted and observed an excess of responding to S+ stimuli in

White psychopaths compared with nonpsychopaths, which was

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Whites</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>r</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPQ Extraversion</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPQ Psychoticism</td>
<td>-0.34**</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPQ Neuroticism</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPQ Lie</td>
<td>-0.20**</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSP Psychopathic Anx.</td>
<td>-0.28**</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSP Monotony Avoidance</td>
<td>-0.31**</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSP Detachment</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSP Psychic Anxiety</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSP Somatic Anxiety</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSP Marital Tension</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Anxiety Scale</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPI Socialization</td>
<td>-0.43**</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Inquiry</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: EPQ = Eysenck Personality Questionnaire; KSP = Karolinska Scales of Personality; CPI = Californi-

a Psychological Inventory; Z tests the difference between correlations for White and Blacks.

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.
attributed to perseveration of an initial attentional focus on earning reward. No group differences were observed in the punishment only condition. If Black male inmates, anxious with regard to Black psychopaths and nonpsychopaths may be expected to perform differently in the reward + punishment condition. In particular, we expected Black psychopaths to exhibit the same kind of condition-specific passive avoidance deficit observed in White psychopaths.

Method
Subjects. Subjects were 59 Black male inmates recruited using the procedures described in Study 1. Forty-five of the Black subjects were assessed using the original PCL, and 14 subjects were assessed using the revised PCL. All 22-item PCL scores were converted to revised PCL scores by multiplying them by 0.22 for the sake of consistency. This method of scoring purposes is explicitly recommended in the revised PCL manual (Hare, 1985). Following the cutting scores suggested by Hare (1985), 30 subjects with scores of 30 or greater constituted our group of psychopaths and 29 subjects with scores at or below 20 constituted our group of nonpsychopaths.

Procedure. All subjects were initially assessed via interview and the review as described in Study 1. The procedures used in this study, including apparatus and experimental procedures, were identical to those used in the investigation of White subjects reported by Newman and Kosson (1986). In addition, most Black subjects were tested during the same period time as White subjects. All subjects, participation in behavioral testing usually occurred several weeks following the initial assessment, and the passive avoidance task was always the first behavioral task administered.

Complete procedural details concerning this task can be found in Newman and Kosson (1986). Briefly, subjects were told the number would appear on a computer screen and that some of the numbers were good and some were bad. Subjects were encouraged to earn as much money as possible by pressing a key when a good number, and to stop pressing (by pressing a button) when and not to respond. In addition, subjects were informed of the reinforcement contingencies in each of two conditions: (a) the reward + punishment condition, correct responses were followed by reward; and incorrect responses were punished: the punishment only condition, punished incorrect responses and incorrect inhibitions; Reward consisted of winning 10 cents and punishment consisted of losing 10 cents. Each subject was tested in one condition only.

There were four 5's ("good numbers") and four 6's ("bad numbers"). The eight different stimulus numbers made up a block and were presented in random order within each block. Each subject received 10 presentations of each stimulus, or 60 trials in all. Each presentation of a stimulus number lasted for 3 s or until a response was made; the interval between stimuli lasted 3 s. Two different sets of stimulus numbers were used, and the presentation and pacing of stimuli were controlled by an Apple II+ computer.

Results
Analyses paralleled those employed by Newman and Kosson (1986). Data for the first 8 trials were not analyzed because subjects could not yet have known to which stimulus to respond. Data from the remaining 72 trials were analyzed using a 2 (Group × Error Condition) x 2 (Type of Error) ANOVA. Although stimulus was used as a covariate in the analysis reported for White subjects (Newman and Kosson, 1986), stimulus was not used in the present analysis because it was unrelated to performance. The type of error factor was treated as a repeated measure and consisted of commission errors (false alarm) and omission errors (missed).

This analysis yielded main effects for condition, F(1, 55) = 7.76, p < .01, and type of error, F(1, 55) = 24.40, p < .0001. These effects parallel those obtained with Whites and indicate greater learning in the punishment only condition and a response bias across groups toward more inappropriate responses (false alarms) than inappropriate inhibitions (misses). There were no other significant main effects or interactions, although the Group × Type of Error interaction approached significance, F(1, 55) = 3.20, p = .08. To test the hypothesis that Black psychopaths, like White psychopaths, would perform more poorly than nonpsychopaths in the reward + punishment condition but not in the punishment condition, planned comparisons were conducted (see Newman & Kosson, 1986). Unlike the analysis for passive avoidance errors reported for White subjects, the difference between Black psychopaths and controls in the reward + punishment condition failed to reach statistical significance, F(1, 55) = 1.76, p = .00. Similar to the results for Whites, there were no differences in passive avoidance errors in the punishment condition or in omission errors in either condition. Cell means for the two dependent measures, false alarms and misses, are presented in Table 4, along with the unadjusted means for White subjects included in the Newman and Kosson (1986) report.

To examine the effect of race on passive avoidance learning, we conducted an additional analysis in which we combined the data for Whites (previously published in Newman & Kosson, 1986) and Blacks and repeated the ANOVA using race as an additional factor. There were no significant main effects or interactions involving race. Given the absence of significant race effects, we recomputed the planned comparisons testing the difference between psychopaths and controls in the reward + punishment condition collapsing across race. The contrast for false alarms was statistically significant, t(256) = 2.56, p < .02, while the contrast for misses was nonsignificant, t(256) = 1.03. Neither comparison for the punishment only condition was significant.

Discussion
The trend toward a passive avoidance deficit only in condition reward + punishment and the absence of Group × Race interactions suggests that Black inmates receiving psychopathy diagnosis have difficulty learning to inhibit punished responses when those same behaviors are associated with reward. To a limited degree, they corroborate an important learning deficit that has frequently been reported for White psychopaths and suggest a possible link between passive avoidance learning and psychopathy in Black male inmates.

Study 3
In Study 3, we investigated the extent of criminal behavior in White and Black male inmates subgrouped by psychopathy diagnosis. Researchers have suggested that psychopaths commit both a larger number and a wider variety of crimes than

*Details of the analysis combining White's and Black's data are available upon request. This analysis revealed significant effects for condition (p < .001) and Group × Type of Error interaction (p < .05); the Group × Condition × Type of Error interaction approached significance (p < .05).
Table 4  
Passive Aggression Learning in Whites and Blacks by Group and Condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Whites</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Psychopaths</td>
<td>Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fines</td>
<td>8.27</td>
<td>6.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punishment only</td>
<td>15.60</td>
<td>7.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Means for Whites are derived from Newman and Kosson (1966) but are not covariate adjusted for individual offenses. Means for Blacks are derived from police reports. All analyses were conducted using the Proc GLM procedure in SAS. For purposes of the present study, we used a two-way mixed model with group (White vs. Black) and condition (Control vs. Psychopaths) as factors. All tests were two-tailed. The significance level was set at p < 0.05.  

Results

To examine the number of charges within the composite cate-
correlations of violent and non-violent offenses, a 2 x 2 (Race multivariate ANOVA (MANOVA) was conducted based on the table derived categories. This MANOVA revealed significant main effects for group, F(2, 291) = 18.01, p < 0.001, and race, F(2, 295) = 4.58, p < 0.05. The Group x Race interaction proved nonsignificant, F(2, 295) = 1.78. (Univariate F tests re-
vealed that psychopaths were charged with more violent of-
ences, F(1, 296) = 13.07, p < 0.001, and more non-violent of-
ences, F(1, 296) = 24.07, p < 0.001, than nonpsychopaths, and
that Black inmates were charged with more violent offenses
than White inmates, F(1, 296) = 9.18, p < 0.05. Group means are
presented in Table 5.  

Next, we examined the number of different offense cate-
correlations in which subjects were charged with committing crimes four severity measures broken down by violent and nonviol-
cent categories of offenses. A 2 x 2 (Race x MANOVA

Method

Subjects: Subjects were 481 male inmates (269 Whites and 116
Blacks) at the same prison, with the preceding studies were con-
ducted. This analysis includes all inmates interviewed following our
adoption of Hare's 20-item PCL and revised rating manual (Hare, 1985c). To avoid overlap between our measure of selecting subjects and our dependent measures, scores on Item 20, criminal versatility, were subtracted from each subject's PCL total, and PCL scores were pro-
rated to 20 items based on the other 19 items (see Hare & McPherson, 1984). Those with PCL scores of 10 or greater were considered psychopaths.

Procedure: All subjects in this study were assessed via an interview and file review as described in Study 1; however, psychopathy ratings were made using the revised PCL (Hare, 1985). Interviews with the second author and three advanced graduate students. With our imple-
mentation of the 20-item revised PCL (Hare, 1968), the number of charges in several offense categories was tabulated during review of the inmates' social service files. For purposes of the present study, we coded specific offenses, assaults, murders, sexual assaults, and kid-
napping as violent offenses. Passive drug offenses, burglary/theft, weapons charges, negligence, frauds, escapes, abortions, obstruction of justice, treason, and miscellaneous minor offenses were coded as non-
violent offenses. Thus, we tabulated the total number of charges for violent and nonviolent crimes. Similar criminal versatility indexes for the number of different types of violent and nonviolent charges were also computed.
revealed main effects for both group, F(2, 296) = 20.26, p < .001, and race, F(2, 296) = 7.88, p < .001, and no evidence for a Group × Race interaction, F(2, 296) = 1.96, ns. Univariate ANOVAs revealed that Blacks were charged with more different types of violent crimes than Whites and that psychopaths were charged with a greater number of different violent and nonviolent crimes than nonpsychopaths. Group means are presented in Table 5.

To ensure that the aforementioned differences were not a function of psychopaths' being older than nonpsychopaths, we examined the ages of Black and White subjects. The 2 (Group) × 2 (Race) ANOVA failed to yield any significant main effects or interactions. The average ages of Black and White psychopaths who participated in this study were 27.4 and 26.5 years, respectively, compared with 36.5 and 37.6 years for Black and White nonpsychopaths, respectively. In view of the fact that Hare and Hutton (1983) reported that their psychopathic subjects spent significantly fewer months in prison than nonpsychopaths, it is unlikely that the more prolific criminal activity of psychopaths in this study reflects differences in age or amount of time out of prison.

Discussion

For both composite indices of criminal offenses (frequency and severity), between-groups analyses revealed that psychopaths were charged with more offenses of both types, violent and nonviolent, compared with nonpsychopaths. In addition, Black subjects were charged with more violent offenses than White subjects. The results of this study generally support the findings of Hare and McPherson (1984) dispute the fact that there were substantial differences between the studies themselves.

The finding that Black offenders were charged with more violent offenses than White offenders merits discussion. More detailed analyses of race differences for the various types of violent crimes were occluded in the composite indices revealed that Black offenders were charged with more robberies than White offenders, F(1, 295) = 45.36, p < .001. Whereas 15% of the White nonpsychopaths and 18% of White psychopaths were charged with robberies, 40% of the Black nonpsychopaths and 67% of the Black psychopaths were implicated with robberies. Thus, the greater number of violent charges for Black subjects appears related to the fact that Black offenders in our sample were charged with proportionately more robberies. Given that others have reported that Blacks commit more robberies than Whites (e.g., Haber, 1980), this appears to be a finding worthy of further investigation.

General Discussion

It is not possible after three studies to resolve the question of the similarities and differences between the psychopath concept in White and Black male inmates. Taken together, these studies indicate that psychopathy, as measured by the PCL, does exist in Black male inmates. Indeed, the overall pattern of results contains more parallels than disparities. Ratings of Black subjects, like those of White subjects, proved reliable across raters. Indices of interrater consistency (alpha coefficients and interclass-to-total correlations) pointed to generally acceptable internal consistency in ratings of Black inmates. Moreover, the pattern of significant correlations between psychopathy and socialization, but not with anxiety or intelligence replicates that found for White inmates. Also the results for Study 2 suggest that Black psychopaths may manifest passive avoidance deficits similar to White psychopaths. Finally, Black subjects identified as psychopaths by the PCL, like White psychopaths, received an excess number of criminal charges for both violent and nonviolent offenses categories, and were charged with a larger number of different types of offenses than were nonpsychopaths.

On the other hand, Study 1 also revealed important differences in the expression of psychopathy among White and Black inmates. First, there were separate differences in the distribution of psychopathy in Whites and Blacks. Second, psychopathy ratings for Black subjects failed to correlate with self-report measures of impulsivity (r = .13 for Impulsiveness; r = .03 for Neuroticism). Finally, there was little evidence that the PCL items identified by Hare et al. (1988) in loading on Factor 1 and corresponding to the personality core had a utility psychopathology associated to the same way in Black offenders as in White offenders. Furthermore, the items identified by Hare et al. (1988) as loading on Factor 2 in nonclinical life-style were not associated with Factor 2 in Black subjects.

The differences in distribution of psychopathic and nonpsychopathic subjects reported in Study 1 may reflect differences in the PCL (or in the way it was used) or real differences in the
distribution of psychopathy among White and Black inmates (see Kosson, Nichols, & Newman, 1985). Given that our PCL ratings were made by Whites only, it is especially difficult to evaluate these alternatives. For example, Blacks' higher PCL scores may simply reflect the reduced familiarity of White raters with Black culture. Consequently, researchers may wish to use different cutoffs for non-White populations rather than interpret differences in the distribution of PCL scores as differences in the incidence of psychopathy in various racial groups. Indeed, the cutoffs recommended by Hare have not been empirically validated. Only development of alternative measures of psychopathy will permit convergent validation of estimates of the prevalence of psychopathy in different groups.

Nevertheless, differences in the distribution of PCL ratings appear sufficiently large to place different proportions of Blacks and Whites in the subject groups of researchers who fail to include race as a factor in their designs. That is, unless researchers who use both Black and White subjects address race explicitly, their studies are likely to be confounded by any main effects associated with race.

The observed differences in the relation of psychopathy ratings to measures of impulsivity must also be interpreted cautiously. Clearly, these differences arise against the assumption that psychopathy manifests itself in exactly the same way in White and Black male inmates. However, there are two limitations inherent in these data. First, only self-report measures of impulsivity were administered. Whether weaker correlations among Blacks would also be observed with other measures is uncertain. Second, all the raters in these studies were White. Indeed, our use of White raters limits the generalizability of all findings reported to situations in which White researchers rate psychopathy in White and Black inmate populations.

The lack of congruence between ratings of Blacks and Whites for Factor 1 of the PCL ("selfish, callous, and remorseless use of others") raises questions about the appropriateness of using the PCL with Blacks. Although Harpur et al. (1988) reported that both factors in their two-factor model of PCL scores are necessary for the diagnosis of psychopathy, they emphasized that one factor (Factor 1) "describes a constellation of personality traits that many clinicians consider to be at the core of psychopathy" (p. 745, Harpur et al., 1988). Given that Factor 1 congruence coefficients between our sample of White subjects and five mostly White samples (as reported by Harpur et al., 1988) were relatively high, the lower congruence between our White and Blacks subjects for Factor 1 likely resulted from ratings of the Black subjects. In addition, the unexpected degree of congruence between Whites' Factor 1 and Blacks' Factor 2 (r = .59) suggests that the item tapping antisocial life-style in the Blacks loaded on both PCL factors as delineated in White subjects, thus providing further evidence that the two-factor structure of the PCL is valid, at least among Whites and Blacks.

As noted earlier, the only component of the psychopathic personality examination systematically was impulsivity. The widespread use of self-reports of impulsivity among Black subjects might therefore be construed as a possible determinant of the low congruence for Factor 1. However, Harpur et al. (1988), in their study of PCL items tapping impulsivity and boredom proneness cluster with their Factor 2 ("Chronically unstable and antisocial life-style"). Thus, the possibility of differences in the relation of self-reported impulsivity to psychopathy does not neatly explain the poorer congruence of Factor 1 in Black subjects.

With regard to the low congruence for Factor 1 obtained in Study I, it is worth bearing in mind that PCL items are simply signs of the putative components of psychopathy. The signs of personality traits such as insincerity, lack of empathy, and superficial charm (Factor 1) may require more inferences than those reflecting a parasitic life-style, boredom proneness, and lack of long-term plans (Factor 2). Along these lines, the lower congruence for Factor 1 in Blacks may reflect that the White interviewers were less able to make these inferences regarding Black subjects, that the same personality traits have different manifestations or signs in Black than in White subjects, or both.

One additional possibility must be considered. Personality factors might have played a smaller role in the PCL scores assigned to Black subjects compared with White subjects because of the relatively greater importance of social factors contributing to PCL scores in Blacks. To the extent that the same social factors contributing to the overrepresentation of Blacks in prisons (Farrington, 1987) influence PCL scores, such scores will tend to reflect these social factors as opposed to individual differences related to psychopathy. The finding that Factor 2 (antisocial life-style) factor in the Blacks was associated both with Whites' Factor 1 (r = .93) and Whites' Factor 1 (r = .59) also suggests that personality factors may play a less important role in life-style societal factors in the use of the PCL with Blacks.

Additional research with independent samples in which potential rater bias is reduced (e.g., using Black interviewers) is necessary to further evaluate the robustness of the factor structure reported by Harpur et al. (1988), and its generalizability to non-White groups. Nevertheless, our findings raise the possibility that the personality dynamics of White and Black psychopaths may also be different.

The premise of these studies—that we cannot presume that our constructs generalize across race—appears supported by the data. Pending further research on the validity of the psychopathy construct in non-White, we strongly advise researchers to include race as a factor in all analyses to allow for the possibility of identifying differences between White and non-White subjects and to begin to develop a research literature that will provide more sensitive answers regarding the validity of the psychopathy construct in non-White populations.

References


