

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

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Title: Assessing Prisoner Identity and Redefining Victimless Crimes: An Analysis of Prisoners at Boonville Corrections Center

The purpose of this research is to better understand the identities of victimless criminals and drug dealers in order to help reduce rates of recidivism. Eight interviews were conducted at Boonville Corrections Center in Boonville, Missouri. Questions regarding the home environments and personal attributions for responsibility were asked. A Locus of Control Scale was used to assess the extent to which the inmates attribute responsibility externally or internally. It was found that the inmates told stories of unstructured and volatile living environments which made personal success difficult, yet they received scores on the scale indicating they feel personally responsible for being in prison. These findings lead the researcher to see patterns that indicated the inmates have conflicted attributions for responsibility considering the environments they come from. These conflicts then, lead to the concept of the *divergent identity* within which inmates' identities diverge and become more unstable. In order to decrease the likelihood of their identities diverging further and likelihood that the inmates will recidivate, prison policy and programs should be better tailored to creating a balance in the ways the inmates are labeled and how they view themselves and their environments.