Prisons
HOMOSEXUAL AND DRUG BEHAVIOR IN PRISON: 
A TEST OF THE FUNCTIONAL 
AND IMPORTATION MODELS OF THE INMATE SYSTEM*

RONALD L. AKERS  
Florida State University  
NORMAN S. HAYNER and WERNER GRUNINGER  
University of Washington

Which of the two major models of the inmate system, the importation or the functional, better accounts for two forms of in-prison behavior of inmates, drug use and homosexual behavior, is tested in a sample of inmates from seven U.S. prisons. The prisons were classified into three types along a custody-treatment continuum. The reported levels of these two kinds of behavior in the different types of prisons are examined against their relationship to seven inmate background characteristics. The analysis reveals that the amount of drug and homosexual behavior among inmates is more a function of the type of prison which holds them than the social characteristics which they bring with them from the outside.

Our objective in this analysis is to present findings from a comparative study of prison organization in an attempt to account for differential levels of homosexual and drug behavior among prison inmates. There are, of course, many practical and theoretical issues in the study of drugs and homosexuality as forms of deviant behavior in society, whether they occur within or outside of correctional institutions. However, our attention to drug use and homosexual behavior here is part of the general concern with describing and explaining the inmate social system and culture which has been a major focus of sociological research and theory on correctional organizations at least since the pioneering work of Clemmer (1938) and others (see Hayner and Ash, 1939, 1940; Reimer, 1937; and Weinberg, 1942).

The inmate code, anti-staff hostility, inmate social roles, leadership structure, socialization (prisonization) into the system, and other aspects of the inmate system have been investigated. (See the various topics discussed in Cloward, et al., 1960; Cressey, 1961; Hazelrigg, 1969; Carter et al., 1972). The attempts to explain the existence and anti-conventional orientation of the inmate system revolve around two theoretical models. The first of these is a functional explanation, which views the inmate culture as a collective adaptation to the prison environment, more specifically the deprivations or "pains" and "degradation" of imprisonment, and also as serving control functions for the administration (Sykes, 1958; Sykes and Messinger, 1960; Cloward, 1960). The other is a diffusionist or importation model, which sees the nature of the inmate system as reflective primarily of

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the criminal roles played and values acquired by inmates on the outside and brought into the institution with them (Irwin and Cressey, 1962; Irwin, 1970), and, by extension, other pre-prison characteristics and experiences of the inmates.

Studies of prison homosexuality have fairly closely reflected the general interest in the whole inmate system; the emphasis has been on homosexual roles and relationships as integral to inmate social organization, and both the functional (Sykes, 1958; Kirkham, 1971) and importation (Ward and Kassebaum, 1965; Giallombardo, 1966; Gagnon and Simon, 1972) models have been invoked in the analysis of in-prison homosexual behavior. Drug use within prisons has not yet received the same attention. In the United States, correctional administrators, legislators, prosecutors, and others are becoming increasingly concerned about drugs in the prisons and make public statements about the extent of the problem. However, the phenomenon of significant amounts of drug taking by prisoners in the United States is recent enough that, to our knowledge, no systematic sociological research on it has yet been reported. Irwin (1970) does make reference to drug taking in the context of discussing the in-prison behavior of the "dope fiend" and the "head," and since these are role types defined by pre-prison behavior, it is clear that he sees their drug use as simply an extension of behavior patterns established before imprisonment. However, drug use in prison can also be interpreted as one functional adaptation to the prison environment.

The contrast between the functional and importation models can be misleading, if it is taken to mean that the two are necessarily mutually exclusive, for prior experience and the prison situation may interact to produce the norms and behavior of the inmates. The existence of collective solutions in the form of an inmate culture and social structure may be explained by the need to solve common problems of adjusting to imprisonment, but the content of those solutions may be reflective of behavior patterns and values imported from the larger society (Thomas, 1970). While recognizing this interaction, we start with the hypothesis, consistent with the functional model, that the amount of drug and homosexual behavior among inmates is a function of the type of prison in which they are located. By type of prison we refer to the kind of total organizational atmosphere or milieu confronting the inmates provided by the style of architecture, administrative goals, orientation of the staff, visiting policies, rehabilitation programs, and other aspects of the prison organization. At one extreme, the type of prison climate facing the inmate is repressive, punitive, and degrading. At the other, this atmosphere is nonpunitive, open, and imbued with humanitarian concern for the welfare of the prisoners. A given prison can be typed by placement on the hypothetical continuum running between these two polar types of custodial and treatment institutions. We assume that the more custodial type of institution presents a more deprivational environment and greater problems of adjustment to inmates than does the more treatment-oriented institution.

**Type of Prison Organization:**

**The Custody-Treatment Continuum**

The data presented here are from a larger study of prison organization and
the inmate system in 25 prisons in five different countries—the United States, Mexico, Germany, Great Britain, and Spain. In selecting the prisons, the effort was made to include a variety of institutions, maximum security penitentiaries, reformatories, and modern treatment institutions to allow for both cross-national and within country comparisons. Although the actual classification procedure (described below) did not come until later, prisons were selected which, on the basis of initial information and observation, could be tentatively characterized as lying at various points on the custody-treatment continuum. This report presents analysis of data from the seven United States prisons only. One of these institutions is located on the West Coast, one in the Southeast, one in the Southwest, one in the West, two in the South, and one in the Northcentral section of the United States.

The custody-treatment continuum in prison organization and orientation and the conflict between custodial and treatment goals are widely discussed in the literature. However, the meaning of these terms have not been precisely delineated, and there are few guidelines to their empirical measurement in the literature.1

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1 The words “custody” and “treatment” are in fact somewhat misleading because treatment in the sense of engaging in strategies which will change behavior is not strictly the polar opposite of custody. The difference seems to be one of degree of humane attention to the rights and dignity of the individual. But since these terms are recognized in the literature, we shall continue to use custody and treatment to denote the two ends of the continuum. However, “repressive-open,” “inhumane-humane,” and other pairs of terms would be suitable and perhaps more descriptive synonyms to indicate the differences we have in mind. The lack of agreed upon procedures for placing prisons on this continuum results partly from the fact that most studies of correctional organizations are case studies of single institutions, and thus there is no opportunity to array a number of institutions in these studies. In few instances where more than one institution is included and the institutions are characterized as custody, treatment, or intermediate between the two, no detailed information is given on the basis for classification (see, Berk, 1966; Street, et al., 1966). Moss (1968) does give sufficient detail on his measures of “social climate,” but they are only indirectly applicable to the custody-treatment continuum.
Prison Behavior

maximum possible score of 9 indicating the most severely custodial prison, and a maximum of 63 indicating the most treatment-oriented institution). For purposes of analysis, the possible range of scores was trichotomized as custody type (a score of 29 or less), intermediate type (scores from 30 to 44), and treatment type (score of 45 or more). The actual scores split into three fairly discontinuous groups, with the intermediate prison scoring closer to the custodial than to the treatment prisons, as follows:

Treatment—three prisons scoring 50, 52, and 57.
Intermediate—one prison with a score of 30.
Custodial—three prisons scoring 16, 18, and 21.

MEASURES OF LEVELS OF HOMOSEXUAL AND DRUG BEHAVIOR

In addition to the interviews with prison administrators, questionnaires were administered to a sample of inmates from each institution. The questionnaires were given under conditions designed to maximize confidentiality and elicit cooperation. The inmates completed the questionnaires in groups of about 20 in a classroom or other room set aside specifically for the purpose. Only the investigator and his inmate assistants were present in the room during the time the questionnaire was being taken. No member of the prison staff was in the room. Few questionnaires were rejected as too incomplete to be used, and for the most part the per-item non-response rate is low. However, the non-response to a few questions, including the five of most interest in this paper, is fairly high.

some modification occurred, however, is attested to by the fact that we achieved an eight percent rather than the planned ten percent sample of the total number of inmates in all prisons.

The assistance of a number of prisoners whom the staff felt were "respected" by other inmates was obtained (after private sessions in which the questionnaire and purpose of the research was explained and these prisoners answered the questionnaire themselves) in administering the questionnaire and assuring the inmates selected that there was no way in which their answers could be seen by prison staff or other inmates or individually identified by anyone.

Our findings and conclusions must be read with this non-response rate in mind. There is a tendency for the respondents in the custodially oriented institutions to fail to respond more than the respondents in the treatment oriented institutions. But it is not clear in which direction this would produce systematic bias. If we assume that every failure to respond means that the respondent has knowledge of no one using drugs or engaging in homosexual behavior (and assign "no responses" to the "none" category), then the associations between type of institution and these two variables would be considerably weakened. If we assume, on the other hand, that failure to respond represents an effort to keep from "ratting" (however anonymously) on known users
The questionnaire covered several aspects of the inmate culture and social system, personal and criminal characteristics of the respondent, participation in prison programs, and other behavior and attitudes of the inmates, including questions on homosexual and drug behavior. Data on the amount of homosexual involvement were obtained from responses to the question, "How many inmates do you know for sure have participated in homosexual relations in this institution at least once in the past year?" The same question was asked separately for: drugs (no kind specified), marihuana, heroin, or drugs other than marihuana or heroin. The inmate responded by writing in whatever number he was sure had been involved in homosexuality or drugs (including himself and homosexual participants and assign the "no responses" to the "1-5" or "6 or more" categories then the relationships reported would be considerably strengthened. We have, therefore, done neither and simply report the non-responses to allow the reader to make his own judgments about how they may or may not bias the results.

We did not ask the inmate to report his own drug use or homosexual behavior. We felt that because admission to this kind of behavior would place the inmate in extreme jeopardy should his identity be discovered, he would be so threatened that, in spite of all efforts to assure confidentiality, we would have an extremely low response rate and largely invalid answers. This study still must contend, however, with the same difficulty of studies which use self-report as the behavioral measure; that is, we are dealing with reported behavior, not behavior which we have directly observed. The near impossibility of an outsider adequately observing the behavior in question, of course, leads to this reported approximation to the actual behavior. In the text we often call attention to this by referring to "reported" behavior, but even where the reference is simply to behavior, we do not lose sight of the fact that it is reported behavior.

if applicable). For purposes of analysis, the responses were categorized as none, 1 to 5, and 6 or more. This procedure obviously does not allow for measuring or reliably estimating the absolute proportion of inmates participating in homosexual acts or using drugs. However, we believe that by emphasizing that we wanted to know the number about whose involvement the inmate had certain knowledge, thus avoiding reports based on vague feelings and uncertain or hearsay knowledge, we have a more valid measure of relative level of involvement in different institutions than we would if inmates or staff were asked to offer general estimates of percentages of the total population engaging in drug and homosexual behavior.

Our measure may be affected by the total number of inmates in the given institution, however, for the larger the size of the inmate population, the greater the chance that more drug users and homosexual participants will be known to the respondent. Thus, size of the prison may be a contaminating intervening variable in the relationship between either of these two dependent

6 The percentage of inmates participating in homosexual relations has been estimated in other studies on the basis of official reports, estimates given by staff members, or estimates given by inmates (Clemmer, 1938; Ward and Kassebaum, 1965; Giallombardo, 1966, Kassebaum, Ward, and Wilner, 1971). This procedure involves problems of counting as equal the estimates of those who really have knowledge and those who have none, differential acquaintance with and ability in thinking in terms of percentages, and other biases. Thus, although the questionnaire administered in prisons in countries other than the United States contained an item asking the respondent to estimate the percentage of inmates engaged in homosexual behavior, we changed the items on the questionnaire administered in the U.S.
variables and any independent variable. This appears to be no problem in this instance, however, because there is only a small and non-significant relationship between prison size and the number of reported drug users (Gamma = .096) and a slightly negative association between prison size and reported homosexuality (Gamma = -.06).

**Type of Prison and Differential Levels of Homosexual and Drug Behavior**

Generally, it appears that the number of inmates taking part in homosexual behavior, which traditionally has been considered a major behavioral problem by prison authorities, has now been surpassed by the number of drug users. Of those responding in all seven prisons, 33.5 percent know more than five inmates who have been practicing homosexual acts in the institutions, whereas 43.6 percent are certain of more than five inmates who are drug users. In only one prison is the number of homosexual participants reported to be greater than the number of drug users. But these general figures conceal considerable variation among the prisons. For instance, in one place 80 percent of the respondents report at least six inmates engaging in homosexual behavior while only 12 percent report knowing this many in another institution. In one prison, no one admits knowing six or more heroin users (and only five percent know even one); but in another, 44 percent report this number of heroin takers.

The data make it clear, however, that these are not random variations. There is something about the prison which produces both homosexual and drug behavior. Without exception, those with high levels of reported drug use also experience high levels of homosexual behavior; and prisons with low levels of drug use also have low levels of reported homosexual behavior. The data support the hypothesis that these differences in both drug and homosexual behavior are accounted for by differences in the type of prison in which the inmates are incarcerated. Not only is the reported number of drug users and homosexual participants associated with the overall type of prison, but both are related to the ratings given the institutions on each of the nine separate dimensions, in the expected direction.

Table 1 shows that the more custodial the institution, the higher the level of reported homosexual behavior. More than half the inmate respondents in the treatment institutions report that they know no one for sure who has participated in homosexual relations. At the other extreme, more than half of the inmates in the custodial prisons report certain knowledge of six or more who have engaged in homosexual relations in the prison. Drug use of all kinds also increases from treatment to custodial prisons. The strongest association is that between type of prison and use of drugs other than marihuana or heroin (Table 2); these drugs are used more often in the custodial than in the intermediate prison, which in turn has more than the treatment institutions. However, as shown in Table 3, the relationships between prison type and overall drug use, marihuana use, and heroin use are slightly curvilinear; for the intermediate prison has more users of these drugs than do the custodial prisons. Thus, the consistent difference in drug use by inmates is in the low level of use in treatment institutions on the one hand, and the much higher level of use in intermediate and custodial prisons on the other hand.
TABLE 1
LEVEL OF HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIOR IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF PRISONS IN THE UNITED STATES

(Percentage distribution of responses to "How many inmates do you know for sure have participated in homosexual relations in this institution at least once in the past year?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Prison</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>1-5</th>
<th>6 or more</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>No response N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3 prisons)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1 prison)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custodial</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3 prisons)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All prisons</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gamma = .40, P < .01; X² = 65.52, df = 4, p < .01

The findings, then, do support the functional model. In all cases, the relationship between type of prison and reported level of homosexual behavior, marihuana use, heroin use, and other drugs is in the expected direction and statistically significant. Those institutions which present the inmate with a more punitive, repressive, and harsh environment have relatively more inmates using drugs and participating in homosexual liaisons than those institutions which are more open, humane, and treatment-oriented.

INMATE CHARACTERISTICS AND LEVELS OF DRUG AND HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIOR

Drug and homosexual behavior are not solely a function of prison life, of course. Indeed, while it can be assumed that there will be sexual behavior of some sort in any case, using drugs probably would not occur to the in-

TABLE 2
LEVELS OF USE OF DRUGS OTHER THAN MARIHUANA ORHEROIN, IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF PRISONS IN THE UNITED STATES

(Percentage distribution of responses to "How many inmates do you know for sure have used other drugs [other than marihuana or heroin] in this institution at least once in the past year?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Prison</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>1-5</th>
<th>6 or more</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>No Response N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3 prisons)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1 prison)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custodial</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3 prisons)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All prisons</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gamma = .46, P < .01; X² = 55.31, df = 4, p < .01
TABLE 3

PERCENTAGES OF INMATES REPORTING HIGH LEVELS OF VARIOUS TYPES
OF DRUG USE IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF PRISONS IN THE UNITED STATES

(Percentages reporting knowing for sure 6 or more inmates who have used)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Prison</th>
<th>Drugs (any type)</th>
<th>Total N</th>
<th>Marijuana Total N</th>
<th>Heroin Total N</th>
<th>Other Drugs Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment (3 prisons)</td>
<td>27.5 (200)</td>
<td>8.9 (179)</td>
<td>11.7 (180)</td>
<td>13.4 (169)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate (1 prison)</td>
<td>60.8 (97)</td>
<td>30.3 (95)</td>
<td>35.2 (88)</td>
<td>47.8 (90)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custodial (3 prisons)</td>
<td>54.6 (141)</td>
<td>34.7 (121)</td>
<td>26.3 (118)</td>
<td>53.5 (129)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gamma = .35
P < .01

mates as a way of adjusting to life inside if it were unknown in the larger society. The fact that there has been an increase in drug use within the walls during a period of time that has seen illicit drug taking become more widespread in American society as a whole indicates that inmate behavior reflects changes in the larger society. The fact that homosexuality seems more frequent in female than in male prisons (Ward and Kasebaum, 1965) indicates that in-prison adjustment may reflect differences in sex roles in the outside community. More specifically, some inmate types, such as the “queen,” are homosexual prior to and after imprisonment (Sykes, 1958; Kirs ham, 1971); and the kind of orientation to sex in prison populations may be an extension of the lower educational and social class from which most inmates come (Gagnon and Simon, 1972). There are inmates whose drug taking in the prison is just a continuation of habits developed prior to incarceration (Irwin, 1970). It may be, then, that the findings in this study are explained more readily by an importation hypothesis that the variations in drug use and homosexuality result from differential selection of inmates into the prisons; that the types of inmates who are more likely to use drugs or commit homosexual acts are more likely to be incarcerated in custodial and intermediate prisons than in treatment institutions.

We do not have direct measures of predisposition to drug use or homosexual behavior, but we do have measures of a number of background characteristics. Because we did not ask the respondent to report his own behavior, we are uninterested in the relationship between his characteristics and the number of drug users and participants in homosexual behavior known to him. (And our data show that they are, in fact, unrelated.) The meaningful relationship is that between the general distribution of characteristics among the inmate population and the level of reported homosexual and drug behavior. Therefore, we devised aggregate measures of seven inmate characteristics: criminal background, length of sentence currently being served, age, marital status, race, sentences being served for drug and sex.
offenses, and education. Of these only the age distribution is strongly related to the level of homosexuality (Gamma = -.41). As presented in Table 4, the three prisons with a relatively young population have more reported homosexual behavior than the four prisons with older populations. Also, the proportion of inmates with prior criminal background and the mean length of sentence are related to reported homosexual behavior, but the relationships are not strong (Gammas = .18 and .15 respectively).

None of the seven inmate character-

7 With the exception of race, the measures are based on the distributions among the respondents. The distributions were categorized as follows for purposes of analysis:

1. Criminal background. Proportion of inmates who were arrested at a young age, had a juvenile record, and are adult recidivists. Low = less than 50 percent, medium = 50-70 percent, high = more than 70 percent.

2. Mean length of sentence for currently incarcerated inmates. Low = less than five years, medium = five to ten years, high = more than ten years.

3. Age composition. Younger = 40 percent or more under age 25, older = less than 30 percent under 25.

4. Marital status. Proportion of inmates not currently married (single, widowed, or divorced). High = 60 percent or more unmarried, low = less than 60 percent unmarried.

5. Race. Percent black in each prison.

In both the case of (6) offense type (proportion serving time for drug offenses and proportion serving time for sex offenses) and (7) educational level, the distributions were so similar among the seven prisons that no meaningful classification could be made. The lack of variation in these two variables, of course, means that neither can explain the variation among prisons in drug use and homosexual behavior.

8 Controlling for these two variables leaves the associations between prison type and levels of homosexual and drug behavior virtually unchanged.
TABLE 4
LEVELS OF HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIOR IN PRISONS WITH YOUNGER INMATE POPULATIONS AND IN PRISONS WITH OLDER INMATE POPULATIONS

(Percentage distribution of responses to "How many inmates do you know for sure have participated in homosexual relations in this institution at least once in the past year?")

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Composition</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>1-5</th>
<th>6 or more</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>No response N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Younger Inmates</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3 prisons)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older Inmates</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4 prisons)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All prisons</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gamma = -.41, p < .01; X^2 = 28.55, df = 2, p < .01

TYPE OF PRISON, HOMOSEXUAL AND DRUG BEHAVIOR, AND AGE OF THE INMATE POPULATION

The failure to account for the consistently significant relationships of drugs and homosexuality to the type of prison by assignment of the inmates in this study with predisposing social or criminal characteristics to the different prisons is to be expected, since of the seven background variables only the age composition is significantly related to prison type; and it is related in the opposite direction from what would be expected (Gamma = -.21). Ordinarily, the more treatment-oriented institutions tend to receive younger offenders, and thus one would expect the age level to increase moving from treatment to custodial prisons, but this is not the case for the prisons in our sample. Rather, of the three treatment prisons, two have older populations, and of the three custodial prisons, two have younger populations. However, since the age structure is also negatively related to the level of homosexual behavior as well as to the number of known users of heroin and "other" drugs, we should regard age as a probable intervening variable between prison type and these kinds of behavior. Therefore, we shall analyze the relationships between prison type and reported homosexual and drug behavior, controlling for age composition of the prison population.

The association between prison type and homosexual behavior remains after controlling for age composition. However, the relationship is weaker for institutions with older populations (Gamma = .29) and stronger for prisons with younger populations (Gamma = .56) than the uncontrolled relationship for all institutions (Gamma = .40). In other words, the type of prison in which inmates are incarcerated does make a difference in the amount of homosexuality for both younger and older populations, but it makes a bigger difference for prisons with younger populations. This is

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9 This is probably due to the fact that our treatment institutions and custodial prisons were not located in the same states. The two custodial prisons are located where there are no treatment alternatives in the state and hence receive even the young of-fenders. One of the treatment prisons is a special treatment facility for which age plays little part in commitment.
shown clearly in Table 5. This table also shows that the prison type is more important than the age structure. The differences in levels of homosexuality in younger and older inmate populations controlling for type of prison are much less than the differences in homosexual behavior in different types of prisons controlling for age composition.

The relationship between prison type and use of drugs other than marihuana or heroin remains essentially unchanged when the age structure is controlled. But when the age composition is controlled, the association between prison type and heroin use stays the same for prisons with younger inmates (Gamma = .25) and increases for prisons with older inmates (Gamma = .40). This pattern for heroin is just the opposite of that for homosexual behavior. As Table 6 shows, the type of prison accounts for levels of heroin use for both younger and older populations, but accounts for more in prisons with older populations.

10 The uncontrolled association is Gamma = .46; for prisons with younger populations it is .46; and for those with older populations it is .49.

CONCLUSION

One way to approach the question of which better accounts for the adoption of inmate culture and behavior patterns, the effects of the institutional stay or the imported characteristics and predispositions, is a processual one as in the studies of prisonization. That is, the length of time incarcerated and the phase of institutional career may be seen as measures of exposure to the prison environment (Wheeler, 1961). The effects of this “situational element” may be compared to the independent effects of some “actor characteristic” such as the inmate’s social role or type (assuming that the inmate’s role is reflective of his past criminal career) (Wellford, 1967; see also Garabedian, 1963).

We have taken a different more structural approach here by examining the impact of different types of prison environments and the distribution of inmate characteristics at a given time on the amount of homosexual and drug behavior in prison, rather than changes in behavior over time within the same prison. This approach to testing which of the two major models of the inmate
**TABLE 6**

PERCENTAGES OF INMATES REPORTING HIGH LEVELS OF HEROIN USE IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF PRISONS IN THE UNITED STATES, BY RELATIVE AGE OF THE INMATE POPULATION

(Percentage of inmates knowing 6 or more heroin users)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Prison</th>
<th>In Prisons With Younger Inmates</th>
<th>Total N</th>
<th>In Prisons With Older Inmates</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>2.0 (1 prison)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15.5 (2 prisons)</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td></td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>(88)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custodial</td>
<td>14.3 (2 prisons)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>43.8 (1 prison)</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

system, the functional-deprivational or importation models (or which combination of variables from the two theoretical perspectives), better explains various features of the inmate system has not progressed very far for at least two reasons. First, most studies of prison organization and the inmate system are case studies of single institutions, and there is no way to compare variations in organizational environment. Comparing findings from several separate case studies is hampered by the lack of comparable measures. Second, the type of prison to which inmates are sent is related to the criminal history, offense, age, and other social characteristics of the inmates. Thus, it is difficult to find two or more institutions which differ in prison type but are similar in social characteristics of the convicts (or two or more prisons which are similar in custody-treatment orientation but differ in the kind of inmates committed to them).

We were able to deal with both of these difficulties in this study. Not only are a number of prisons of varying types included from which comparable data were collected, but the prison types were sufficiently independent of the types of inmates in them to enable judgment of their relative importance in accounting for levels of drug and homosexual behavior. Such analysis suggests that the extent to which convicts are engaged in these two kinds of deviant behavior during the time of their incarceration is more a function of the type of prison which holds them than they are reflective of the social characteristics which they bring with them from the outside. Preliminary analysis of other findings in the study indicate that several other aspects of the inmate system, too, are more strongly related to prison type than to factors in inmates' social backgrounds.

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