SOCIAL ROLES IN A PRISON FOR WOMEN

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A neglected area in deviance studies of the adult prison setting concerns female forms of deviation. The study of deviance in the prison setting has typically been concerned with male forms of deviation. Indeed, with the exception of Harper's analysis of the "fringer" role\(^1\) and the recently reported study of a women's prison by Ward and Kassebaum\(^2\) which describes

The complete study is reported in Society of Women: A Study of a Women's Prison, New York: John Wiley and Sons, forthcoming. The writer is indebted to Richard D. Schwartz and Paul J. Bohannan for their critical reading and comments of an earlier version of this paper. Acknowledgment is also made to Elliot Freidson for his constructive criticism and invaluable suggestions.

2 David A. Ward and Gene G. Kassebaum, "Lesbian Liaisons," Transvest, 1 (January, 1964), pp. 28-32. Also David A. Ward and Gene G. Kassebaum, "Homosexuality: A Mode of Adaptation in a the homosexual adaptation of female inmates, scientific description and analysis of the informal organization of the adult female prison have been overlooked.\(^3\) In the present paper, in-

Prison for Women," Social Problems, 12 (Fall, 1964), pp. 159-177. In this institution, the authors found little evidence of the differentiated social types or of inmate solidarity that is typical of the male prison.

\(^3\) In this connection, it should be pointed out that in addition to the aforementioned studies of the adult women's prison, there are several reports of institutions for juvenile girls which reveal homosexual practices and/or the presence of "family" groups among the delinquent girls. These reports are unsystematic investigations and impressionistic reports. See, for example, Charles A. Ford, "Homosexual Practices of Institutionalized Females," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 23 (January-March, 1929), pp. 442-444; Margaret Otis, "A Perversion Not Commonly Noted," Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 8 (June-July, 1913), pp. 112-114; Lowell S. Selling, "The Pseudo-Family," The American Journal of Sociology, 37 (September,
imate social roles and social organization in a women's prison will be described in some detail; comparisons of this informal social structure will be made with relevant literature on the social roles assumed by male prisoners; and the social structure inside the prison setting will be viewed in relation to the external environment.

Previous accounts of the male prison have taken the view that the most important features of the inmate culture emerge as a response to the conditions of imprisonment. The features of this system are well-known and need not be repeated here.\(^4\) The point to be


stressed, however, is that the functional interpretation which is made for the emergence of the inmate system typically views the culture that forms within the prison as a response to the problems found in the internal world of the prison and the crucial ways in which it differs from the external world. It is argued that while the prisoner cannot completely eliminate the pains of imprisonment, a cohesive inmate system which has group allegiance as its dominant value provides the inmate with a meaningful reference group that may restate the inmate's self image, or in some sense neutralize the deleterious effects of its loss. This formulation derives from case studies of single institutions, and, therefore, it is extremely difficult to ascertain the validity of the conclusions drawn as previous writers have not explored systematically the interaction of the external culture with the conditions for survival faced by the prison aggregate. Nor has anyone assessed several adult prisons simultaneously so that a comparative analysis could be made.\(^5\) I think we are just beginning to understand the variability of one prison from another as they are affected by organizational goals, the composition of staff and inmates. Indeed, recent systematic studies of socialization in the male prison by Wheeler and Garabedian call into question the solidarity opposition model


\(^{5}\) It is interesting that an analysis of variations in organizational goals and an examination of data on the inmates of several juvenile correctional institutions for boys call into question the "solidary opposition" model of the inmate group. See David Street, "The Inmate Group in Custodial and Treatment Settings," American Sociological Review, 30 (February, 1965), pp. 40-55.
of inmate culture even within single institutions, as these scholars found that prisoners varied in their support of the inmate culture over time and according to type of prisoner.6

Moreover, Irwin and Cressey have advanced the thesis that there are three subcultures in the prison which they maintain reflect the presence of different types of prisoners. These differences presumably are a reflection of the values and attitudes particular inmates bring into the prison and are related to latent identities.7 Similarly, Schrag attempts to account for inmate deviants with respect to internalization of inmate culture and support of the inmate code in terms of their preprison characteristics and identities.8 Thus, the developing theoretical considerations tend to emphasize values and attitudes learned by inmates prior to entering the prison.

The present findings from a case study of a women’s prison bear on this matter. In the adult female prison which the writer studied, it was found that in order to cope with the major problems of institutional living, the female inmates have also labeled the reactions of prisoners according to the mode of response exhibited by the inmate to the prison situation and the quality of the inmate’s interaction with other inmates and staff. However, although the deprivations of imprisonment were present and felt keenly by the female prisoners, the female argot roles differ in structural form and in the sentiment attached to them from the roles assumed by male prisoners. In addition, it should be pointed out that homosexual dyads cast into marriage alliances, family groups, and other kinship ties formed by the inmates integrate the inmates into a meaningful social system and represent an attempt to create a substitute universe within the prison.9

The empirical evidence to be presented supports the thesis that differences in the informal social structure in male and female prison communities can be understood in terms of the differential cultural definitions ascribed to male and female roles in American society. More specifically, it is suggested that the prison structure incorporates and reflects the total external social structure in that the differential cultural definitions ascribed to male and female roles in the external world influence the definitions made within the prison, and function to determine the direction and focus of the inmate cultural system.

Cultural Expectations of Male and Female Roles

Are sex roles so sharply differentiated in American society that we would expect wide variations in behavior patterns to be found in the two prison communities? There are a number of areas in which American society differentiates male and female roles. In the main, it may be said that in contrast to the male, who is expected to prepare for an occupational role,

9 Marriage, family, and kinship in the female prison will be discussed in a forthcoming paper. However, in this context it might be worthwhile pointing out that the differentiation of sex roles is crucial as it structures at the outset many other roles which the inmate may legitimately play. Once an inmate has adopted a sex role, it automatically closes off some family roles, while at the same time it opens up legitimate avenues for other roles.
and whose prestige rank is established by the nature of his life work, the female's life goal is achieved through marriage and child-rearing. Although the "career woman" is an important social type, the percentage of women who pursue uninterrupted careers is very small in our society. So long as women bear children, there must be some social arrangement to ensure that the functions of nurturing and training during the period of dependency are fulfilled.

And we may point to other areas in which American culture tends further to differentiate male and female roles. It does not discourage and accepts a public display of affection between two women such as the use of terms of endearment, embracing, holding hands, and kissing. Such behavior on the part of the male, however, would immediately be defined as homosexual. Moreover, women are said to be more dependent, emotional, less aggressive, and less prone to violence than men. It is said that women generally show less initiative in openly defying authority, whereas men have been defined as independent, violent, and aggressive. This generalized popular culture persists for women on another level—the woman-to-woman popular culture. In this vein, the mass media perpetuate the stereotype that a "woman's worst enemy is another woman." Because of the female's orientation to

the marriage market, it is argued that she tends to see other women as rivals. This view finds its significance and signature underscored in the highly stylized type of the best friend "betrayed." A similar theme is operative when we find that working women state preferences for male supervisors rather than female supervisors.

To the extent that this generalized popular culture persists in the prison setting, a situation of calculated solidarity may be said to obtain between the female inmates. Calculated solidarity is defined as a social unity based not upon automatic conformity to a set of common norms perceived to be morally binding, but, rather, a unity which is subject to constant interpretation by the inmate as she perceives each situation from the point of view of her own interests. Common responsibility in any particular situation, then, exists only to the extent that the individual perceives her own interests to be served. Unless the formal organization can supply the inmates with all of their wants, then perforce inmates must turn to one another for the satisfaction of those needs which are attractive and agreeable to them, and which cannot be fulfilled by the formal

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10 Robin M. Williams, Jr., American Society (rev. ed.), New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960, pp. 64-65. Although many married women at one time or another do some kind of work outside the home for which they earn a salary, marriage and family are the primary goals for most American women. Indeed, despite the marked increase in the number of married women in the labor market, the worker role of women continues to be regarded by society as secondary to the traditional role of women as mothers and homemakers.

11 Indeed, the architecture of the male prison has been historically oriented upon the general belief that the male criminal is aggressive and dangerous.

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12 Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, trans. and ed. by H. M. Parshley, New York: Bantam Books, 1961, p. 514. She argues that the marriage market from one age period to another is very unstable for the female. Consequently, the process of acquiring a husband becomes an urgent matter, and this concern is often destructive of feminine friendships, for the young girl sees rivals rather than allies in her companions. In this connection, Jules Henry has stated that the self-orientation of the female begins at an early age; see Culture Against Man, New York: Random House, 1963, pp. 150-155.

13 As Malinowski has cogently pointed out, however, automatic conformity does not exist empirically. But we may conceive of automatic conformity and lawlessness as ideal types with the prison approximating calculated solidarity. See Bronislaw Malinowski, Crime and Custom in Savage Society, New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1932, esp. chs. 3, 4, and 5.
Organization. Clemmer's finding is relevant here. In response to questionnaire items, seventy per cent of his subjects concluded that "friendships in prison result from the mutual help man can give man rather than because of some admired trait." However, if the popular culture on the woman-to-woman level is imported into the prison environment, then we would expect that violations of much taboosed behavior may not be severely punished, or may be overlooked, as the very nature of the case implies that expectations of behavior cannot be consistent. Possible latent dysfunctions of the popular culture, then, would be to neutralize deviant acts.

**Method of Study**

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to undertake field work for a period of one year in a large women's prison in a correctional system generally regarded as one of the most progressive. Data were gathered by personal observation of the inmates as they participated in formally scheduled inmate activities: work assignments, vocational and avocational classes, group counseling sessions, academic educational classes, recreational and religious activities. At all inmate functions, the observer sat with the inmates. Other sources of data were obtained by personal observation of informal interaction patterns in the cottage units and on the grounds. During the year it was possible to get to know all the inmates who were at the prison when the study began, approximately 650, and, also, many of the inmates who were committed during the course of the year as well. Interviews of one hour to three hours in length were held with these inmates. These interviews provided basic information on the nature and meaning of the cultural experiences and activities of the group, as well as the social values attached to them. The sociological characteristics of the inmate population were obtained by an examination of the record files of 653 inmates who were confined at the same time.

Other data were obtained by attendance at classification and subclassification meetings; the disciplinary court; meetings of the lieutenants and correctional officers; and other scheduled staff meetings. Informal interviews with correctional officers, prison administrators, and other staff members provided additional data. During the last week of the study, an anonymous questionnaire was administered to all the correctional officers to obtain data on the sociological characteristics of the correctional officers and perceptions of their role function.

**The Deprivations of Imprisonment**

Sykes has noted in his study of the Trenton prison that the pains of imprisonment for the modern prisoner are not rooted in physical brutality, but rather may be seen as attacks on the psychological level. The "residue of apparently less acute hurts," he argues, such as the deprivation of liberty, goods and services, heterosexual relations, autonomy and security, "may indeed be the acceptable or unavoidable implications of imprisonment, but we must recognize the fact that they can be just as painful as the physical maltreatment which they have replaced." What would constitute deprivations for women? Interview data revealed that although the perception of the female inmates vary from one another in this regard depending upon the stage of the inmate’s prison career, one's former commitment history.

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16 Ibid., p. 64.

17 On a selected day the records revealed that 52.1 per cent had been previously jailed or imprisoned. The commitment age
and/or the relative ease with which the individual may adjust to the inmate social system, there is nevertheless a “hard core of consensus” among the female prisoners that prison life is depriving and frustrating.

In the female institution studied, it is quite true that in some areas the deprivations of imprisonment are less harsh. The physical surroundings are certainly more pleasant; the cottages although starkly simple are clean and provide the inmate with adequate physical living conditions; with some ingenuity and mutual aid, the inmates enjoy limited opportunity for variety in the matter of dress. The list could doubtless be expanded.

In spite of the mitigation of the pains of imprisonment, however, the differences cited are merely peripheral to the major concerns of prison life. The problems to be solved by the female inmate in this institution are the same conditions for survival as those which the male prisoner has found it necessary to provide solutions in order to survive psychically in the prison environment. These problems have their basis in the disorientation resulting from the abrupt termination of the individual’s freedom: the lack of opportunity for heterosexual relations—the fracturing of every influence favorable to the cultivation of emotional reciprocity as a result of being cut off from family and friends; withholding of material goods; attacks on the self through the humiliating experiences incidental to a prison com-

18 Yarn may be purchased at the commissary store. Knitted items such as socks and sweaters provide another means by which the loss of goods may be mitigated.

19 Stripping and mortifying practices are discussed in Erving Goffman, Asylums, New York: Doubleday, 1961; see esp. pp. 14-25. In the prison, no clothing may be kept by the inmates except girdles (if they are not the panty type), brassieres and shoes of simple (relatively low-heeled) closed styles. Medals, simple style earrings and wedding rings which are not studded with precious or semi-precious stones may be kept by the inmate, as well as wrist watches which are valued under fifteen dollars.
orientation unit to individualize the prison issue by monograms, embroidery, or the strategic placement of pleats on a surplus WAC jacket in an attempt to make them "more like free world clothes" are all evidence of the subtlety of deprivation.

For the male prisoner, it has been pointed out that lack of heterosexual intercourse is frustrating and depriving, and the evidence indicates that the same holds true for the great majority of the female inmates. Most inmates have enjoyed the company of men outside, and sex constitutes a major problem of adjustment for almost every inmate. Women do not choose to live their lives entirely apart from men, and the necessity of doing so in prison is frustrating for the individual. Indeed the situation for the imprisoned female may, perhaps, be seen to be more serious than for the male.

"[American] culture," writes Jules Henry, "gives women no firm role except an erotic one." In this regard, Parsons has discussed three broad categories of adjustment for the American female: 1) the "good companion" role; 2) the "glamor girl" role; and 3) the "domestic" role. Thus, with

20 The obvious exceptions to this, of course, are the homosexuals who have practiced homosexuality in the free community. Approximately 1 per cent of the inmate population falls into this category. For this group, it cannot be said that this aspect of imprisonment is depriving. In a sense, the imprisonment of the homosexual—whether male or female—is ironical, for the loss of liberty, except in a few countries, is always accompanied by the denial of contact with the opposite sex so as to increase the burden of punishment. The homosexual in prison, however, is actually in a favored position, because the competition of the opposite sex has been excluded.

21 Jules Henry, op. cit., p. 61; also cf. Margaret Park Redfield, "The American Family: Consensus and Freedom," The American Journal of Sociology, 52 (November, 1946), p. 182. "Beyond the roles of glamor girl and nursemaid, the part to be played by women is but vaguely defined in our society."

22 Talcott Parsons, "Age and Sex in the the closing of the prison gate, the female prisoner finds herself cut off from the structure of American society conducive to the cultivation of a female role which is the avenue through which she achieves self-respect and status.

The evidence, however, suggests that the other major deprivation suffered by the male prisoner, namely, the loss of security, occurs on another level of experience for the female inmate, which is consistent with the popular culture. In the words of the inmates: "The hardest part of living in a prison is to live with other women." Commonly expressed attitudes of the nature of women are: "You can't trust another woman"; "Every woman is a sneaking lying bitch." Hence, it is not so much the constant fear of violence or sexual exploitation such as is the case for the male prisoner which creates a hardship for the female inmates, but, rather, the strain involved in being in the forced company of women who are believed to be untrustworthy, capable of predatory tactics. Thus, the female inmate is apt to fear the consequences of aroused jealousy transformed into vitriolic verbal attacks; and she suffers acute insecurity in confronting and handling the frequent attacks of penitentiary darby—gossip which takes place at all times and on all sides within the


23 Spkes, op. cit., p. 78.

24 This is not to say, however, that there are no fights which take place among the inmates, but the real violence that occurs in the prison, however, tends to be in connection with a homossexual triangle. And in this connection the great fear is not so much for one's life, as the fear of disfigurement—the fear that an inmate "out to get" another will use razor or scissors to disfigure one's face. It is worthwhile noting that the prison officials issue scissors to each inmate; the blades are fairly blunt, but, nevertheless, this indicates the widely held belief of women as nonaggressive types.
prison. Moreover, there is enough differentiation among the inmates so that some women experience insecurity in adjusting to living in the forced company of others whom they consider to be socially inferior; some of the white women, for example, find living in close proximity with Negroes to be distasteful; others feel repulsion at having to associate with prostitutes, women who are untidy in their personal habits, or who use vulgar language.25

As does the male prisoner, the female prisoner soon discovers that escape routes in prison are few. Psychological and physical withdrawal are not significant modes of adaptation to mitigate the pains of imprisonment for the inmates in this institution. What follows now is a description of the informal social structure which provides a complex of clearly defined social roles for the female prisoners and sets the limits of mutual accommodation.

THE SOCIAL ROLES

Snitchers and Inmate Cops or Lieutenants

Communication across caste lines is strictly forbidden in the female prison studied except for matters of urgent business, and all such interaction is expected to be handled with swift dispatch. Indeed, to violate the ban placed on legitimate communication flowing from inmates and staff is considered to be a very serious matter. The female inmates argue that no inmate should jeopardize the successful execution of activities based upon the common interests of the inmates in connection with the performance of illegal functions to relieve the pains of imprisonment; and secondly, supplying information to officials may result in the withdrawal of privileges or other forms of punishment, thereby adding to the pains of imprisonment for the inmate.

In the female prison, the role of the snitcher is the female counterpart to the "rat" in the male prison. To accuse an inmate of snitching is the most serious accusation which one inmate may hurl at another because it clearly signifies the division of loyalty between the staff and the inmates. The importance placed upon the "no snitching" norm is apparent as it covers every range of behavior and is put in the imperative to the new inmate or the deviant: "See and see nothing! Hear and hear nothing!"

Although the female prisoners agree that inmates should never give any information concerning an inmate to the staff, any prisoner according to the female inmates may occasionally engage in snitching when it is believed to serve the individual's interest. Moreover, the female's self-orientation and the tendency to see one another as rivals both function to decrease general expectations of rigid alliance from one another. Consequently, the female inmate rarely expresses any surprise when she suspects another inmate of deviating from the norm prohibiting communication of inmate affairs across caste lines—only a kind of bitterness that the status of inmate is not sufficient to bind and solidify the inmates completely into a cohesive group. The popular culture, then, in connection with the extent to which any female may be trusted, functions to neutralize many deviant acts in the prison. As a result, many deviant acts are overlooked, or are not severely punished; in contrast to the situation in the male prison, we find that violation of the "no snitching" norm does not often result in violence. In the words of one prisoner: "A lot is said about what will be done if you catch a snitch, but you know women! They talk loud, draw a crowd, and that's as far as it goes. When it comes to a showdown,
they chicken out." This does not mean, however, that negative sanctions are not imposed. Panning and signifying are common modes of punishment to control behavior in the female inmate community.

_Panning_ is general derogatory gossip about an inmate when the inmate is not physically present. _Signifying_, on the other hand, is a more compelling negative sanction because the offending inmate is physically present. A group of inmates will discuss a deviant act in considerable detail with biting sarcasm, scorn, and mimicry; the inmate’s name is not at any time mentioned, but little doubt is left as to the inmate’s identity. Both panning and signifying are extremely effective modes of social control. But sanctions need not always be so obvious to be effective. The fact that the prison is isolated, of course, makes the prisoners extremely dependent upon one another for emotional reciprocity, and this in itself serves to check much continued deviant behavior. In the words of an inmate: “It’s rough when the group ignores you.” Inflection in one’s voice, then, pretends that one has not seen another, and turning the head to avoid a greeting, can be exquisite punishment in the prison community, and can often be quite as devastating as the more pointed panning and signifying.

Inmates who violate the ban on communication are watched closely and pertinent information concerning their activities is circulated quickly to other inmates. The snitcher, in short, is _persona non grata_ in the prison community, and any common cause with an inmate assuming this role would in all certainty hurt one’s reputation and close off interaction with the great majority of inmates. The snitcher is condemned by the female inmates because she denies the cohesion of the inmate community and jeopardizes the successful execution of the many illegal activities that take place in the prison to mitigate the pains of imprisonment. And the fact that the snitcher is disloyal to the inmate group adds to the burden of imprisonment.

The behavior subsumed under "center man" in the male prison finds expression in the role of _inmate cop_ or _lieutenant_. The inmate cop is a prisoner who is in a position of authority over other inmates, and in the process of executing her work function will issue orders to other inmates or report infractions of rules in connection with work. The prison experience is considered to be the "great equalizer" and inmates resent taking orders from other inmates. As one prisoner said contemptuously: "She tries to act just like an officer. She forgets that she came through that gate and she’s got five numbers across her chest just like the rest of us. She’s an officer without a uniform, and she tries to tell another inmate what to do. They’re always in the officer’s face. . . ." The inmate cop or lieutenant in effect takes the role of the officer and thereby violates an important tenet of the inmate code: she denies the egalitarian ethos of the inmates.

The inmate cop’s disloyalty is despised not only because it is open to view, but also because it is often flaunted in the face of other inmates. Here is an open and shut case of identification with staff values, and the inmate cop’s actions deny the solidarity of the inmate body and weaken the bonds of interdependence which bind them together. Moreover, the inmate

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26 Most women, as a matter of fact, serve their entire sentence without a visit from the outside world. In the year 1962, for example, an examination of the records revealed that 79 inmates or about twelve per cent of the inmate population received visits during the entire year.

27 Cf. Judge M. Murtagh and Sara Harris, _Cast the First Stone_, New York: Cardinal, 1958, p. 244.
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Cop is apt to rationalize her actions in terms of noncriminal values which according to the inmate code have no place in the prison. Unless this inmate can be persuaded to "see the light" through socialization into the inmate culture, she cannot be reasoned with or bought. In this sense she poses a real threat to the inmate community, because the inmate cop is an added bulwark to the staff's forces, and the fact that an inmate is adding to the pains of imprisonment by joining forces with the staff makes her doubly despised.

Squares and Jive Bitches

Along with the snitches and the inmate cops, the squares are truly the pariahs of the inmate community. "Square" is a derisive label pinned on inmates who are considered to be accidental criminals. The behavior of the square in the prison community clearly betrays her alien status, as she is oriented to the prison administration and tends to possess "anti-criminal" loyalties. Degrees of "squareness" are recognized by the female inmates ranging from the inmate who is said to be "so square that she's a cube" to the inmate designated as a "hip square." The "cube square" is very definitely oriented to societal values and the prison administration, whereas the "hip square" tends to sympathize with the inmate code and adheres to some of its principles, sometimes going so far as to pin—as on a lookout—for other inmates. Her sympathy tends to take the form of stated tolerance for inmate activities. The distinguishing characteristic of the "hip square," however, is that she does not engage in homosexual activity, as well as the fact that she is oriented to the administration and societal values. In the female prison studied, it should be pointed out that anyone who does not engage in homosexual activities in the prison in one form or another is automatically labeled a square.

Not only are squares outside the main stream of inmate activities—excluded and ostracized by the inmate population—but more important for the inmate social system, squares are pitied. It is said that squares "don't know any better," and, further, it is widely believed that the square is not "woman enough" to commit a crime. "They're suckers and fools—gullible without even knowing it." And herein lies the key to understanding the threat that the square poses for the inmate community. Like the inmate cop or lieutenant, the square tends to identify with the institutional officials. In the case of squares, however, association is considered to be doubly hazardous, for in their presumed gullibility squares may unwittingly divulge information to the officials. It is for this reason that squares are apt to be "fed with a long-handled spoon," that is, information concerning inmate activities is carefully sifted and censored.

While the deviance of the square is often the consequence of an artless simplicity—and presumably leaves open the possibility that induction into the inmate culture may remedy the situation (Indeed, the pressures applied are so great that this frequently does occur.)—the deviance of the jive bitch, on the other hand, is a deliberate, calculated strategy to cause conflict. In short, the jive bitch is a troublemaker whose strategy often involves a distortion of the facts, as in the case, for example, when she is interested in breaking up an established homosexual relationship: she will often volunteer information about kites (prison letters) and illicit rendezvous to the injured party who, in many cases, would prefer not to be the recipient of such information—as it will mean that ignorance is no longer bliss—and who may be goaded into terminating an affair, which although perceived not to be perfect may be felt to be better than none.

Moreover, the jive bitch can't be
trusted to keep her word when she gives it, indicating her disloyalty to the inmate group. Although female inmates claim that women are not trustworthy, it is normatively demanded that once you give your word to a prisoner, you should keep it—particularly in connection with matters concerning mutual aid. An example of a jive bitch supplied by an inmate follows:

You're out of cigarettes, and you go to a girl and say, "Look, I'm out of cigarettes, and I won't have any money until next week. When you go to Commissary, would you buy me a carton, and I'll pay you back next week?" She says, "Sure, baby, sure. I'll get them for you on Friday." When Friday comes, you go to her house to get the cigarettes and when you say, "Did you get the cigarettes?" she opens her mouth like she's surprised and maybe slaps her cheek and she looks at you and says, "Oh, baby, I forgot all about it. I'm sorry, baby, honest!" That's a jive bitch 'cause she had no intention of getting you those cigarettes in the first place.

The jive bitch, in short, is an example par excellence of the woman-to-woman popular culture translated into role behavior. And the fact that she cannot be depended upon weakens even the bonds of calculated solidarity which exist among the female inmates.

**Rap Buddies and Homeys**

While no inmate trusts another woman completely—"You pick your people and even then you only go so far."—within the limitations imposed by this definition of the situation, an inmate may single out another prisoner as a special friend. She is one with whom an inmate can converse easily, and, further, assume reasonably that the conversation will be mutually binding as secret. Any two people who find one another compatible in this way may become *rap buddies* to one another. This relationship is dissolved if the expectations concerning the relationship are not honored by either of the incumbents of the rap buddy role; or if the relationship develops into a homosexual relationship, the inmates become a "couple" and assume the obligations relevant to a homosexual relationship.

The *homey* role is probably as close to "blood" relationship that one comes to in the female prison, and the relationship holds a special place in the lexicon of the inmates. Technically speaking, even if conflict ensues between homeys, the relationship still holds. The homey is the inmate who is from another inmate's home town or nearby community. Homeys may or may not have known one another before incarceration; but whatever the case, within the prison these inmates become homeys to one another. Contact is made as soon as the presence of a homey becomes known; information is usually obtained from inmate orientation helpers or inmate office workers. Inquiries as to whether a homey's needs in the orientation unit have been met are immediately made: cigarettes, soap, toothpaste, facial tissues, and any other commissary items which she needs will somehow be routed to her. The special bond of reciprocity which is established between homeys is of a vastly different degree of intensity than that between rap buddies, and is expected to cover a wide range of behavior; homeys have the right to turn to one another when material need arises, and the further expectation exists that if economically possible, the merchandise is to be returned at a later date.

Although superficially the rap buddy and homey roles may appear to be quite similar, the basis for the allocation of these roles and functions is quite different. What is the basis for allocation of functions with respect to the homey role? While there is a special relationship that exists between homeys, significantly the homey relationship excludes homosexuality. In-
Connects and Boosters

The fifteen dollars which inmates are permitted to spend per month at the commissary store is not a large sum when one takes into account that it covers almost all purchases, including cigarettes. Furthermore, even this modest sum is beyond the reach of most inmates. Few legitimate channels are open to the female inmates to improve their economic lot in the prison. Like the male prisoners, the female inmates also find it necessary to exploit the environment in order to improve their material circumstances. Here it takes the form of stealing from institutional supplies. Significantly, a role based upon aggressive physical tactics such as the “gorilla” reported by Sykes who takes what he wants from other inmates by force does not emerge in the female inmate community. By contrast, in the female prison the connect is any inmate with a “good job” who will cooperate in the procurement of scarce goods and/or information. Connects are also those inmates who are in a position to negotiate with other inmates to obtain information or goods, that is, acting both as middleman and distributor. Thus, this role includes the procurement of both goods and services.

In this connection, the inmates draw a sharp line between the connect who often takes a dual role, and the booster whose exploitation of the environment consists solely of stealing from official stores and carries on a successful business enterprise. Of course, it should be made clear that stealing from the officials is universal at the prison. Even inmates designated by sister inmates as squares and inmate cops declare they will sometimes take a pot of coffee out of the dining room “on principle.” Inmates, however, make a clear distinction between the petty

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28 It is possible to make special withdrawals for yarn purchases.
boosting which is engaged in by all the inmates—say a few teaspoonfuls of sugar placed in a napkin, a sandwich, and the like, while in the dining room—and the stealing engaged in by the booster. The difference lies mainly in the source of supply, the regularity with which the goods may be procured, and the purpose for which the items are stolen. Items stolen sporadically for individual consumption tend to be classified under the category petty boosting. The booster is the inmate who is in a position to steal desired objects regularly and in fairly large quantities.

Now in the male prison, regardless of the source of supply, giving and sharing is normatively demanded by the inmate code—especially if the materials have been stolen from the officials. The "pedlar" or "merchant" has been described as "a man so alienated from other prisoners, so selfish in his pursuit of material advantage, that he is willing to thrive on the misery of his companions. He places his own well-being above the well-being of the inmates as a whole. He does not share the goods in short supply but exploits, instead, the needs of others."29 Interestingly, the same behavior for which the "merchant" is despised in the male prison is that which receives words of praise from female inmates. To "get a good thing going," that is, to engage in a successful enterprise is to draw forth admiration from the inmates. It is held: "If you can get a little racket going, more power to you."

And yet at the same time inmates rationalize many of their actions by saying, "If I don't get there first, someone else will," which clearly indicates the self-orientation of the inmates. In a real sense, boosters are inmates who have "gotten there first," and for this feat there is admiration—albeit tinged with not a little envy. In addition, inmates tend to feel gratitude to the booster, for it is recognized that the booster's role involves a certain amount of risk. Whatever recompense is necessary to enjoy the pleasure of making a cup of coffee at odd hours of the day is thought to be well worth the price. The inmates will gladly exchange a carton of cigarettes for a pound of coffee,30 and if this transaction can be made a weekly matter, prison life is made more tolerable.

In contrast to the male prisoner, no sharp line is made by the female inmates between selling and giving, except between "honest," inmates participating in a homosexual marriage, and other "family" members. Who are the inmates that become the clients for the supply of illicit goods? All prisoners do not have an opportunity to enjoy these luxury items, regardless of their financial situation. Low caste inmates, such as snatchers, squares, and inmate cops or lieutenants, of course, lie outside the boundary of legitimate giving, as these inmates have deviated from the inmate code and, therefore, have roped themselves off from the privilege of sharing in the scarce goods that circulate about the prison. They are in the same boat as "rats," "center men," "weaklings," and "fish" in the male prison. Apart from the pariahs in the female prison, mutual aid is greater near the locus of high intensity of emotional reciprocity. As intensity of emotional reciprocity decreases, mutual aid decreases proportionately.

**Pinners**

Since complete elimination of detection is never possible in the performance of many illicit activities, the female inmates find it necessary to minimize the risk of being detected by the prison officials. For this reason, the role of pinner is very crucial in the prison.

The pinner in the female prison is a

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29 Sykes, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

30 Cigarettes are the most important nexus of exchange among the inmates.
lookout, stationed as a sentry to prevent a surprise attack upon inmates engaging in illicit activities from all unauthorized persons—whether they be staff or inmates. With discovery always imminent and punishment a certainty, the pinner's role is not one to allocate to amateurs or to inmates whose loyalty is in doubt. The pinner must be an inmate who can be trusted, stand up under pressure, and she must be "in the know." Depending upon the task at hand, sometimes the female inmates find it necessary to mobilize a team of pinners—each of whom must share the responsibility that the task at hand be carried out successfully. The interdependence of the inmates requires the cooperation of other inmates in order to carry out their activities successfully. In the words of an inmate:

Even if you wanted to go it alone, it's almost impossible to do. The situation is such that you need the help of other inmates. For example, if you're makin' it with someone, you need a pinner. This means initiating the aid of a third party—maybe more. And you might be called up to help two other people in the same situation... The way pinning works is this—maybe I've got two friends who are involved with each other. O.K., well, I'll go into the office and keep the officer busy for an hour talking about a problem I have or I make one up. She can't be in two places at one time, so usually this is a safe procedure. Or a girl will stand at the foot of the stairs with a tin can in her hands. If the officer or a person known to be a snitch goes up the stairs, she drops the can, or she whistles loudly. These signals are understood.

Now while it is important to the female inmates that the pains of imprisonment be mitigated, it is also imperative that in the process of doing so their deviant actions do not result in disciplinary action which will increase the burden of punishment. The pinner, therefore, is a valued individual, as she imparts a measure of reasonable security to the inmates that their deviant performances will not result in loss of days or other forms of punishment.

The Homosexual Cluster: Penitentiary Turnouts, Lesbians, Femmes, Stud Broads, Tricks, Commissary Hustlers, Chippers, Kick Partners, Cherries, Punks, and Turnabouts

The problems and concerns of the female inmates in adjusting to deprivation of heterosexual relationships are revealed by the number of roles channeled into homosexual behavior. Moreover, the female inmate's role refinement with respect to the categories of homosexual activity illustrates its function as both a motivating force in the lives of the inmates and as an organizing principle of social organization.

The inmates apply a number of labels to homosexual behavior in the prison depending upon the specific role assumed, the adeptness with which the assumed role is played, or the motivation for the behavior. Broadly speaking, the inmates differentiate between penitentiary turnouts and lesbians. The penitentiary turnout is the prisoner who resorts to homosexuality in the prison because heterosexual relationships are not available; in contrast, the lesbian prefers homosexual relations in the free community. In this respect she resembles the "fag" in the male prison. The lesbian is labeled as a sick person by the inmates because it is argued that the preference and selection of homosexual relations in a situation where choice is possible clearly constitute a true perversion. It is only in the penitentiary world where men are unavailable that the values and norms regarding homosexual behavior are redefined by the inmates and—within the limits imposed by this definition—accepted as a temporary substitute for heterosexual relations.

Stylized symbolic devices make it possible for the female inmates to attach new meanings to a culturally defined sex role representation seen as a variation of a sex type based upon biological attributes. The institutional-
ized character of the differential sex roles orders the behavior of the inmates and defines the limits of permissible behavior and regulates the interaction between the inmates.

The *femme* or *mommy* is the inmate who plays the female role in a homosexual relationship. The femme role is a highly sought-after role in the prison because most of the inmates want to continue to play the feminine role in a meaningful way in the prison. Cast in the context of a "marital" relationship, the femmecast as a manageable model of the inmate as a meaningful personal and social relationship. From the mass of interview data it is clear, however, that this mode of adjustment (with the exception of homosexuals who practice homosexuality in the free community) would be repugnant for most prisoners, but the uniqueness of the prison situation compels the inmate to redefine and attach new meanings to this behavior within the prison structure.34

The inmates are not able to resolve their sense of isolation within the formal organization, and, therefore, develop relationships and behavior patterns within an informal structure. For the vast majority of the inmates, adjustment to the prison world is made by establishing a homosexual alliance with a compatible partner as a marriage unit. Although we cannot discuss the dynamics of mate selection, courtship, and marriage in this paper, it should be pointed out that when a studs and a femmecan have established a homosexual alliance, they are said to be "makin' it" or to be "tight"; that is to say, they are socially recognized as constituting a legitimate married pair.

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34 Estimates of the number of inmates who are involved in homosexuality vary. Inmates who are very much involved in this phase of inmate culture place the figure at ninety or ninety-five per cent. The Associate Warden (treatment) estimated that eighty per cent of the inmates were involved in homosexual relations. Correctional officers tended to set the figure at fifty or seventy-five per cent which agrees with the usual estimates I obtained from squares. Some officers and other staff members set the figure at one hundred per cent. At one point in the study, I made a cottage count of inmates assuming the male role, and the studs totaled 215 inmates. The number of "males" in the prison tends to vary slightly from day to day depending upon inmate releases and individual role choice. And the same is equally true of the inmates playing the female role. At this time, there were 356 femmes out of a total of 639 inmates. At any rate, it is apparent that femmes are competing for a scarce commodity.

83 This role is also reported in Ward and Kassebaum, op. cit., p. 169.

82 Cf. the role of the butch in Ward and Kassebaum, ibid., pp. 168-169.

80 Ward and Kassebaum, ibid., p. 171.
Since one of the important goals in establishing a homosexual marriage alliance is to strive for what is referred to as a "sincere" relationship, which is translated to mean a stable relationship and one based upon romantic love, the trick is held in low esteem by the inmates because she allows herself to be exploited, rather than to develop a relationship that is sincere. And the trick permits exploitation in a variety of ways—usually economically and as a source of labor. Any individual who allows herself to be exploited in this manner is considered "weak." Moreover, tricks are regarded as "suckers" and "fools" because they may be kept dangling with promises.

Who are the inmates who utilize exploitative tactics? The commissary hustler is so labeled as an individual who establishes a single homosexual alliance with an inmate who lives in the same cottage, but in addition establishes relationships with one or more inmates in other cottages for economic purposes. This is called "mating for commissary reasons," and any femme other than the inmate who lives in the stud's cottage is labeled as a trick in the relationship. The commissary hustler presents a commissary list to the tricks scattered throughout the prison, and they, in turn, supply the commissary hustler with needed material items. The function of all the tricks in this "polygynous" system is an economic one. The "wife" in the cottage takes precedence over all others. She shares in the bounty and usually knows of the existence of otherennes, i.e., tricks. Indeed, if the "couple" is in serious economic difficulty, she may suggest to her stud that this role be assumed. Or the stud may consult the femme in arriving at a decision to "work a few tricks."

So long as the "wife" shares the same household as the stud, the existence of other femmes (tricks) in the relationship is tolerable. As the inmates put it: "The nearest is the dearest, and the closest gets the mostest."

In addition, it should be pointed out that the "wife" who lives in the same household as the stud also derives security from the public recognition of the relationship as legitimate. They are recognized as a "couple." The additional wife (or wives) merely serves an economic function. One would be well advised to ask why an inmate enters into a trick role. The stud population is outnumbered by the femme population, and competition for studs is very keen. Actually, each trick in this situation anticipates and plans for the day when the relationship will become a permanent one; each trick anticipates displacing the cottage "wife" in the affections of the stud. And since the trick is, after all, an inmate with a commissary account, the possibility that this might occur is a good one. While it is more or less understood that she wait for an invitation to move to the stud's cottage, sometimes a trick may lose patience and forego prison etiquette. Such cottage moves present complicating triangular situations, often leading to violence.

The role of commissary hustler is one which requires a certain amount of adroitness to carry out successfully. The inmates argue that in the free community, the commissary hustler would tend to exploit men, but since there are no men in prison, they exploit women. Although there may be individual personality factors involved, there are structural features in the prison which precipitate this role. Every inmate is not compensated for work performed in the prison, and the role of commissary hustler provides an avenue whereby an inmate may solve her economic needs.

The dyad configuration cast into the framework of a marital relationship covers a wide range of behavioral expectations. The commissary hustler, although in some respects exploitative, nevertheless does maintain a
stable and sincere relationship with the femme who shares the same cottage. However, when the individual exploits each situation with a partner for its unique possibilities, whether it be sexual gratification or material, the inmate is said to occupy a chippie role. This role differs from the commissary hustler in a very important way. Although the commissary hustler actually establishes one sincere relationship and exploits other inmates in order to provide for the femme in the relationship, the chippie establishes no single relationship of this type. Chippies are said to be “makin’ it,” but not to be “in love” with any individual. The chippie, in the inmates’ eyes, is the prison prostitute. The inmate who “chippies from one bed to another”—i.e., terminates affairs too quickly—is held in scorn by the inmates, as her behavior is held to be promiscuous. This behavior draws forth words of scorn from the inmates because the ideal cultural pattern in the prison is to establish a permanent relationship. The chippie clearly deviates from the ideal pattern, as the affairs of this inmate are characterized by their striking temporary quality.

The female inmates distinguish clearly between homosexual activity that is considered to be promiscuous and that which is engaged in solely for sexual gratification. Although kick partners are also not involved as “lovers,” there is, nevertheless, a predictable permanence in the relationships maintained between kick partners, but the motivation for entering into the partnership is clearly understood to be solely for physical gratification. There is usually no economic exchange in this relationship, and the inmates exhibit no jealousy. An inmate is apt to enter such a relationship when she does not wish to assume the responsibilities that a more permanent tie would entail. The object of this relationship is to release sexual tension. Kick partners sometimes consist of a group of several women among whom partners are exchanged and friendly relations exist between all members concerned. To the extent that kick partners are “discreet,” the behavior is not looked down upon by the inmates.

Every society has a reserve of members from which potential mates may be obtained. When resources are limited, or because of cultural prescriptions, mates may be drawn from other groups. In the female prison, the kick partner is an individual who may be drawn into a permanent tie. And there is also the possibility that the square will in time come to “see the light” and enter into the inmate social organization. But there is one category of inmates in prison, namely, those labeled cherries, who constitute an uncommitted sizeable reserve for potential mates, as they are the inmates who have never been “turned out”—initiated into homosexual practices. Cherries, however, are not squares. Often they are young and first offenders, and they are usually initiated by older women. Cherries in this context are “hep” individuals, i.e., know what the score is from the point of view of the prisoners, but for one reason or another have not engaged in homosexuality. Sometimes a short sentence may be the deciding factor; a preference not to become emotionally involved; or it may be that the individual decides that this mode of adjustment may not be desirable.

One who assumes a false part or assumes a character other than the real is despised for his hypocrisy both within and without the prison gates. Within the female prison, the punk is despised for pretense and deceit. In the male prison, it will be recalled that the “punk” is an inmate who plays the submissive part in a homosexual relationship because he is coerced into doing so. In this respect it is said that “punks” differ and may be distinguished from “fags,” who it is said are
"born" not "made." In a sense, "fags" resemble the lesbians for it is said by the inmates that they are "born that way," or "something happened to them in their childhood."

The punk in the female prison, on the other hand, is the inmate so designated because she acts like a female, that is, takes on the coquettish mannerisms of a woman when the expected behavior is that of the male. The behavior of the punk elicits a combination of anger and ridicule from the inmates. The tendency is to heap blame upon the punk, because the punk's "impotence" is not a constitutional failure, but, rather, is due to incomplete role learning. Responsibility, therefore, is placed upon the individual. Punks are, as it were, self-proclaimed studs without substance—unconvincing sexual deviates. The punk is despised and ridiculed by the inmates.

While the punk is guilty of incomplete role learning, the turnabout, on the other hand, claims expertise at playing both male and female roles. As a matter of fact, she not only describes herself glowingly in terms of her versatility, that is, "good either way," but stands ready to put her boasted skill to the test. Such protean versatility, however, is viewed with amused contempt by the inmates. As a prisoner put it, "There's a lot of talk, but not the right kind of talk. She should know what she is and stay that way. And we tell them, 'Get yourself together and find out what you are!'"

The female inmates prefer a structured situation in their prison world, and inmates playing male roles one day and female roles the next confuse the issue greatly, especially for the inmate who may be planning a strategy of conquest. In addition, anything which tends to decrease the "male" population in the prison is apt to be alarming to the inmates. It is not surprising, therefore, that the turnabout is held in low esteem.

**CONCLUSION**

The social roles as distinguished and labeled by the female inmates constitute the basic structure of social relationships formed by the inmates in response to the problems of a prison commitment. While it is apparent from the previous discussion that some argot roles are mutually exclusive, other roles clearly are not. Furthermore, an inmate may assume one role soon after commitment, for example, such as square, but may assume many other roles at a later point in time if drawn into the inmate social organization.

In addition to the comparisons with the male prison community that have already been made, there are other important differences that may be pointed out at this time. Consistent with the cultural definition of the female as nonaggressive, the roles of violence that emerge in the male prison, namely, those of "wolf," "tough," "gorilla," "hipster," and "ball buster," are notably absent among the female inmates. Also significant is the fact that a role resembling the structure of the "right guy" who is such a dominant figure in the male prison does not emerge in the female prison. Concepts such as "fair play," "courage," and the like—which are consistent with the concepts of endurance, loyalty, and dignity associated with the "right guy"—are not meaningful to the female. Although it is true that the norm of inmate loyalty exists in the prison world, the popular culture of women as untrustworthy is imported into the prison world and serves both to neutralize many deviant acts and to furnish the rationale for their commitment.

The need to assert or defend one's femininity, in the same way that the male inmate must prove his masculinity in the group if his manhood is called into question, clearly does not arise for the female inmate. This is a
reflection of the self-orientation of the female, and the fact that the female validates her femininity by proving she can attract men. In other words, it appears that general features of American society in connection with the cultural definitions ascribed to male and female roles are imported into the prison and are reflected in the structure of social relationships formed by the inmates. Nowhere is this more dramatically revealed than in the extraordinary function of the homoy role with its extended implications for the reentry of the inmate into civil society. From the same vantage point, we saw that the function of the pincher's role serves to control the physical distance between inmates engaging in illicit activities on the one hand, and the snitcher on the other, in order to make it possible for the female inmates to avoid discovery and punishment.

The number of roles clustered about homosexual behavior clearly reveals the problems and concerns of the female inmates in connection with adjustment to deprivation of heterosexual relationships. Moreover, the distinctions made by the inmates as to motivation, role assumed, adeptness with which the assumed role is played, and so on, indicate the values and expectations of the inmates with respect to this behavior. But the rights and obligations attached to a legitimate "marital" relationship automatically close off much interaction among the inmates, as inmates assuming this type of relationship must account for all of their contacts with members of the "opposite sex." As the inmates move closer to legitimate relationships in the prison, then, the refinement of roles becomes necessary in order to control and to account for the behavior of every inmate in the system.

The cultural orientation of males, however, precludes legitimate marriage and family groupings as a feasible alternative solution for the male prisoners, as the serious adoption of a female role is contrary to the definition of the male role as masculine. Hence, family groups do not emerge in the male prison. It is noteworthy that in the male prison the "fags" and "punks" are both held in derision by the vast majority of male inmates as it is felt that they have sacrificed their manhood, but the homosexuality of "wolves" is looked upon as a temporary adjustment to sexual tensions generated by the prison setting. The absence of sentiment and the aggressive behavior of the "wolf" is consistent with the cultural definition of the masculine role, and thus homosexuality loses the taint of femininity in the prison that male homosexuality tends to carry in civil society. In addition, the cultural orientation of the male role with respect to demonstrations of affection toward another member of the same sex clearly precludes the adoption of legitimate feminine roles by male inmates in informal kinship groupings such as those found among the female inmates. The ease with which women may demonstrate acts of affection, both verbally and physically, toward members of the same sex, perhaps may provide a predisposition to widespread homosexuality and its ready acceptance under the extreme conditions of isolation in the prison setting. This fact alone, however, is not enough to account for the emergence of the female inmate social system.

Why do these remarkable differences in inmate culture emerge in the two prison communities? Two theoretical positions have already been posed. The first of these is the typical structural-functional analysis of total institutions which asserts that behavior systems of various types of inmates are a result of the conditions of imprisonment. However, when we consider that the deprivations of imprisonment were found to be present in the female prison studied and keenly felt by the female prisoners—yet the typical cul-
tural system which emerges in the adult male prison is not present—we must conclude that the differences in structural form found in the two prison communities are inadequately explained by current functional analysis solely as a response to the deprivations of imprisonment. The deprivations may provide necessary conditions for the emergence of an inmate system, but they are not in themselves sufficient to account for the structural form that the inmate social system assumes in the male and female prison communities.

The second interpretation views inmate culture as somehow imported into the prison world from the external world by the inmates who compose that culture, through the particular attitudes and values which inmates learned prior to entering the prison. This position has been most forcibly suggested by Schrag, Irwin, and Cressey, and calls our attention to the thesis that the behavior patterning of inmates is influenced by pre-prison experiences, social identities, and cultural background. Simply stated, the behavior patterns in the prison are the result of the inmates’ relations in the external world; however, the external world is important only in providing the particular cultural elements that the inmates learn. Inasmuch as the individuals who enter the prison world are not a random sample of the population, the values and attitudes brought into the prison do not comprise a random sample of elements of outside culture; hence, prison culture differs—especially by the presence of increased hostility, violence, and traffic in illicit goods. The three sub-culture groups (thief, convict, and legitimate) in Irwin and Cressey’s typology presumably demonstrate this thesis, as these authors maintain that their three sub-culture groups share learned behaviors which are common and peculiar to them in or out of prison. Elsewhere, it has been cogently pointed out that Irwin and Cressey do not demonstrate that this is so. Nevertheless, they have called attention to the important thesis that the behavior patterning of inmates may be influenced by social identities and cultural backgrounds.

We suggest, rather, that the culture that forms within the prison by males and females can be understood in these terms: the prison inmate social system is not an intrinsic response to the deprivations of imprisonment, although the deprivations of imprisonment may be important in precipitating inmate culture; nor can inmate culture be viewed as a mere reflection of the values and attitudes inmates bring into the prison world. The evidence presented here suggests that the male and female inmate cultures are a response to the deprivations of prison life, but the nature of the response in both prison communities is influenced by the differential participation of males and females in the external culture. The culture that emerges within the prison structure may be seen to incorporate and reflect the total external social structure; that is, the way in which roles are defined in the external world influence the definitions made within the prison. General features of

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36 Julian Roebuck, “A Critique of Thieves, Convicts, and the Inmate Culture,” Social Problems, 11 (Fall, 1963), pp. 193-200. It should be pointed out that Schrag’s analysis also remains unclear, for at least one point he comments: “Juxtaposed with the official organization of the prison is an unofficial social system originating within the institution and regulating inmate conduct with respect to local issues, such as length of sentence, relations among prisoners, contacts with staff members and other civilians, food, sex, and health, among other things.” This suggests that all inmates face a number of common problems of adjustment as a result of incarceration and that social organization develops to provide solutions. See Clarence Schrag, “Some Foundations for a Theory of Correction,” in Cressey (ed.), The Prison, op. cit., p. 342.
American society with respect to the cultural definitions and content of male and female roles are brought into the prison setting and they function to determine the direction and focus of the inmate cultural system. These general features I have suggested are those concerned with the orientation of life goals for males and females; second, cultural definitions with respect to dimensions of passivity and aggression; third, acceptability of public expression of affection displayed toward a member of the same sex; and, finally, perception of the same sex with respect to what I have called the popular culture.

It is the system of roles and statuses that is imported into the prison setting, and not merely the values and attitudes of the individuals who enter the prison world. It is in these terms that the importance attached to the female role, marriage ties, and family groups can be understood as salient elements of prison culture in the female prison community, but not in the male prison community. It would seem, then, that there is greater unity between the inner and outer worlds than has heretofore been thought. Accordingly, greater understanding of the prison communities may be accomplished by focusing our attention on the relationship of the external and internal cultures rather than trying to understand the prison as an institution isolated from the larger society.