Mitchellville: a study of the adaptation responses of women in prison

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Mitchellville: A study of the adaptation responses of women in prison

by

Richard Statler Jones

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Sociology has produced an extensive literature on prisons and their occupants. The principal focus within this literature has been on prison organization and inmate subcultures. Such prison studies were based on the experiences of long-term male convicts in maximum security prisons. Because women have traditionally comprised only three to four percent of the prison population in this country (Bowker, 1981), relatively little attention has been given to female prison inmates.

Prior to 1960, most of the literature on women's prisons and female prisoners has fallen fall into one of five categories. The first category consists of articles that are programmatic in nature (Addition, 1957; Coggeshall and Menken, 1933; Williams, 1957). For example, Coggeshall and Menken (1933) developed a guide for the care and treatment of women prisoners. Included in this guide are discussions of management, location of the institution, training of the staff, treatment programs, and the training of inmates. The purpose of the guide was to assist in bringing about higher standards to existing institutions and to provide a model for the development of new institutions.

A second category consists of autobiographical accounts of released inmates (Bryan, 1953; O'Hare, 1923). For example, Helen Bryan (1953) was the Executive Secretary of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee. She was convicted of contempt of Congress for failing to release books and records of her organization to the House Committee on
Un-American Activities. She was sentenced to a three month term in the federal women's penitentiary at Alderson. The book provides a first-hand account of the experiences of a woman in prison, describing the impact of being deprived of freedom, the tension of living under prison discipline, and the constant fear and apprehension that she faced throughout her imprisonment.

A third category is made up of historical accounts of women's prisons and legislation focusing on institutions for women (Lekkerkerker, 1931; Rogers, 1922). Rogers (1922), for example, presented a brief chronological survey of the legislation establishing reformatories for women. This survey included a classification by topics of the provisions of the individual laws, and a summary of recent tendencies in relation to the ideal legislation.

A fourth category consists of sensational exposes of women's prisons (Burnham, 1958; Kellogg, 1950; McManus, 1960). Kellogg (1950), a former correspondent for the Los Angeles Times and a veteran screenwriter, voluntarily served time in prison to get an inside story of women behind bars to gather material for a movie. She discovered that most state penitentiaries for women are ridden with corruption and political favoritism. Kellogg concluded that "most state prisons function as crime universities for women, in which adolescent newcomers are given courses by experts in evil doing, and then are returned to society with a hatred of the law that is guaranteed to bring them back to the university for post graduate work."

The final category consists of attempts to establish the
criminality of women (Bishop, 1931; Kellor, 1900; Pollak, 1950). Kellor (1900) sought to follow-up on Lombroso's Theory of Atavism, which maintains that the criminal possesses more degenerative characteristics and stigmata than do other classes of people. Kellor took anatomical measures of female criminals, including their weight, height, hand grasp, distance between arches, orbits, corners of the eyes and crown to chin. According to Kellor, the measurements have a bearing upon the relation of heredity and environment to crime.

The mid-1960s brought about the beginning of the scientific study of the informal social structure developed by incarcerated women (Giallombardo, 1966; Ward and Kassebaum, 1965). These early studies were designed to examine the prison from a sociological perspective, as a system of roles and functions, and to provide a basis for comparisons with the literature on male prisons.

Earlier research on the male prison had suggested that male inmates tend to organize into an overall symbiotic structure characterized by a shared normative system which is epitomized in a prison code (Clemmer, 1940; Sykes and Messinger, 1960; Wheeler, 1961; Garabedian, 1963). This inmate code is a rejection of the conventional norms of society. The studies by Ward and Kassebaum (1965) and Giallombardo (1966) found that women experience the same pains of incarceration as do men, and that an informal social structure of inmates arises in women's prisons in a similar solidarity opposition model (inmates form a unified group with norms and values that are in opposition to the goals and objectives of the prison staff and
administration). However, the social structure that develops in women's prisons differs from that found in men's prisons. In contrast to the males, female inmates tend to organize into relatively enduring primary relationships, often involving dyadic homosexual attachments and extensive "family" relationships (Ward and Kassebaum, 1965; Giallombardo, 1966).

Although most studies of women prisoners have found that female inmates tend to organize into enduring primary relationships, the specific form the relationship takes varies from study to study. For example, in Ward and Kassebaum's study (1965), the female's response to imprisonment resulted in dyadic homosexual relationships. Giallombardo (1966) found that women respond to the deprivations of incarceration by creating a make-believe family structure that is based on a homosexual marriage. And finally, LeShanna (1969) found the presence of the make-believe family, but most of these families were matricentric (a family headed by one woman rather than based on a homosexual dyad). Nearly all subsequent research focused on the homosexual dyad and kinship systems as the primary response of women to prison.

The present study is a descriptive analysis of the prison experience of female inmates in the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women at Mitchellville. The central research questions that shape this study are:

1. What are the primary concerns and expectations that women have prior to the beginning of their prison sentence?

2. How do these prior fears and expectations influence the
inmates initial definition of the prison situation?

3. How does the inmate's definition of the situation change through early participation and direct experience in prison?

4. What do the inmates perceive as the primary deprivations they face as a result of incarceration?

5. How do the inmates respond or adapt to these deprivations?

6. What type of relationships are inmates able to maintain with the outside world?

7. What impact do outside relationships (or lack of relationships) have on the inmate's response to incarceration?

The present chapter has presented a brief overview of the prison literature, along with a presentation of the research questions that will guide this study. The following chapter will be a discussion of the theoretical framework for this study and an in-depth presentation of the research on women's prisons.
CHAPTER II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The prison is one of several types of organizational structures that may be classified as "total institutions." According to Goffman (1961:4-5), "total institutions are organizational structures wherein the specific welfare of the individuals charged to and/or governed by the institutions often times is secondary to the efficient functioning of the formal system." These institutions are generally characterized by involuntary membership, a centralized area for all activities, a rigorous time schedule, and constant surveillance (Goffman, 1961). The overriding theme of the total institution is control.

There is general agreement in the literature concerning the existence of an informal inmate normative system within the prison, but there is disagreement concerning the determinants of this normative system and how the tenets of this normative system are passed to subsequent populations of inmates. Two general theoretical models have been developed to account for the consequences of imprisonment. Cline (1968) labels these two perspectives the "deprivation model" and the "importation model."

The deprivation model emerged first and has provided the conceptual foundation for a substantial proportion of the existing research (Thomas, 1975). The deprivation model has also been referred to as the theory of indigenous origins, the functional explanation, and the institutional-product paradigm. This model views inmate subculture primarily as indigenous to the conditions of prison life. This model focuses on "prisonization" as socialization into the inmate culture, on
the acceptance of the "convict code" of conduct. Proponents of the deprivation model are concerned primarily with: 1) the processing and induction procedures that contribute to what might be termed the "homogenization" of inmates; 2) the problems and deprivations of confinement that are either directly or indirectly a joint product of the prison organization and the position held by inmates within that organization; and 3) the collective or subcultural response that inmates make to their common problems (Thomas and Peterson, 1977).

In reference to the first concern, it is argued that inmates enter the prison having already been exposed to the degradations associated with arrest, trial, and conviction. Such a "status degradation ceremony," like ceremonies in general, consists of rituals which serve to bring about and give public acknowledgement to a significant change in a person's social position. By these rituals "the public identity of the actor is transformed into something looked on as lower in the local scheme of social types" (Garfinkel, 1956:420). Further, the change in identity effected by these rituals is held to be "total." The new identity rests on what a person has done as well as why he is supposed to have done it. The status degradation ceremony is said to contribute significantly to the final conclusion that the deviant actor is the "type of person" who would do what he is alleged to have done.

On their entry into prison, inmates are exposed to still another set of experiences which tend to reaffirm their status as rejected members of the larger society. "They are stripped of personal possessions, individual decision-making prerogatives, many legal
rights, and in short, deprived of their identity as individuals" (Thomas, 1975:485). However, by virtue of their status as inmates, they must face what Sykes (1958:63-83) has termed the "pains of imprisonment: 1) loss of liberty; 2) loss of goods and services; 3) denial of heterosexual relationships; 4) loss of autonomy; and 5) loss of security." The rigors imposed on inmates by the prison officials do not represent minor irritants which they can somehow endure; instead, the conditions of custody involve profound attacks on the prisoner's self-image or sense of personal worth, and these psychological pains may be far more threatening than physical maltreatment (Maslow, 1941).

Under the deprivation model, imprisonment is viewed as punishing the offender in a variety of ways extending beyond the simple facts of incarceration. As Sykes and Messinger (1960:15) have noted, "however just or necessary such punishment may be, their importance lies in the fact that they form a set of harsh social conditions to which the population of prisoners must respond or adapt itself." It has been suggested that the inmates' need to alleviate the deprivations and frustrations of prison life gives rise to the functional significance of the inmate code or system of values. This convict code is most often presented as a sort of countercultural adherence to an alternative set of norms, which implies a corresponding rejection of the conventional code espoused by the prison staff and administration (Sykes, 1958; Sykes and Messinger, 1960). This implicit code acts as a guide for the inmate in his relations with fellow prisoners and prison officials, with the dominant theme of the code being group cohesion.
As Sykes and Messinger (1960:16) have noted, "the pains of imprisonment become less severe as a population of prisoners moves in the direction of solidarity. These deprivations cannot be eliminated, but they can be partly neutralized." A cohesive inmate society provides the prisoner with a meaningful social group with which he can identify, helps to solve the problems of personal security, and supports a system of shared beliefs. This inmate society also institutionalizes the values of "dignity" and the ability to "take it" in a number of norms while reinforcing those norms through informal social controls (Sykes and Messinger, 1960).

In summary, the deprivation model suggests that the inmate encounters a variety of problems and frustrations associated with being processed through the criminal justice system which place the inmate apart from society and at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy. Once imprisoned, the inmate encounters numerous deprivations or pains associated with imprisonment which reaffirm his new status and identity as an inmate. These deprivations are somewhat alleviated or neutralized through a collective response, which is in clear-cut opposition to the desires of prison officials.

Criticisms of the deprivation model center around the closed-system character of this perspective (Irwin and Cressey, 1962; Thomas, 1970; Thomas and Foster, 1972, 1973). First, critics of the deprivation model claim that this approach ignores variables which may be removed from the immediate context of the prison but which may have a considerable influence on the quality of adaptations made by prison
Inmates. Secondly, the deprivation model is criticized as being unable to explain why the content of the subcultural system has frequently been described as negative, oppositional, and anti-social, particularly in the typical maximum security penitentiary. The presence of common problems of adjustment may be viewed as a sufficient condition for some kind of response but certainly not for a specific response (Thomas, 1975).

An assertion that the prison experience is not the same for everyone is implicit in John Irwin's (1970) classification scheme of prisoners. Irwin identified six role types found in prisons that are based on a person's involvement with a criminal behavior system and the acquisition of a criminal perspective and identity. Irwin labels these role types as the Thief, Hustler, Dope Fiend, Head, Disorganized Criminal, and the State-Raised Youth. Irwin (1970:7) also believes that "some persons are convicted of a felony, sent to prison, and released without ever identifying with criminal behavior systems." Irwin identified two types of felons which have non-criminal identities: the Man in the Lower Class and the Square John. So, instead of one solidary opposition model emerging in the prison as the deprivation model predicts, there are a variety of responses to incarceration that are based on pre-prison criminal and non-criminal identities.

These criticisms of the deprivation model have been instrumental in stimulating the development of a much broader conceptualization of responses to imprisonment, the importation model. The importation
model should not be viewed as an alternative to the deprivation model, but rather as an attempt to broaden the scope of the existing conceptualizations.

The major theme of the importation model is that the problems associated with confinement are certainly not the sole determinants of the extent to which inmates will become responsive to the dictates of the inmate subculture (Thomas and Peterson, 1977). Rather, socialization processes that the inmate was exposed to prior to incarceration will help determine how receptive he is to the inmate system.

In more general terms, the importation model focuses on how factors external to the prison situation affect patterns of adjustment within the prison. Proponents of this perspective hypothesize direct links between various dimensions of contact with the outside world and the form of intraprison adaptation. Also, the extent to which an inmate holds either favorable or unfavorable definitions of his postprison life-chances is viewed as an additional determinant of adaptation (Thomas and Foster, 1973).

The research on both of these models is quite extensive. In support of the deprivation model, assimilation into the inmate-normative system has been found to be related to length of time confined (Wheeler, 1961; Tittle and Tittle, 1964; Schwartz, 1971; Thomas and Peterson, 1977), phase of institutional career (Wheeler, 1961; Garabedian, 1963; Wellford, 1967), powerlessness or alienation (Thomas and Zingraff, 1976; Thomas and Peterson, 1977), interaction
with inmates (Wheeler, 1961), and orientation toward staff (Schwartz, 1971). The importation model has also found support in research linking adoption of the inmate subculture to prisoner role types (Garabedian, 1963; Akers et al., 1977), preprison employment stability (Thomas and Peterson, 1977), prior commitments (Schwartz, 1971), age at first arrest or conviction (Schwartz, 1971; Thomas, 1973; Thomas and Peterson, 1977), number of arrests (Schwartz, 1971), migration (Schwartz, 1971), social class (Thomas, 1973), and contact with the extra-prison world (Tittle and Tittle, 1964; Thomas, 1973). Both the deprivation and importation models receive support in cross-cultural research of Akers et al. (1977) in accounting for the extent to which prisoners adopt the inmate code.

There are few tests of the deprivation and importation models in women's prisons. Jensen and Jones (1976) studied the adoption of the inmate code by female felons and misdemeanants imprisoned in a minimum security institution. They found that subscription to the inmate code was greatest in the middle phase of the institutional career, although differences were statistically insignificant. Other structural variables, such as contacts outside of prison, relationships with staff, and participation in special programming, had little effect on prisonization. With respect to imported background characteristics of the inmates, Jensen and Jones (1976) concluded that younger inmates, those with urban backgrounds, and felons were more likely to adopt the inmate code. These authors argued that both situational and background imported variables were relevant to acceptance of the inmate code, but
that the background variables were superior in terms of explained variance.

Following the research of Jensen and Jones, Hartnagel and Gillan (1980) sought to evaluate the deprivation and importation models, and their possible combination, as explanations of the assimilation of female inmates into the informal prisoner normative system at two mixed-custody grade institutions in Canada. Neither model received unqualified support, and there was some favorable evidence for both models; however, the importation model received somewhat greater support. The two variables with the largest effects in code adherence were the imported characteristics of age and prior imprisonment. Two sets of imported characteristics—personal characteristics (age, race, marital status, education and area of residence) and criminal history (offense category and prior imprisonment)—accounted for 43% of the explained variation in adoption of the inmate code. But, not all the data supported the importation model. For example, the variable offense category lost its significant effect on code adherence when the deprivation model variables were included in the regression equations. Therefore, these additional variables appeared to intervene between offense category and code adherence. Also, the deprivation variable of time served exerted a moderate but direct effect upon subscription to the inmate code, as did the prison relationships variable of staff friends.

Hartnagel and Gillan (1980) concluded that younger inmates, married inmates, and those with previous imprisonment bring to the
prison a set of values supportive of the informal inmate normative system. The deprivation variables, however, of time served and staff friends directly affect adoption of the inmate code. Also, the deprivations associated with imprisonment increase with the length of time served, and adopting the inmate code appears to mitigate these deprivations. Finally, the imported characteristics of offense category influences adoption of the inmate code through its effects upon the temporal deprivation factors (time served and time remaining); since conviction for a more serious crime results in a longer sentence, this intensifies the deprivations associated with incarceration which in turn leads to a greater acceptance of the inmate code.

In summary, research on the deprivation and importation models indicates favorable evidence for both. Therefore, as Thomas and Peterson (1977) suggests, the importation model should be seen as an extension of the deprivation model, rather than as a competing model. The deprivation model has been criticized for its closed-system basis and its emphasis on the immediate conditions of confinement. The importation model addresses this criticism by noting a linkage between preprison experience and patterns of prisonization. The purpose of the present study is not to test the explanatory power of the deprivation and importation models. Rather, these models provide a general framework for the study of the prison experience of incarcerated women. The remainder of this chapter will examine the concept of prisonization and provide a general overview of the research specifically on women's prisons.
Prisonization

"Prisonization," a concept that has been central in the prison literature, has been defined by Clemmer (1940:279) as "the taking on in greater or less degree of the folkways, customs, and general culture of the penitentiary." Prisonization is a process operating over time whereby the prison inmate is first initiated into and then becomes a part of the inmate social and cultural system. Clemmer suggests that no inmate can remain completely "unprisonized." Merely being an incarcerated offender exposes one to certain "universal features of imprisonment." These features include assuming a subordinate status, learning prison argot, taking on a prison style of eating habits, engaging in various forms of deviant behavior, and developing negative attitudes towards guards.

In an early attempt to measure prisonization, Wheeler (1961) developed an index based on the extent to which inmates expressed opposition to staff norms or were in low conformity to the conventional expectations of prison staff (an element of prisonization). The purpose of the Wheeler study was to determine whether or not the inmates' orientation towards the prison social world changed throughout their prison career. The question raised by Wheeler is whether, as the inmate moves through the various stages of the prison career, he adopts the norms and values of the prison social world, or does he maintain his free-world orientation that he brought with him to the institution?

Wheeler divided the institutional career into three phases: 1) those inmates who serve less than six months in the correctional
community; 2) those inmates who have less than six months remaining to serve; and 3) those inmates who have served more than six months and have more than six months left to serve of their sentence. Wheeler found a curvilinear relationship between institutional career phase and conformity to staff expectations, with the greatest amount of conformity appearing in the early and later phases of the institutional career. In the early phase of confinement, the prisoner's primary reference groups are those persons in the free world. As the prisoner progresses to the middle phase, the outside world lessens in importance, and there is an increasing influence of the inmate code. In the later phase of the institutional career, the prisoner nears completion of his sentence and again begins to orient himself with the outside world. This U-shaped pattern hold true for both first-timers and recidivists.

Garabedlan (1963) also measured prisonization as degree of conformity or nonconformity to staff norms, and others have used similar measures (Glaser, 1964; Wellford, 1967; Schwartz, 1973). Garabedian discovered essentially the same U-shaped pattern of conformity to staff norms as Wheeler did, but the pattern held primarily for Square John and Right Guy role types and not for Con Politicians and Outlaws.

Atchley and McCabe (1968) replicated the Wheeler study but, whereas Wheeler conducted his study in a state reformatory, Atchley and McCabe conducted theirs in a maximum security, intensive treatment federal institution. Both the types of inmates and the organization of
the staff in their study differed from Wheeler's. Atchley and McCabe's findings did not agree with Wheeler's in any respect. In their study, prisonization was not related to time served for either first offenders or recidivists. Also, institutional career phase was unrelated to levels of conformity to staff norms.

Akers et al. (1977) studied several prisons from five different countries. They tested the same hypotheses of the earlier mentioned researchers and found that the hypotheses were not supported when all prisons within each country were considered, but the hypotheses were supported for particular prisons and not for others. Akers et al. (1977:225-6) noted that "the relationships are affected by the type of institution in which the inmates are incarcerated, the role types they take on in the prison, and the extent of their criminal background."

Other researchers have conceptualized and measured prisonization as the extent to which inmates endorse or report positive adherence to items stating normative prescriptions and proscriptions of the inmate culture rather than adherence or non-adherence to the administrative code. Thomas (1973) defines prisonization as "normative assimilation" and has developed a scale based on agreement and disagreement with such statements as "the best way to do time is to keep your mouth shut and never let the staff know that anything is getting you down." Tittle's (1964) measure of "subscription to an inmate code" makes no reference to staff norms, but rather is a scale measuring loyalty to other inmates, nonacceptance of ratting and squealing, and value placed on manipulating the official system. The findings of these studies lend
support to those of Wheeler's by showing that prisonization is related to both time served and institutional career phase.

Whichever concept or measure is used, no assumption is made by the researchers that all or most of the prisoners endorse the inmate code and are involved in the inmate social system. The only assumption underlying these studies is that there is an identifiable inmate social system within the prison and that the normative system is adhered to by enough inmates that we may speak of a system that sets the atmosphere for the entire group.

One obvious limitation of the preceding literature review is the omission of empirical research on incarcerated women. The primary reason for this is that until recently there has been a paucity of research on incarcerated females. An examination of the major works in the area of female corrections follows.

Research on Women's Prisons

Much of the research on female prisoners has attempted to discern the differences between male and female inmates. A study of Frontera (California Institution for Women) by Ward and Kassebaum (1965) focused on the deprivations faced by incarcerated women and their response to the "pains of imprisonment." The authors listed separation from family as the most severe deprivation encountered by women in prison. For example, according to McGowan and Blumenthal (1976), 67% of the female inmates are mothers with an average of 2.4 dependent children. Since most of the children lived with the mother prior to her arrest, one serious problem that inmate mothers are faced with is what to do with
the children during incarceration. Most children live with relatives during their mother's incarceration, but it is not unusual for siblings to be separated because one relative may be unable to care for all of the inmate mother's children.

In American society, women are regarded as more closely linked to the care of children than are fathers. When a woman is separated from her children as a result of incarceration, the custody of the children is usually assigned to relatives (other than the father) or to a private agency. A crucial distinction exists between male and female parents who go to prison. A father in prison presumes that his wife will continue to play her role as mother. A mother in prison is asking her husband to assume the primary responsibility for the care and supervision of the children when his role in the family is that of breadwinner. The dispossession of the mother role also removes an important personal emotional object from women prisoners.

Emotional and geographical separation (Sobol, 1980) creates another very serious problem in that it affects the relationship between mother and child and presents another obstacle to making a smooth transition during the mother's return to her family and re-entry into her community. Lundberg et al. (1975) studied the attitudes that imprisoned mothers have in regards to their children. All the imprisoned mothers expressed concerns they had about being away from their children. The majority of the mothers felt guilt about depriving their children of their care and about the children suffering for what they had done. Also, the mothers feared that the children would stop
loving them and become more attached to their present caretakers.

A second deprivation encountered by the inmates is the inability of prisoners to predict what was going to happen to them, which Galtung (1961) has referred to as "institutionalized uncertainty." This uncertainty stems from two different sources. The first source is indeterminate sentencing, which precludes the possibility of knowing when one will be paroled. The second source of uncertainty stems from difficulties in understanding the rules and procedures within the prison.

Ward and Kassebaum (1965:28-29) concluded that the painful conditions of confinement which male prisoners must bear apply to female prisoners as well, although in different degrees. First, the material deprivations for women are somewhat less, but the dispossession of familial roles of wife and mother and the separation from family are more severe. Secondly, women are confined in institutions that are less harsh in appearance or functions as those for men, but their isolation from family and friends is just as great. Third, there is less danger for females from physical attack or assault by other prisoners and little danger of physical maltreatment by the guards, but women are as frustrated as males in trying to determine frames of reference for behavior and devise efforts which will help win parole. In sum, all of these deprivations constitute a severe attack on the prisoner's self-image and modes of living, and prisoners, male or female, react defensively.

It has been consistently reported in the literature that one
response of male prisoners to incarceration has been the establishment of a sub rosa social system. In their study, Ward and Kassebaum (1965) were also interested in whether the reactions of incarcerated women were similar to those reported for men, especially in the endorsement of the convict code and the way that different social roles develop. The authors concluded that overall support for the existence of an inmate code is minimal. The inmates who demonstrated the greatest adherence to a normative system were also the most cynical of the institution, staff, and programs. Code adoption was found to be related to age at first arrest and the number of disciplinary reports on the inmate (1965:41-46). Ward and Kassebaum went on to say that the central mode of adaptation for women prisoners was the homosexual alliance. At this point the authors departed from the original question of comparing inmate role adaptations between men and women and undertook an analysis of female homosexuality in prison.

The findings of Giallombardo's study (1966) at Alderson (Federal Reformatory for Women in West Virginia) are consistent with those reported by Ward and Kassebaum in many respects. In both studies, the problems of confinement to be solved by female inmates are the same as those which face the male inmate. And, like males, psychological and physical withdrawal are not significant modes of adaptation to mitigate the pains of incarceration. Also, the evidence of homosexual relations are similar to those reported at Frontera, in that homosexual relationships are established voluntarily between the principals involved, with no physical coercion present. This alliance is not only
a release of sexual tension, but also covers a broad range of interpersonal behavior.

Where a major difference does occur between the findings of Ward and Kassebaum and Giallombardo is that Giallombardo (1966:129) maintained that women attempt to create a "substitute universe" wherein they are able to preserve an identity relevant to free society (1966:129). This identity revolves around prescribed societal sex roles. The focal point of female inmate adaptation is the creation of make-believe family structures in order to preserve a female identity. In turn, this family system provides the structural conduciveness for the creation of, and participation in, female homosexual alliances. Also, the kinship system stabilizes the inmate community by reconciling competing and conflicting social motives. It does this by linking people together by a convergence of interests, social and psychological needs, and sentiments. Giallombardo (1966:107) further asserted that little overall inmate social cohesion exists among females since "snitching" on another inmate is a common phenomenon, while this is not the case for males. The reason for this is "the females' self-orientation and their tendency to see one another as rivals (1966:107)."

LeShanna's (1969) investigation at Marysville (Ohio Reformatory for Women) also discovered the presence of the make-believe family, but unlike Giallombardo, most of the families were matricentric, meaning that they did not center around a mother and father united in a homosexual marriage. LeShanna also observed that the most frequently
reported and influential role at the reformatory was that of mother.

Mawby (1982) conducted a study of a prison for women in Britain and compared her findings with those findings reported for American prisons for women. The British prison included a higher proportion of first offenders and more offenders whose crimes are relatively minor than American prisons. Also, the inmate's contacts with family and friends outside the prison appear to be more frequent than in the United States. Mawby found that familial structures and lesbian relationships played a less significant role in the British prison than has been revealed elsewhere. She speculates that the utility of the responses to imprisonment vary according to both the types of women sent to prison and the contact that the women have with the outside world.

A study by Heffernan (1972) was the first attempt to test for the existence of a female inmate normative system (Occoquan Reformatory for Women in Washington, D.C.). The general conclusion of this study is that there is not one, but that three distinct inmate subcultures exist in female institutions. Heffernan labels these the "square" (noncriminal), the "cool" (professional criminals), and the "life" (habitual criminals). The members of each subculture approach imprisonment with a different world view. For example, the square is a person who holds conventional norms and values and does not consider herself to be a "true" criminal. She identifies with outside reference groups, the staff, and the official policies of the institution. The cool stresses inmate solidarity in an attempt to decrease the
probability of any kind of system disruption caused by inmate-inmate conflict. The life subculture could be said to be institutionalized in that its members desire "substitute services" from the prison for their everyday life including material possessions, affection, status, prestige, etc. (1972:164-169). Heffernan (1972:167-169) devotes part of her analysis to the interchange of these groups. She concludes that these are not three normative systems with distinct boundaries. Rather, there is blending of these boundaries between groups and considerable interaction between the members of each subsystem.

Heffernan (1972), in acknowledging the apparent differences in the literature, states that the precise nature of homosexual relationships in custodial institutions for women is difficult to determine. Following the work of Selling (1931), Heffernan (1972:90-98) suggests that there are at least four different levels of affective relationships occurring within the institution. The first level is friendships, whereby inmates may form bonds of friendship similar to those recognized in the free community. Secondly, there are play families, where inmates may adopt nonconjugal family roles, taking on the rights and responsibilities typically assigned to mother, father, sister, and daughter with the full awareness of the play element involved. The third level is playing, where inmates may "play" at marriage in the same way, interacting as husband and wife but not engaging in sexual intercourse. And finally, overt homosexuality, where inmates may form a full homosexual liaison that involves both sexual relations and the public behavior expected of a married couple.
Nearly all studies on the informal inmate social structures of women and juvenile girls has examined the dimensions of the prison family and offered an explanation for its existence. A variety of terms have been used to represent this type of relationship, including "make-believe families" (Wentz, 1965), "artificial and homosexual families" (Holyoak, 1972), the "sillies" (Giallombardo, 1974; Wentz, 1965), "fantasy families" (Lampman, 1973), "pseudo-families" (Foster, 1975; Selling, 1931), "play families" (Heffernan, 1972), "prison families and imaginary kinship relationships" (Williams and Fish, 1974), "state families" (Burkhart, 1973), "quasi-families" (Brown, 1977), and "putative families and fictive kin" (Ball, 1972). All of these terms refer to forms of quasi-kinship whereby inmates use kinship terminology (a) to express their wish for stable and durable bonds represented by our ideal of the family, and (b) to reinforce and maintain existing close relationships (Propper, 1982).

The first reference to a pseudo-family occurs in a study of a home for delinquent girls by Selling (1931). Selling observed that girls often formed mother-daughter type relationships, with older, more aggressive girls furnishing advice and assistance to one or more "daughters." If two younger or less mature girls shared the same mother, they acted towards each other as sisters. Selling maintained that these relationships developed as a non-pathological response to institutionalization.

A later study by Kosofsky and Ellis (1958) also found the existence of the make-believe family in a study of a juvenile
institution. They believed that these families functioned as surrogates for girls who had been deprived of love and security in their actual families.

The research of Heffernan (1972) and Giallombardo (1966, 1974) supported the hypothesis that prison kinship structures arise, in part, out of the deprivations of imprisonment and that they fulfill important functions for the female inmate. Giallombardo (1966) observed that prison families performed virtually all the functions normally attributed to the actual family except procreation. Not only do prison families provide integrative and conflict-regulating functions which contribute to the equilibrium of the prison society, but they also meet many individual needs, including affection, passing time, security, belonging, advice, friendship, and loneliness. But both Heffernan and Giallombardo emphasized the significance of the concept of latent cultural identity as a factor in the formation of the make-believe family, referring to the pre-institutional identity which the female offender brings with her into the prison setting. The general features of the cultural definitions and content of male and female roles in American society are brought into the prison setting. This functions to determine the direction and focus of the inmate cultural system. The reason that women construct the kinship structures in response to the deprivations of imprisonment, while the men do not, is because females are socialized to conceive of themselves, their peer relations and their need-satisfactions, primarily in terms of family roles and situations.
There is no evidence in the literature that female inmates are ever forced into joining a family group, although some informal peer pressures are operative. Foster (1975:73) views the pseudo-family as a "voluntary association of deviants who are attempting to manage their own identities in response to the depersonalization and status degradation of a custodial regime."

Propper (1982) acknowledges that confusion exists in the literature between homosexuality and make-believe family relationships. One reason given for this confusion is that the argot terms are often identical for both types of relationships. Also, the terms fail to distinguish between overt sexual activity, erotic crushes, make-believe family relationships, and close asexual friendships. Estimates of participation in make-believe family roles range from 0% (Ward and Kassebaum, 1965) to 71% (Wentz, 1965), with the highest figure attributed to a juvenile correctional facility. Other estimates of participation in make-believe family roles in correctional facilities for adult females have been provided by Giallombardo (30%), Heffernan (36%), and LeShanna (48%). Estimates of homosexuality range from 0% (Feld, 1977) to 94% (Giallombardo, 1974), with the highest rates again found in juvenile institutions. Other estimates of the prevalence of homosexuality in prisons for women have been provided by Mitchell (20%), Simmons (21%), and Hopper (49%). These estimates could indicate real differences among institutions or spurious variations because researchers used different methods of collecting data or different definitions of the behaviors.
In summary, it can be concluded from prior research that the painful conditions of confinement which male prisoners must bear apply to female prisoners. What differs between them is the structural form of the response of male and female prisoners to the deprivations of incarceration. Also, some confusion remains as to the precise nature of the female response to incarceration, as is indicated in differences found in the structure of the make-believe family and the broad range of estimates of participation in make-believe families. In the present study, we will examine features of both the deprivation and importation models to help us better understand the inmate social system at the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women at Mitchellville.
CHAPTER III. DATA AND METHODS

Description of Mitchellville

This study is a descriptive analysis of the prison experience of female inmates in the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women at Mitchellville (ICIW). This facility was established by the Iowa Legislature in 1982. Prior to that time, women offenders were incarcerated at the Iowa Women's Reformatory in Rockwell City. The decision to move the institution to Mitchellville, which is only ten miles from Des Moines, was made in order to provide broader programming opportunities and better access to families for the residents.

ICIW is the state's only adult correctional facility for women. The institution is designated minimum security with one building serving as a medium security unit. The population of the institution fluctuates between 65 to 105 women housed in five separate cottages with three general living units, one honor unit, and the medium security unit. Reasons cited for the variability in population size are the use of shock incarceration (incarcerating offenders for 90 days) and a court imposed prison population cap or ceiling (when the entire prison population, including men, exceeds a certain number, the parole board is forced to immediately release inmates).

Inmates new to the correctional system begin their prison sentence at the reception center of the Iowa Medical Correctional Center (IMCC) at Oakdale. Most inmates will spend three weeks at this facility, although longer stays may be required for medical reasons or security
concerns. Inmates receive medical evaluation and any immediate medical care and attention needed, dental assessment and completion of some dental work, psychological testing and evaluation, vocational testing and assessment, academic evaluation and assessment, and an orientation to the Iowa Department of Corrections policies and procedures. Once they have completed this phase of their sentence, the inmates are then transferred to the Mitchellville facility.

Inmates received at Mitchellville remain in Unit 5 (the medium security unit) for at least the first week. The classification committee reviews all new inmates within the first week and determines their housing assignments. New inmates admitted to ICIW remain in Unit 5, on a sentence of 25 years to 50 years, for at least three months; on a sentence of 50 years or more, they will remain in Unit 5 for at least six months; and on a sentence of life in prison, the inmate will spend one year in Unit 5. During the first week, inmates receive a copy of the Resident Handbook, which they are expected to read. The classification committee will review with the inmate the primary policies at Mitchellville.

The classification committee is composed of the Program Director, the Security Director and the resident's counselor. This committee meets weekly and interviews all new residents during their first week at ICIW. Inmates come from Oakdale with a custody classification score which is based on a number computed on a standardized form. They also come from IMCC with a treatment needs summary which identifies and prioritizes treatment needs. This, along with case file material, the
resident's stated interest in programs, and the availability of programming, determines the resident's activity schedule. The programs are by sign up; work details are by a hiring process involving application and interview. The classification committee reviews and must approve all work details and classes.

A full time job is not available for every inmate. ICIW requires that a minimum of thirty-six hours a week be spent in structured programming, including work, educational classes, and treatment programs. Most women work at least a portion of the day, while some work full time. It is felt that no inmate should have any difficulty earning thirty-six hours unless they have a very poor work history within the institution. Counselors work with each inmate to develop individual program plans to include at least a portion of the day spent in a work detail with assignment to other classes and activities as determined appropriate. Work details that are available to the inmates are the printing industry, maintenance shop, dietary, housecleaning, teacher aide, librarian, ceramics aide, and recreation aide.

The privilege system at Mitchellville takes into consideration two factors: the amount of time at ICIW, and the computation of weekly ratings received from work supervisor, class instructor, unit officers, and counselor. The scores of all the ratings are added and averaged together to determine what the level is. Simplistically, the better a woman does in her outward behavior, the more highly she is rated. Disciplinary sanctions can reduce a woman's level as well. Privileges that the inmates earn as they progress through the level system include
additional phone time, being able to stay up later in the evening, increased canteen spending limit, Honor Unit assignment, release recommendation, and furlough consideration. Although furloughs are available, very few are eligible or will be eligible for two reasons. First, there has been a continuing tightening of the furlough policy in response to abuse of the policy by both male and female inmates and the negative publicity it has generated. Also, the short length of time that many women spend in the institution has resulted in release taking place before furlough eligibility is met.

Mail is not regulated with the exception of correspondence with other inmates and this is allowed only for blood relatives. Phone calls are available on a sign up basis with up to forty-five minutes of phone time per day. Inmates may call anyone they wish (collect) with the exception of a list of public officials and staff of the Department of Corrections.

Visiting hours are from 9:30 to 11:15 AM, and 1:00 to 4:00 PM daily. Children of residents may stay and eat lunch with their mother. All adult visitors must receive Department of Criminal Investigation clearance. Those on parole or probation may not visit unless they are immediate family and are approved by the Superintendent. At the present time there is no limit to the number of visitors that can be on an inmate's list.

Data Collection

A qualitative methodological approach was chosen for this study because of the type of information that was sought and the size of the
prison population when the study began. The study of women in prison is still in the early stages of development, and the implication drawn from previous studies is that exploratory studies of female prisoners in a variety of institutions is necessary.

A random sample was not conducted for this study because of the size of the prison population (68 inmates when study began) and the fluctuation of the inmate population. Ideally, it would have been best to interview all inmates at ICIW, but that wasn't realistic for a variety of reasons. First, the inmates represent a disenfranchised group, and may see no benefit in participating in the proposed research. There was very little incentive for the inmates to participate, since I was allowed to pay them only $.41/hour (rate of state pay). Also, most of the inmates are tired of the intensive testing and evaluation during their orientation period at Oakdale and may view a sociological study as a continuation of this process.

To gain access to ICIW, I worked through Kay Rhoads, the Program Director at the institution. I first sent her a brief proposal of my study and then met with her to discuss the proposal. Shortly after this meeting, the proposal was forwarded to the Department of Corrections for final approval. Once this was received, I then sent a copy of the proposal to the Human Subjects Committee at Iowa State University for their approval.

The project began when the inmates at Mitchellville were informed that a sociologist from Iowa State University would be at the prison and would like to meet with them to discuss a research project. Their
attendance at this meeting would be voluntary. I arrived at the prison and was informed that I would be meeting with the inmates in their respective cottages. I went to each cottage and visited with the inmates for approximately twenty minutes. During this meeting, I introduced myself, I discussed the study and answered any questions that they had. Following this initial contact, twelve inmates agreed to participate in the study.

An interview guide was developed based on prior research on male and female prisoners. Included in this guide were 170 open and close-ended questions. The interview guide was developed to gain information on the following features of prison life:

1. The early phase of incarceration, including the inmate's orientation to incarceration, deprivations that they faced, and whether or not an inmate code existed at the prison.

2. The informal social organization of inmates at Mitchellville, including groups that developed and inmate role types.

3. The relationships that inmates maintain with the outside world.

4. The relationships that develop among the inmates at ICIW.

5. How inmates cope with stress and depression.

The interview process began May 18, 1985. The interviews lasted anywhere from 70-120 minutes. All but three interviews were conducted in a conference room located in the administration building. Two interviews were conducted in the children's center because the conference room was unavailable and one interview was conducted in the medium security unit for security reasons. All interviews were conducted in private and tape recorded.
Other supplementary sources of data were also used. During the summer 1985, I participated as a group leader in the parenting skills course that was taught at Mitchellville. This class met two nights per week for three months. Eighteen inmates were enrolled in this course at the beginning, but by the end of the summer there were only twelve inmates remaining, primarily due to their release from prison. Since the class was part lecture, I was able to record some of my observations on the spot, and then I would add to these notes after the class ended.

Another source of data were observations that I made in the cafeteria during the lunch period. On the days that I interviewed at the prison, I would spend approximately seventy-five minutes in the cafeteria having lunch with the inmates. I was able to observe territoriality in the cafeteria and would ask very general questions of the group of inmates I would be eating with at the time. These observations were then recorded once I returned to the conference room. Not only did my participation in the parenting class and the cafeteria provide valuable data, it also allowed the residents to ask me questions about myself and the study in a non-threatening environment. As a result of this, a number of inmates asked if they could participate in the study. By the end of the study, a total of thirty-one inmates agreed to participate in this project.

In comparing the sample population for the present study with a general profile of the inmates at Mitchellville during 1982 (latest available figures), we can see that the sample for this study is fairly
Table 1. Comparison of general profile of inmates from 1982 with the sample population for the present study (1985)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>19-56</td>
<td>20-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Children</td>
<td></td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Caucasion</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Native Am./Cauc.</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>10th grade</td>
<td>11th grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 yrs. or less</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over 10 years</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offense</td>
<td>Property</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
representative of the entire population of inmates (see Table 1). One major difference occurs in the comparison of the prison sentence that the inmate is serving. In 1982, only thirty percent of the population were serving a sentence of five years or less, whereas in 1985, this figure increased to forty-two percent. This change reflects a recent tendency nationwide of incarcerating offenders for less serious offenses than had been done in the past.

Data Analysis

As previously mentioned, a combination of open and closed-ended questions were used in the interview guide. The closed-ended questions were used to obtain objective information, including demographic data and inmate attitudes. The open-ended questions were used to obtain a free response, to allow the inmate to answer the question in her own words and from her own perspective. The disadvantage of using the open-ended questions is that the responses are not standardized and the analysis is much more difficult. But, there are many advantages if the information that is sought is complex and the researcher is looking for broad dimensions of the subject matter. Specific advantages include:

1. A response is not forced into a given category.
2. It allows the researcher to probe for additional information or clarification.
3. It allows respondents to adequately explain an answer so it represents their point of view.

The open-ended questions were used to obtain information about the inmate informal social organization, role types, and relationships.
Thus, a combination of open and closed-ended questions were chosen because of the type of information that was desired.

The goal of the data analysis was to provide descriptive information about the prison experience of female inmates. The information from closed-ended questions were coded so that frequency counts and correlations could be used to discover various relationships that were suggested by the literature and from the analysis of field notes. The more difficult analysis was the weaving together of ideas that emerged from the open-ended questions and field notes. The "constant comparative" method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) was employed, which involves joint coding and analysis in a systematic fashion. Initially, a list of emerging themes developed during the interview process and from early observations. The interviews were transcribed by the researcher and additional themes were developed during this process. The responses from the tapes were coded to identify major topics and clusters of responses. Categories were continually clarified and refined according to the emerging themes. The transcripts and field notes were re-read again and again to assure a close correspondence between the data and the developing themes.

Validity and Reliability

Validity is a central issue in conducting qualitative research. Validity refers to whether one is adequately measuring what is intended to be measured. During the interview session or field observations, there is the danger of data contamination on the part of the
interviewer and respondent. According to McCall (1969), there are a variety of sources of bias possible.

1. **Knowledgeability.** Is the respondent in a position to have valid knowledge of what she is reporting?

2. **Reportorial ability.** Does the respondent express herself well, have a clear and reliable memory, and have enough self-confidence to respond to probes without feeling that her integrity is being questioned?

3. **Reactive effects.** Is the respondent trying to give the researcher the kind of answers she thinks are being sought; are comments and reactions of the researcher causing the informant to answer in a certain way?

4. **Ulterior motives.** Is the informant trying to slant the results of the research in certain directions?

5. **Bars to spontaneity.** Was someone else present or was there a chance that someone might overhear the interview and thus cause the informant to be hesitant to respond truthfully?

6. **Ideosyncratic factors.** Was the informant in a particular mood prior to the interview that might influence her responses?

These factors were considered in designing the present project. Three of the factors mentioned by McCall, knowledgeability, reportorial ability, and bars to spontaneity, did not pose much of a problem in this research. The inmates at Mitchellville are the experts when it comes to knowledge of the prison experience of women at ICIW. And while some women were more articulate than others, nearly all of the women who participated in this study were willing to talk at length about issues facing them and their experiences as inmates at Mitchellville. Also, all interviews were conducted without outside interference.

More of a threat to the validity of the present research effort
came from other factors mentioned by McCall. First, some of the inmates may have had ulterior motives for participating in this research. Many of the respondents said the reason they participated was because "it was about time that someone paid some attention to women in prison, instead of the men getting all of the programs and stuff."

Also, a new Superintendent had just taken over at ICIW, and many of the inmates were unhappy with many of the changes that she was introducing.

The reactive effects of the interview was a very real concern in this research. Talking about their children and sexual behavior within the institution were sensitive issues, so social desirability could be a possible concern since few people would want to be seen as poor mothers or as participating in deviant behavior. It was clear to the researcher that talking about children was a very difficult topic for the inmates. If anything could emotionally upset the inmates, it was asking them about the contact that they had with their children. There was little hesitation from the respondents when talking about sex. At times, I was surprised by the frankness and willingness to divulge personal experience with a sexual relationship. I believe that their knowledge that the researcher had prior prison experience may have led them to believe that I would understand their situation and would be less judgemental of their behavior than would the typical researcher. Also, since they had nothing personal to gain by presenting a particular view of the prison experience of women prisoners, it is likely the information they shared is their perception of the prison experience.

Another issue of concern were the idiosyncratic factors that could
affect the interview. None of the women were in such a state of mind that it would have affected the interview adversely. From the researcher's point of view, all of the interviews went smoothly and without a hitch.

In addition to the factors already discussed, McCall states that there are two ways to guard against threats to validity, (which will consequently improve the reliability of the data as well). The first check in the evaluation of qualitative data is to inquire whether the account is plausible, whether it makes sense in light of one's understanding of human behavior. Also, it is important to determine whether the data are consistent with other accounts from the same source. In dealing with these concerns, some of the same questions were asked at different times and in different ways during the interview so that they could be compared to determine whether the same response was given. Probes were also used to make the informants fully explain themselves if some confusion in their response was apparent. Also, information from the literature and the researcher's prior research experience was used to determine if their responses seemed plausible.

Reliability is concerned with whether two researchers working independently of each other would achieve the same results from the same data. The issue of reliability is not as salient as validity in the constant comparative method. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967:103), the constant comparative method "is not designed to guarantee that two analysts working independently with the same data
will achieve the same results; it is designed to allow, with
discipline, for some of the vagueness and flexibility that aid the
creative generation of theory." It should be noted, however, that
reliability is increased by utilizing methods as previously discussed
to increase validity.
CHAPTER IV. THE PRISON EXPERIENCE

The focus of this chapter is on the prison experience of women prisoners and their response to the deprivations of incarceration. The chapter will begin with a description of a number of central features of the prison experience. In particular, it will look at the inmate's early images of prison, the inmate's arrival at prison and the reception process, the changes in the image that inmates have of the prison during the early stages of her prison career, the pains of imprisonment or the deprivation that inmates experience, the inmate code and the inmate at Mitchellville, the inmate social system, and the inmate's relationships outside of prison. Following this will be a presentation of the four primary modes of adaptation of women at Mitchellville; those modes are quasi-families, couples, rap-partnerships, and going it alone.

Preparing for Prison

Most people have some understanding of what prisons are like, including felons who are about to begin a prison sentence. Most people imagine prisons to be places of violence and danger, and felons develop many fears and expectations of prison life as they anticipate the beginning of their prison sentence. Because of this, the inmate's adaptation to prison begins well before her arrival at the prison; it begins as soon as the felon attempts to envision herself in the prison environment.

The images that society typically holds of prisons are those that
are based on male prisons. Felons, like the rest of society, typically have very little direct or indirect knowledge of what prisons for women are really like. Only twenty-three percent of the sample for this study had prior experience in a prison for women. Thus, the remaining women had to rely on secondary sources of information to construct an image of prison and prison life. These secondary sources of information include any prior juvenile correctional experience, any personal acquaintances who had served a prison sentence, media reports (including television news and entertainment programs, films, and fictional or journalistic accounts), and cellmates in county jails. Of the women sampled, forty-two percent had no prior information specifically about Mitchellville and expected the prison to be similar to a men's prison. Twenty-seven percent of the inmates had relied on the media for information about the prison, while thirty-seven percent received their information from cellmates at county jails.

On the basis of secondary sources of information, most felons imagine a diversity of fears and expectations about prison life and they construct an image of prison which focuses primarily on safety and psychological concerns (see Table 2). This lack of information about prison life at Mitchellville is reflected in some of the following statements by the women during their interviews:

I was scared to death. I was told to watch out for the women, that I was going to get attacked in the showers, and to watch out for the rats, cockroaches and stuff like that. It kind of made me sick.

I thought it was going to be like men's prisons, with bars and things like that. I was really scared
Table 2. Fears and expectations prior to imprisonment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fears, expectations</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical violence</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexuality</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment from other inmates</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation from children</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

of violence, of being confined, and what I would be up against with the other residents.

I was scared because I didn't know what I was walking into—guns, bars, and violence.

It was fear of the unknown. I didn't know what was going to happen. I really didn't know how to act around women.

The gay women, and these great big, burly women. I got this from t.v. You know how t.v. plays everything up and exaggerates.

You hear so much about gays that I was afraid that they would get you in the corner and rape you.

These fears and expectations set the stage for the felon as she prepares herself for the beginning of her prison experience. Based on these fears and expectations, many of the inmates (fifty-five percent) believe that they must present themselves differently in prison from the way they do in the outside world. For some of the inmates that
means developing a tougher attitude or becoming more assertive in an attempt to stand up for themselves and to give the impression that they are not to be messed with. Some of the women expressed this need to appear tough because:

When people see weakness, they take advantage of that. I have to protect myself. I can't let anyone think I'm weak. I can't cry. Anger is violence and tears is fears.

I had to be more assertive, follow rules and keep calm. You don't have to be tough, but you get respect for standing up for yourself.

Yes, I'm normally a real quiet person, and you can't let them run over you. So you have to be more self-confident.

Other inmates choose to keep to themselves or become more reserved in an attempt to avoid trouble.

I was always pretty outward on the streets, but in here I am much more reserved.

You have to repress your feelings and keep to yourself.

You can't mouth them back (the other inmates). You don't dare say anything back to them.

Regardless of the mode of adaptation the inmate chooses, it is clear that the fears and expectations the inmate has prior to incarceration influences the way she responds to incarceration. As the felon enters prison, she is faced with a situation in which she expects that her prior fears will materialize, at the same time, she hopes that the fears will not materialize.
Arrival at Prison

All inmates begin their prison sentence at the reception center at Oakdale. The Oakdale facility resembles what we typically think of prisons—bars, cells and isolation. For some inmates (nineteen percent), the initial reaction to arriving at Mitchellville is one of relief.

I was relieved. Oakdale was more like what you see on t.v.

It's not what I expected. I thought it would be much worse, more like Oakdale. But here, it's more like a college dormitory.

Others (fifteen percent) had more ambivalent or mixed feelings about their arrival at Mitchellville.

I was glad to be here, you know. We've got more amenities, open windows and stuff. But, it was also bad, like, "Oh God, I'm here, this is the end."

But the majority of inmates (fifty-four percent) were very frightened on their arrival at Mitchellville.

I was scared at first. I didn't know what to think about this place. You know, if there was, you know, what kind of people were here or how they were going to act toward somebody. You know, because there was a riot up at Fort Madison (maximum security prison for men). I thought, "God, what if that happens here and somebody ends up getting killed."

I was scared to death. I felt I was being shut out from the rest of the world, my family and friends.

Mitchellville is a prison and, as with all prisons, inmates entering the prison must go through another reception process. The majority of inmates (seventy-two percent) entering Mitchellville find this experience to be humiliating and degrading.
It's terrible. The fingerprinting is just awful. I bawl every time. It's degrading. It all flashes back where you are and what you have done.

It's very degrading and dehumanizing. It's probably meant to be that way. You don't really get used to it. It's a constant reminder of the situation.

To have someone tell you to bend over and spread your cheeks is the most degrading thing that you could ever be asked to do. I mean, I've never been raped, but in my mind it is the same thing as rape. I'll never get used to it. You just come to accept it. For some women, they've been invaded all of their lives.

It's horrible, degrading; it makes you feel like you are nothing, just trash. You're treated like garbage. I really hated it. It strips you of all your dignity.

I felt bummed by being numbered. I don't like people considering me like a number instead of a human being. You're this certain number, and it makes me feel like nobody.

The reception process is part of the administrative routine of every institution. Regardless of what it means to the institution, this process has a very clear meaning to the inmates. They have now been transformed from human beings into numbered objects, with very little control over their own lives.

Shortly after arriving at Mitchellville, the residents receive a handbook which outlines the rules and regulations that they are expected to follow. This handbook is intended to expose the inmates to the official rules of the institution and assist them in learning about how the institution operates. The inmates tend to view this experience as their first exposure to discipline at Mitchellville.

They give you this handbook. Your real discipline starts the day you come in. They throw this at you
and tell you, "Here it is, them is the rules and regulations and your discipline starts the day you hit population. If you break the rules you get a discipline." At first, they start out pretty gentle because, I guess, they want to feel you out, see what you are about, before they start throwing all this bullshit at you.... But the biggest share of it (enforcement of rules) comes from whether they like you or not.

Some inmates find that the handbook is not very helpful to them in learning what is expected of them, so they rely on other inmates to help them make sense out of this new social world (see Table 3).

Table 3. How inmates learned the rules and regulations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How obtained information</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation and other inmates</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handbook and other inmates</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handbook and staff</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inmate and staff</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For some, the handbook is not very helpful because not everyone in here can read. Can you believe that?

They give you a handbook, and I think that is stupid. I understand that they have to do it, but I think it is stupid. They give you a handbook and tell you to read it. Ok, when you first come in here, I don't care if you read it twice, you aren't going to remember that. You are just not going to remember it. You are frightened. There are so many things to learn, so many new rules and regulations and cans and cannots, and so many can'ts that aren't on paper, you know. And another long term inmate kind of took me under her wing and, uh, you know, told me you can't do this and you can do that. She
explained them to me just like we are sitting here talking and it made a big difference.

I learned by sitting back and watching what other people do. Listening, not shooting my mouth off, listening to the other people and accepting it. I just had to accept it. The residents were the most helpful.

Since the inmates rely on a number of different sources for information (handbook, staff, and other inmates), it is difficult for the inmates to receive a single, clear definition of the rules and regulations to which they are expected to adhere. For example, the message may differ from one staff person to the next.

Some staff members follow the rules strictly, while others are more slack and will overlook some things. The residents clue you in on who you can do what around.

One thing is for sure, and that is that there is a clear difference between the information that the residents offer and that which is provided by the staff members.

The staff generally go by the rules. They tell you to keep reading the handbook, and if you have any questions, ask. The residents, on the other hand, say there are ways of getting around any rule here.

There is quite a bit of difference. The inmates tell you which staff is cool and which is not. You learn what you can get by with and what you can't.

Yes, it is so inconsistent. Nobody tells you the same thing. The residents tell you one thing and the staff says another.

The residents tell you how to get away with stuff. I was wanting to believe what the residents said and trying to do what the staff said.

So, the new inmates receives two separate guidelines that govern their behavior. According to the residents, "You can do anything as long as
you don't get caught," and the advice given by the staff is "Don't do it, and you won't have to worry about it."

**Changing definition of the situation**

The image of the prison world held by the inmate undergoes considerable change during the course of the inmate's prison career. The point at which the most change in the definition takes place is at the beginning of the inmate's prison career. Prior to incarceration, most inmates do not have a firm definition of prison life because they have not had direct experience in the prison world. The inmate arrives at the institution with numerous personal fears and expectations garnered from a variety of secondary sources of information.

The inmate's uncertainty about entering this new social world is overwhelming (see Table 4). She does not know what kind of behavior to expect from the prison staff or her fellow inmates. Because she is uncertain how to define the prison world, she is also uncertain how to act within that world. Resolving this uncertainty becomes her primary goal.

Although she never completely eliminates her uncertainty, she does "resolve" it by reducing it to a reasonable level. This resolution can take a number of forms, but it begins in a very tentative way. The inmate finds it necessary to guide her behavior on the basis of what appears to be the most accurate or reasonable information available. Her initial participation in the informal culture of the prison serves as a further test of this information.
Table 4. What new inmates are uncertain about in terms of the prison experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of uncertainty</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other inmates</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not knowing what to expect</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexuality</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None, prior experience</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the inmate develops her own conceptualization of this social world, tests this conceptualization through behavior participation, and modifies this conceptualization in light of the reactions to her participation as well as new information received, the uncertainty and unpredictability of prison life decreases. By the time the inmate serves a couple of months of her sentence, she has generally developed a relatively firm understanding of the prison world and feels that she can predict the behavior of others with a reasonable degree of certainty.

When asked to describe what Mitchellville is like, two different but related images are presented by the inmates. Physically, the prison is not like a maximum security prison, rather the institution more closely resembles a college campus.

In some sense it doesn't seem like a prison and in some sense it does. In the sense that it don't,
there's not your complete confinement, unless you are in the security unit. It appears at times like a college campus, to where you are able to move freely, only the fact that I don't care for is that you're under complete guard all the time. And you get so sick of hearing numbers all the time, to call you here or there. And at times, I think it's a learning experience. It depends on how you put yourself into it, and whether you are a behavior problem.

But emotionally, the rules and regulations serve to remind the inmates that they are indeed in prison. These rules confer a childlike or juvenile status on the inmates, and they continue to be a source of frustration and tension throughout the inmate's prison career (see Table 5).

Table 5. The primary source of trouble or frustration for inmates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of trouble</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rules and staff</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backstabbing</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gossip</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snitching</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It's hell. The rules are ridiculous, petty, unreasonable, and subject to the personalities of staff. They use their own judgment as to what they want you to do.

I'm in the devil's dining room, a real hell hole. It's not really a prison, it's more like day care for adults.
It's a little girl's school. We have rules and regulations. It's like being back in a juvenile ward. You have a curfew, you have to go to school, etc.

Physically it's like a college campus. Actually, you have a lot of rules that are petty. For scratching someone's back, you can get rated down or get a discipline for inappropriate physical contact. That's a bit bizarre. To scratch someone's back is very human. If a staff person has a bad day you can automatically tell it. They are going to come in, and you don't expect them not to have a bad day because they are human beings, but you just expect them to know how to control it and not take it out on others. Emotionally it is very draining.

Through this changing definition of the situation, the new inmate has had most of her prior fears and expectations relieved and replaced by a new set of concerns. Prior to incarceration, the primary fears held by the felon were fear of physical violence and fear of the unknown. Now, after direct involvement in the prison social world, the inmate has learned that physical violence is highly unlikely and most of that uncertainty has been dissipated. What the inmate has foremost on her mind is dealing with the rules and regulations, and attempting to complete her sentence with as little difficulty as possible.

The Pains of Imprisonment

On their entry into prison, inmates are exposed to a set of experiences which tend to reaffirm their status as rejected members of the larger society. Inmates are denied certain material comforts and personal belongings and experience restrictions on personal freedom as a result of incarceration. The most frequently cited deprivation faced by the inmates at Mitchellville is separation from family and friends.
Table 6. The most difficult aspect of adjustment to incarceration, or the hardest thing to bear

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deprivation</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Separation from family and friends</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules and staff</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being around people you can't trust</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality of sentence</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of privacy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(see Table 6). As previously mentioned, eighty percent of the women participating in this study are mothers. But of that eighty percent, only sixty-eight percent of the inmate-mothers had their children living with them prior to incarceration (see Table 7). Imprisonment of a mother creates additional problems for the inmate-mother on top of those problems faced by inmates in general. The primary problem confronting the inmate-mother is what to do with her children during incarceration. Rarely can the father be counted on to take care of the children. Most of the inmate-mothers at Mitchellville typically relied on parents, in-laws, siblings, other relatives or friends to care for their children during their absence (see Table 8). Also, thirty-six percent of the inmate-mothers with dependent children reported that their children had to be separated because they were unable to find someone able to accommodate all of the children.

The frustration experienced by inmate-mothers does not lessen over
Table 7. Who children lived with prior to mother's incarceration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who children lived with</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inmate</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster care</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Who children lived with following mother's incarceration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who children lived with</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents, in-laws</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster care</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatives</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split up (relatives, friends)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

time. For example, over fifty percent of the inmate-mothers had received no visits from their children during their incarceration (see Table 9). One mother, who has been incarcerated for over four years, has had only one visit from one of her children during her incarceration. Most mothers, especially those with infant children, expressed concern about their children becoming attached to their
Table 9. How often children visited their mother in prison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of contacts</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Several times a week</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 times a year</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once a year</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

temporary caretakers.

I'm real concerned about my daughter because she was only four months old when I was arrested. And I found out from my son (who is living with his grandparents in another state) that she calls my sister Mom and my sister's kids her brother and sister. I'm not really worried about my son because he was five when I was arrested, and he is ready for me to come home right now. Anyway, I told him that you have pictures of me and you show them to her and you tell her that this is her Mom and that I love her very much, and then give her a kiss and a hug. He really liked that idea, so I am hoping that he can kind of teach her who I am. But I don't know.

For those mothers fortunate to have some contact with their children through visits or by telephone, these contacts are very emotional and sometimes painful experiences.

After a visit is the saddest time in prison, very sad. Anticipating the visit is the highest time, and after the visit is the lowest.

It makes you feel good, very close and accepting. But after we hang up, I get an attitude, and that shows me that I miss them and my freedom.

I cry, but it is worth it. It hurts so much but the good is worth it.
It started out really good. I wasn't sure that he would remember who I was. It made me cry.

I talked with her on the phone. I wanted to cry, it really hurt, but it felt so good to hear her little voice. She cried as soon as she heard my voice, so I won't call her anymore because of what it puts her through.

One thing that does come from these contacts with their children is being able to see or hear for themselves that their children are doing fine. But, it also reminds the mothers how much they miss their children and how they would really like to have more contact with them.

I'm more at ease knowing that he is ok, but no matter how much contact you have, it's never going to be enough.

The second most frequently cited response in terms of difficulties of adjustment concerns the rules that the inmates are expected to follow. At one time or another throughout the interviews, nearly all of the inmates mentioned the pettiness of the rules as a major problem. For example, talking in the hallway outside their rooms in the cottage can result in a discipline, as will failing to go to the evening meal. The women at Mitchellville have a difficult time understanding the rationale behind many of the rules, which leaves them with the feeling that they are being treated as children.

For instance, the petty rules. I thought prison was going to be that you're locked up, and it's enough to be locked up, and they put you in your cell, and you do what you want in there. But they can put you in your room here and you still can't do what you want. They've got to control every little personal thing that you do, which is really hard to accept.

I have tried to adopt the idea that they cannot make up a rule that I can't follow, but sometimes they
are just a bit much. Like, I can't give a staff member a cup of coffee or a piece of candy.

An issue closely related to the pettiness of the rules is the enforcement of the rules. The discretion that staff have in enforcing policies leads to inconsistency in the application of those rules, which in turn increases the uncertainty for the inmates.

They should all be consistent but they aren't. They differ from one to the next, and you never really know what is expected of you because of the inconsistency. It's like you can beat your head against the wall for a week trying to do this certain thing just the way you think they want you to do it, come to find out later they didn't really care about that at all. They really keep you confused.

There are so many differences in them. Some of them really go by the rules and some of them are very slack; they just don't like to write disciplines. Whereas others of them, if you are just a minute over on the phone, they will write you up in a minute. You know, with staff, there are just different personalities. Some I like, some I don't. Some understand your situation; others don't care.

It's kind of hard to explain without living it. Some of the staff bend their own rules; others make them up on the spur of the moment. Some of the residents would rather have the staff stick to their rules, and some of the residents enjoy the fact that the staff bend the rules, because there is a lot of conflict because some of the people like it this way, and others like it that way. The staff get their little pets. They are going to pick on one group and be nice to these others because of the information they get from them.

Another concern registered by the inmates is being locked up with a group of people you cannot trust. There are two important areas of distrust. First, there is a concern for physical safety.

Realizing the people that I was going to be in here with, you know, murderers and people like that—I've
never been around violent people before.) Being around people you can't trust—you know, they're young and temperamental; you never know what's going to happen. They are like a live fuse waiting to go off.

But, an even more frequently cited problem is what many of the inmates refer to as "he say, she say," or the "telling of tales."

Women are just different. For instance, men will fight at the drop of the hat, whereas a woman will try to turn and get others involved in it and say stuff behind people's back. They will not come out with it to your face. They will try to get the whole campus involved. You know, women like to gossip a lot, and in doing so, they're out to see people hurt, and in that way they can be in charge.

This involvement in "he say, she say" is very widespread and is second only to the rules and staff as a primary source of trouble for the inmates.

The Female Prisoner and the Inmate Code

The research on male prisoners indicates the existence of an inmate code that develops in response to the deprivations of incarceration. This code provides a rationalization for criminal behavior, solutions for obtaining scarce goods and services, and descriptions of appropriate ways of dealing with staff and inmates. This code is implemented and enforced by the inmate social organization. The research on female prisoners has indicated only minimal endorsement of this inmate code. At Mitchellville, fifty-two percent of the inmates state that an inmate code does not exist in this institution compared to sixteen percent who believe the code does exist.

No, and that's annoying because I think there should be some kind of a mutual understanding between
inmates. There should be some understanding about how to go about getting something done or whatever, or even how to play a game. But like I say, everybody's got a different opinion; nobody agrees on anything. I think people should agree on something sometime.

A number of reasons are given for the failure of an inmate code to develop. One reason focuses on the relatively short amount of time many inmates will be at the prison.

It's more of a girl scout camp. One reason we're not better organized is because of the short-timers. Everyone is too scared to hurt others. They won't hurt snitches because they don't want to get into trouble or because of the uncertainty with the parole board.

Another reason given for the lack of an inmate code relates to what Ward and Kassebaum (1965) refer to as "criminal immaturity," or the inexperience of female criminals.

I would like to think that there is a code. I follow one but the majority here don't. The girls lack experience; they are just bambies. If anything, they are kids. They haven't been exposed to criminal codes of conduct. It's brought inside. It starts before the crime is done. You pick your crime partner by these codes. If I was to pick a partner, I would want somebody with a reputation for keeping their mouth shut.

No, they lack experience or commonsense. These are mostly just kids in here, and they don't realize that you gain more by being united.

Approximately thirty-two percent of the inmates believe that an inmate code does exist among certain groups of inmates, or cliques.

It depends on the clique you are in but there is no enforcement. The main thing is to watch out for others in your group.
Among certain people they say you shouldn't snitch, but here, snitching is an everyday thing. They say you shouldn't do it but it is no big deal if you do.

It may not really be a code; it may be more of just belonging to the group, like an old-boys club. You don't snitch, but it is o.k. if your life is on the line or they are messing with you or your time or if someone is going to be hurt.

The belief that a code exists for members of certain cliques is related to the issue of inmate solidarity. Are inmates loyal to the population of inmates in general, to the clique that they belong to, or only to themselves? When asked this question, the inmates were evenly divided among these three response categories (see Table 10). This ambiguity in inmate solidarity, in turn, is also related to the lack of overall enforcement of certain tenets of the code.

Table 10. Is there inmate solidarity or loyalty at Mitchellville

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loyal to whom</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To overall inmate population</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To their clique or group</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only to themselves</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If an inmate code exists among certain groups of inmates, which inmates are more likely to endorse this code and what does this code consist of? The inmates were presented with a series of questions dealing with inmate loyalty and other areas important to inmate adjustment which are derived from a model of the ideal male prisoner
code (Sykes & Messinger, 1960; Wheeler, 1961; Garabedian, 1963). The purpose of administering these questions was to discern the normative orientation of the female prisoner (see Table 11). At Mitchellville, the norm is for the inmates to accept the legitimacy of staff authority and the official rules and regulations. It is also moderately acceptable to inform on other inmates. This is counter to what one would expect to find in a male prison. But the area in which women are consistent with the males is in their belief that inmates should stick up for their own rights when dealing with staff and that it is easier to do time when the inmates stick together.

Of particular interest are those groups of women who endorse values that are most consistently found in male prisons. Women who have husbands, boyfriends, family or friends who are or were convicts are less likely to accept the legitimacy of staff authority, to see disciplinary actions as fair and to accept snitching under any circumstances. They are also more cautious about revealing information to the staff and are more likely to believe that police, prosecutors and judges are about as crooked as the people they send to prison. So it appears that some women bring these values, learned through associating with other criminals, into the institution with them, rather than developing these attitudes inside the prison and in response to the deprivations of incarceration. This again directly relates to the concept of "criminal immaturity," in that the more experienced criminal is more likely to hold values endorsing a criminal code of conduct.
Table 11. Endorsement of the inmate code of Mitchellville

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of Code</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Do you accept the legitimacy of the staff's authority</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Do you accept the official rules and regulations</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Do you feel that staff disciplinary actions are fair</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Is it o.k. to inform on others in some situations</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. An inmate should stick up for her rights when dealing with staff</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. The best way to do time is to never let staff know that anything is getting you down</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. There are basically two kinds of people, those in the know and those who are suckers</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. It is easier to do time when inmates stick together</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. A good rule to follow is to share any extra goods with your friends</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. If you reveal too much about yourself to staff, the information will probably be used against you</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Police, judges, and prosecutors are about as crooked as the people they sent to prison</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Inmate Social System

After examining the inmates' responses to the questions relating to an inmate code, it is clear that there is not just one, unified normative system operating at Mitchellville. Although it is impossible to define precisely the number of different groups operating at Mitchellville, we can examine the informal organization of inmates along a number of dimensions to gain a clearer understanding of group formation of inmates at Mitchellville.

The single most important indicator of what group a person belongs to is indicated by the inmate's race. In the cafeteria, for example, you will consistently observe whites sitting with whites and blacks sitting with blacks.

Race is really becoming more important here. I think that if you oppress people so much, they look for something to lash out at, some sort of scapegoat to lash their anger out at. And, it is, it has become more noticeable, more hostile. We were in a room that was mostly black people and the volume was so disturbing and the antagonism. This is unreal.

While this statement may give the impression that there is open warfare between the two racial groups, as has been reported in some prisons for men, in reality, there is some crossing or mixing between the groups.

The white group doesn't cross a whole lot. Sometimes the black group will take somebody from the white group and try to help them better themselves or try to nurture that person. And, we got a girl here now and I see some of the women working with her, and they'll say "Don't talk like that; that's country." They's together, and they try to help each other. Whereas the white group, they just don't have the time. And that's unusual because people usually want to help other people.
The separation of whites and blacks into two distinct groups represent differences and barriers that exist outside the prison and are brought into the prison, including cultural beliefs and values and rural/urban influences.

A second important factor in group membership is determined by place of residence prior to incarceration, which is referred to by inmates as being a "homey." Individuals who come from Cedar Rapids, Waterloo or Des Moines are most likely to be referred to as "homeys."

They are friends from the streets or a friend of a friend. There are a lot of people here who knew each other from the streets.

By being a "homey," the inmate is almost assured of directly or indirectly knowing some inmates prior to her arrival at Mitchellville. These inmates, in turn, will assist the new "homey" in her integration into the prison social world.

A third indicator of group membership is based on "personality, style and age." These are factors that would normally influence who one's friends or associates would be. Members of cliques share common interests and similar backgrounds and experiences. An example of a clique would be the bikers.

These women are hardcore; they take no shit off nobody. Their boyfriends or husbands were bikers.

They run around in here in their Harley-Davidson T-shirts. They really aren't any different, but they try to act a little bit tougher.

They are crazy people, real flamboyant. They get lots of disciplines and are in more trouble with the staff. They really aren't respected, just tolerated.
At the beginning of this study there were ten members of this group but by the end of the study, all but two members had been paroled, thus meaning the end of this group or clique.

Other than the bikers, there are no clearly defined groups at Mitchellville. Instead, what has been found are friendship cliques that range from three to seven people.

There are no real groups here, but there are people who hang out together, eat together. It's just a bunch of girls who like to have fun together.

Inmates involved in friendship cliques move freely from group to group with no norms operating to prevent mixing. As one inmate put it, "any person can talk to anyone around here."

The individual crimes that the women have committed does not appear to be an important factor in group membership, except for those inmates incarcerated for crimes involving children. These women do not form a group for themselves, and they are generally excluded from membership in any other group. Essentially the rule is as follows, "Stay away from child molesters and child killers."

We've got a woman who's been in general population for about five months, and they're still spitting on her door. They walk down the sidewalk and call her baby killer.

They never forget your crime, and they never accept your crime if it involves a child. Sometimes they will tolerate you, and sometimes you may find someone who will run interference, you know, and they'll go over to those people inflicting the punishment and try to get them to shut their mouth. But nobody forgets.

As previously indicated there is no single inmate adaptive system. The informal social organization at Mitchellville is composed of
multiple subsystems which differ in orientation and life goals. There are essentially three normative systems operating at Mitchellville, and which consist of the "Cools," the "Country," and the "Achievers."

The "Cools" generally are a little more streetwise and experienced than the other women at Mitchellville.

This is the real hip group. They may have been into drugs, the streetlife. A lot of them are repeaters. One thing, they are not going to change for nobody.

They are kind of laid back. Basically, they are just doing their time. They do what has to be done.

They just kind of think alike. Maybe they had done time together at Rockwell (the former prison for women). They are the most streetwise.

The "Country" represents individuals who are "not wise to the ways of the big city." They are considered sheltered, naive, innocent and rarely get into trouble with the staff.

These are stupid people. They do exactly whatever they are told to do, no matter who tells them.

They are just real squares. They are naive, and you sometimes wonder how they make it out in the world.

They are the squares, the nerds. Nobody really messes with them. In fact, some really feel sorry for them and try to help them get their shit together.

The "Achievers" are people who are just trying to make the best out of a bad situation. These inmates become involved in any program or activity that can in any way improve themselves.

These people are out there doing their own thing. They work and go to school or work a couple of
jobs. They do things to better themselves.

They are people trying to improve themselves. Some take fifty-six contact hours a week, twenty over what they need. These people are respected for what they do.

There are no real positions of power held by inmates at Mitchellville. As one inmate put it, "we ain't got no bigshots in here." But, there are three roles that do carry some status and prestige among the inmates. The most respected inmate role at Mitchellville is the "Mom" (see Table 12).

Table 12. The most respected inmate role at Mitchellville

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role type</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mom (trustful, truthful, helpful)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does own time</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly, fun, follows rules</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

She is caring; anything you say to her is held in confidence. If she thinks that you should be doing something that you are not, she will literally shove you and make you do it. You know exactly where you stand because she doesn't pull any punches.

Another respected inmate role is that inmate who does her own time, or as Heffernan (1972) refers to her, the "real woman."

She is mature, doesn't bother other's business. She doesn't cry about her problems and doesn't make others jealous.

She is tough minded. She don't want to be walked on or treated like dirt, and she won't allow that
to happen.
She is mature, has commonsense, she has respect for herself and others. She does her own time.

A third role type respected by others is the inmate who is friendly and follows the rules.

She is easy going, follows the rules and doesn't back-talk the staff.

She has a good attitude, knows how to get along, is friendly and fun.

It is important to note that the three normative reference groups do not represent separate and distinct categories of inmates. Rather, there is considerable overlapping. A good example of this overlapping is demonstrated when we examine what types of inmates are admired and respected by whom. For example, the "Country's" are more likely to admire the inmate who is fun and follows the rules, but some are also likely to admire "Moms." The "Cools," on the other hand, are more likely to respect the inmate who is able to stand up for what she thinks is right, or the "real woman," but some of these inmates are also going to admire the "Moms." And finally, the "Achievers" are more likely to show respect for the "Moms," but may also admire those who stand up for their rights and those who follow the rules. So, it is more accurate to view these reference groups as a general orientation or framework for doing time, rather than fixed rules or guidelines governing the informal inmate social system.
Relationship with the Outside World

As previously mentioned, separation from family and friends is a severe deprivation faced by the inmates at Mitchellville. Upon entry into prison, one of the inmate's primary concerns is how to maintain a relationship with the outside world. Contact with the outside world is possible through three different avenues: visits, letters and the telephone.

Contact with the outside world serves a number of important functions. First, it provides an opportunity to demonstrate love and caring.

Contact with the outside is pretty important because no contact would mean that they didn't care.

It is important because it shows how much I really mean to them.

When you get to prison and stuff, you really know where you stand with the family. You know how much they really care, and their concern and love and all that, you know. Because they have stuck by you.

Secondly, contact with the outside also provides a sense of support and encouragement for the inmates.

It is very important for my self-esteem. If I didn't have these people out there caring for me, I probably wouldn't care about myself.

It makes you feel you aren't alone, knowing that someone is there for you.

It's like they've done my time with me. They've stuck by me through the hell, they come up every chance they get. They've just encouraged me to keep my shit together.

But, an inmate's relationship with the outside world can prove to
be one of continuous frustration. One reason for this is that the outsiders may not realize how important this contact is to the inmate.

People out there still love and care about you, but they don't realize what it is about in here. So, consequently, they don't give you the attention that they should give you.

A lack of contact with the outside world leads inmates to believe that they have been cast away by their family and friends.

My mother and sister refuse to visit. They can't stand to see me in here. And I can understand that, but sometimes I wonder if they really care.

I don't feel the same because they have spaced me off. If they really were close friends, they wouldn't have forgotten me.

Sometimes I am almost frightened that I have grown cold while I've been in prison because sometimes it is like I don't feel, and that bothers me. And I know that deep down I care about these people, but it's like I don't feel. I have been here for three years and I have not seen one of my sisters.... Prison is really hard on improving family ties. I wonders sometimes if I have been dumped by my family.

It is clear, though, that the prison sentence provides a valuable learning experience for the inmate.

You really do learn who your friends are because you lose the good-time friends.

Out of sight, out of mind. It clearly defines who your real friends are.

Inmates sometimes look at how much contact they receive from outsiders as an indicator of how much the outsiders care for them. For the inmates, visits are the most important type of contact because it requires the most effort from the outsiders. As shown in Table 13,
Table 13. Frequency of contact through visits, letters, and telephone calls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Husband/Boyfriend</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Dependent</th>
<th>Children Adult</th>
<th>Friends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several times/week</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every other week</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every other month</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-6 times/year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once/year</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Letters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several times/week</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every other week</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every other month</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-6 times/year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once/year</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
families are the most frequent visitors, with nearly fifty percent of the residents receiving one or more visits a month from a family member. Only fifteen percent of the residents receive monthly visits from friends, and just one of the twenty-four residents who are married or in a serious relationship prior to incarceration received a visit from her husband or boyfriend. Of course, there are many reasons why the outsiders do not visit more frequently. One reason is that forty-six percent of the husbands and boyfriends are in prison or on parole, as are many of the friends. Other factors include visiting hours conflicting with work schedules, lack of transportation and the cost associated with a trip to the prison.

The telephone is an alternative means of contact for the
These calls must be initiated by the residents, and all calls must be made collect. Approximately fifty-eight percent of the residents maintain at least monthly contact with family members, while contact with husband/boyfriends (forty-six percent) and friends (thirty-five percent) is significantly less frequent. Again, cost was a major reason given for the limits they placed on their phone use.

Contact by mail is the most likely means of maintaining a relationship with the outside world. This is especially true for friends, from whom sixty-five percent of the residents receive at least one letter a month. But again, residents continued to receive the most contact from family members (sixty-eight percent), while husband/boyfriends (fifty percent) lag somewhat behind the others.

So, as can be seen, families provide the greatest amount of contact for the inmates. With this in mind, most inmates state that their relationships with family members is more likely to improve during incarceration than with husbands, boyfriends, or other friends. But, at the same time, few residents are happy with the amount of contact that they have with the outside world.

As previously mentioned, the residents state that contact with the outside provides a sense of support, but this can be diminished by the inmate's unwillingness to open up to the outsiders. The inmates attempt to ease the fears that the outsiders may have by controlling information to them, as is demonstrated in the following statements.

You don't tell them the mind games that go on. I would never tell my mother the things that go on in here because you don't want to see your mother hurt, and you want her to come up and see that this
place looks like a college campus.

Sometimes with my Mom I do. About all she knows about prison is what she sees on t.v., and it's scary to her. Here I see what it's like and she doesn't. She doesn't know what it's like. So, sometimes I make it a little better for her because if I told her the truth, it would just hurt her or make her feel bad for me being here, and she's not to blame for that.

It would hurt my Mom to know exactly what was going on in here. I've kept a lot of things from her.

My family gets so upset, so I don't want them to think I'm suffering.

But, outsiders also attempt to shield the inmate from news that might upset her or cause her to worry.

I've had so much torment over that. My grandmother died and they didn't want to tell me. I can tell by my Dad's voice that something went wrong. Yes, anything that he thinks is going to hurt me.

I know they don't tell me until they have to. That is a very frustrating feeling. It's like being treated like a kid, and that's a double whammy because that's how we are treated in here by the staff.

Yes, to an extent. There are things going on at home that involve me and I don't hear about it until after it has happened, never while it is going on. I guess they don't want me to worry.

If somebody is hurt or sick, they won't tell me. I guess they're trying to protect me, but I don't like that. I like them to let me know.

So, outsiders as well as inmates keep information from each other in order to protect each from information that might scare them or situations in which they are unable to do anything. This reciprocal control of information results from both the inmates and outsiders fears and expectations of prison life. Both are attempting to put the
other at ease, alleviating in part, their fears and expectations. But, this controlling of information and the relative infrequency of contact also emphasizes the grief of both parties and potentially operates to increase the social distance between the inmate and the outside world. As a result, inmates are more inclined to open up and share their burdens and concerns with other inmates. This, of course, would be the most likely choice, but we must remember that one of the primary concerns expressed by the inmates is being around others whom they cannot trust. Faced with this dilemma, inmates search to find someone out of this pool of untrustworthy candidates on whom they can count to provide the support that they need and desire. In general, inmates will find this support in one of the following types of relationships: the quasi-family, the couple, or the rap partner.

Relationships on the Inside

The quasi-family

The quasi-family is a term used to describe a relationship that develops among the inmates, although the term may be somewhat misleading. Many of the inmates feel that the relationships that develop among the inmates are similar to families on the outside.

Sometimes you get close enough to a resident that she feels like a sister, or you look up to a resident as you would a mother. You just feel close enough to them that you feel like they are part of your family. A lot of times I feel that most of the residents are one big family.

But some of the inmates do not believe that the quasi-family resembles family relationships in the outside world at all. Rather, the "Mom" is
more like a counselor or advisor. The term "quasi-family" has been adopted here primarily because the inmates use the words "mother" and "kid" to describe the different roles that the inmate plays in the relationship.

The quasi-family is a relationship between one more experienced inmate and anywhere from one to fifteen other inmates. Persons who fulfill the "mother" role are described as generally older, more experienced, and are the most respected inmates in the institution.

She is open and patient. She is the kind of mom that every girl would like their mom to be like. But it is not really a family thing.

They are usually older and have longer sentences, and they have more of the real life experiences. They kind of keep you in line and out of trouble. And if you don't stay out of trouble, then you have them breathing down your neck.

They are active in things around here. They help the younger girls adjust, they give advice, and they are someone that you can be open with since there is such a lack of trust around here. They are the most respected of the inmates.

There are usually about two mothers in each housing unit, and that number remains fairly stable. When one mom leaves, someone just fills in that position. There really isn't any competition between the "Moms" and the "kids" are able to seek advice from more than one "Mom."

The mom sees her role in much the same way as the kids describe it.

It's being patient with them. Offering advice and constructive criticism. We help them sort through their problems. It's a thing called trust, a feeling that you have found someone in here that you can really trust.
tells me her problems and I give her good, sound advice. I listen to what she has to say, even when things bother her, upset and hurt her. And if she is doing something that is not right, then I tell her so.

The most frequently cited reasons for the inmates performing the role of mother are the respect they receive from the other inmates and an opportunity to express their nurturant feelings.

There are some people in here who are really into motherhood, or that have lost their kids or had them taken away, and they need somebody to be like their child. When I first came in, there were several who wanted to mother me. Some people can take it and some can't. You can walk around these grounds on any given day and here somebody say, "Mom, mom, look what I did today." It's something you can understand.... The people that are portraying the mother need to be able to give that nurturing feeling.

They give you that motherly touch, that motherly feeling. They give you a lot of advice. They voice their opinion and they try to comfort you. It's the way that they like to do their time. They are some of the most respected in here.

The inmates who adopt the role of child generally are younger, somewhat insecure, and do not have much of a relationship with outside family members.

The kids are younger, less experienced residents. They are girls that haven't had a family, or they are missing out on having a mom. They are just girls who are needing something. They are needing a helping hand or a stronger person than they are to lean on.

The kids are real insecure, scared, weak, and don't know how to defend themselves. They generally have very little contact with their family, and that's why they cling to this inside the prison.

What they tell me is that no one has taken the time with them. No one has told them that what they
just did was silly. No one before has ever listened to them.

Approximately fifty percent of the inmates participate in quasi-family relationships. What the kids receive from this relationship is a great deal of emotional support and assistance in dealing with the everyday problems associated with incarceration.

We talk when I'm depressed. She listens to me and I ask her for advice.

She shows concern for me, gives me time, and if it's my birthday, she remembers it. I go to her for advice when I need it. And she sticks by me. Sometimes, though, they will just out and out tell you you're messing up. Like I was floating down the hallway one day and she told me she wanted me to meet her in the shower so we can talk. When I got there, she told me to sober up and turned on the shower, and then she told me how that wasn't good for me and stuff.

Whether or not an inmate has a good relationship with an outside family member is not the crucial point. What is important is the inability of outsiders to understand what the inmates are experiencing and their unavailability to assist the inmate at that moment she needs help.

The ties are there but at the choice of the family. So the resident doesn't have any control. The feelings are there, the love is there. Doing time is something that is hard for people out there to comprehend. Therefore, a lot of the problems she is dealing with right now, she needs someone to talk it over with right now.... She needs somebody to listen to her and to understand her.

There are other differences between "moms" and "kids" other than age and experience. For example, "Moms" are more likely to be serving sentences of 10-25 years while nearly all of the kids are serving
sentences of five years or less. "Moms" are less likely to receive disciplines (two or less per year) than will the "kids" (four or more per year, most receiving one or two per month). Also, all of the "moms" have retained custody of their natural children while this is true for only thirty-six percent of the "kids." And finally, none of the "moms" had served prior prison sentences while twenty-five percent of the "kids" had been previously incarcerated.

The quasi-family represents one type of relationship that develops as a response to incarceration. This relationship is similar to the other types of relationships in that it provides emotional support for the inmates, but it differs from the couple relationship in that an incest taboo does operate at Mitchellville. As the inmates strongly maintain, homosexuality and families are not the same. One Mom put it best when she said, "It's not a sexual thing. If I'm a Mom, I don't have sex with my kids. That's unheard of."

**Coupling**

In almost any book or movie that focuses on the prison experience, there will be some mention of homosexuality. Thus, anyone entering prison will come to the prison with some preconceived idea that homosexual relationships are quite prevalent.

You know, people on the outside think that in men's and women's prisons that homosexuality runs rampant. And this is not so. They come in here with these ideas and think that everybody is laying with everybody else. And that's not so.

It is important that we distinguish between an isolated homosexual experience and a homosexual relationship. At Mitchellville, residents'
estimates of how many inmates participate in a sexual affair while incarcerated ranges from five percent to one hundred percent, with the average being approximately forty-five percent (see Table 14). The highest estimation (75-100%) of inmate participation in a sexual affair are given by inmates who have served less than three months in prison (58%). These higher estimates reflect the new inmate's pre-prison fear of homosexuality and their lack of knowledge of the prison social world. This lack of knowledge may influence the inmate's definition of a homosexual affair. It could be defined as hugging, kissing, spending most of your time together, or, as one inmate referred to it, "doing the business."

Table 14. Inmate estimates of the percentage of inmates who have had a sexual affair in prison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimate of participation</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 - 15%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For instance, some gestures I did once were interpreted as me making a homosexual overture. And I looked at these people and said you're nuts because there is one thing that I'm not, and that
is gay. This is me, this is the way I am. It just lets me know and keeps me in check, but it's my way of letting you know that I care about you as a human being.

When asked what percentage of the residents are in a couple relationship, the range of estimates decreased slightly from five to seventy-five percent. But, more importantly, forty-one percent of the estimates fell in the range of five to fifteen percent (see Table 15). The inmates involved in these relationships maintain that they are very open about them.

Table 15. Inmate estimates of the percentage of inmates participating in a couple relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimate of participation</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-15%</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the people on campus know about it, and I don't think they look at me any differently.

In every cottage there is about 2-3 couples. There was three in unit one, two in unit four, and two in unit three.

There doesn't appear to be any active recruiting or any pressure placed on inmates to participate in these relationships. Instead, it appears to be more like a courtship.
There is no physical pressure; it's more like being courted. It's just like on the streets. If you want somebody, you wine and dine them.

It develops out of loneliness, not pressure—by somebody taking that extra little, like if you were a woman and I came up to you and I made a point of asking you how your day is going or bring you a candy bar, or saying, hey, that's a beautiful blouse you are wearing. Mainly showing her attention. It is like a courtship.

Although many of the inmates had a difficult time understanding why a person would become involved in this type of relationship, the majority saw the relationship as arising out of a basic need in a less than normal situation.

Anything you take something away from a person that is supposed to be normal, and they still have normal feelings, then you have people trying to be normal in an unnormal situation. Consequently, you have unnormal sex.

I know that it's because many normal, natural relationships and feelings are denied in prison that people get into those situations. They need someone.

Although the inmates state that sex is a normal and natural need that we all have, they believe that sex is the least important aspect of these relationships. The primary need met by the couple relationship is emotional.

I don't really believe that it's a whole lot more—now granted, there is probably a lot of physical contact, but I think a lot of it is just emotional. It is nice to know that somebody in here gives a fuck about them. But there is a lot of physical stuff, too, but I think the emotional is what means more.

Another important need met by the relationship is having someone to share things with.
It's much easier to do my time having someone to share things with, to tell my problems to. For instance, my daughter is going to have a baby. Nobody else out here cares if my daughter is going to have a baby, but she does, she does. She cares if a tear comes out of my eye, she cares if I don't have a visit on Wednesday that I was promised.... Before, I had to handle things on my own, but now I have someone to share with, or to take half of the hurt off me.

Other needs met by the couple relationship are a sense of belonging and trust.

It's having someone who belongs to you, and for you to belong to. You know, it's a good feeling to know that somebody cares. It also helps getting some of your self back, or your identity. Plus, it's something that is yours, something my counselor doesn't know anything about, or the warden. Therefore, I can be honest with this person. I can have one person in this place I can be completely honest with. You really can't trust the other residents 'cause I don't know what's going to make them flip funny. This is the only person I can tell that I like the color blue; I like spaghetti. I can be totally honest with this person, and I am.

So, as can be seen, many needs are fulfilled by the couple relationship. While the needs that are met are similar to that of the quasi-family, there still exists one major difference, and that is the element of romance.

They need something to hold on to, somebody to love them in a way that a mother can't. It has to be a romantic love. They really love each other.

And for many people, love and sex mean essentially the same thing.

I do know that it's because they are lonely, and it's because you need someone in here. And for some people, they need sex as a part of their life. That may be the only way that they have shown their love in their whole life, through having sex.
Rap partners

The final type of relationship to be discussed is that of the rap partners, or good friends. It is very difficult to distinguish between the couples and the rap partners because they essentially meet the same needs of the inmate. This confusion is demonstrated by the following response.

I think there is a lot less sex going on around here then people think because if you're in a friendship, some people think you are lovers.

It's just having a good buddy. We have a lot of that and there is no sexual business going on. It's just straight up friends. This is the most common type of situation.

One of the primary needs that a rap partner meets is that of companionship.

It's important to have a good, solid friendship because we are people, we are social beings. We weren't meant to be alone.

They are someone to pal around with, someone you could confide in more. They laugh with you, not at you.

Like the quasi-family and the couple relationship, the rap partners fulfill the needs of sharing, trust and emotional support.

They are someone to share things with. Like ______ and I, we do it just for the emotional support. She needs someone to talk to and I need someone to talk to. There's nothing sexual there. It's just being good friends, and knowing that you've got somebody that you can have their shoulder to cry on, to have somebody to talk to. You know, you really can't trust many people around here, and once somebody finds that special someone that they can talk to and tell them how they are feeling and getting some positive feedback, I think that helps.
Going it alone

A fourth type of adaptive response to imprisonment is "going it alone." Those inmates who had prior expectations of prison violence and were concerned about being around others they couldn't trust are likely to consider doing their time on their own by isolating themselves from others. While many of the inmates agree that this is a possible way of doing time, they also feel that it would be very difficult.

Yeah, it's possible to do it alone. I mean, the others would leave you alone. If they don't know anything about you, they tend to shy away from you. It's hard; it makes it awful hard, but that's her choice.

Yes, but it would be hard and really long. I planned to do that but found out that everyone wasn't out for blood.

Yes, but it's not the best way because I think everyone needs some interaction at some point.

About half of the inmates believe that it is not possible to go it alone. Relating to other inmates serves too many important functions for the inmates. First, it aids in the inmate's learning about how the prison operates.

There is just too much uncertainty around here; you just would never know what to expect without talking to the others.

But more than anything, the inmates need the emotional support and companionship that is provided by forming a relationship of some type with the other inmates.

No, it would be real tough; there's so much to put up with and misery loves company.]No, I think you need someone to talk to. You have your bad days; it's somebody to tell it to, and on your good days, it's someone to share it with. I like to be around
people and I think most people are like that.

There is an emotional need. Women are known to be too sympathetic and very weak, and they may not choose to get into lesbianism that goes on and that kind of stuff, which is ok. But there is still those emotions from just being cut off from your family, of being away from your kids, so they need to get into some kind of group where they feel at least some kind of friendship.

So, the prospect of facing a prison sentence without the affective support of any kind, although a possible response to incarceration, is not considered a viable solution to imprisonment. Of the thirty-one participants in this study, only one person felt that the best way to do time is to "stay to yourself." Because of the variety of needs met through affective relationship, the remaining ninety-seven percent of the inmates do participate in at least one of the three types of relationships that develop inside the prison.

Summary

The three types of relationships that exist at Mitchellville—quasi-families, couples, and rap partners—develop, in part, as a response to the deprivations associated with incarceration. Separation from family and friends is one of the primary deprivations experienced by the inmates and when coupled with infrequent and controlled contact with family and friends from the outside world, this may encourage inmates to search for companionship and emotional support from within the institution. This task is made more difficult when we consider that the inmates are very much concerned about being around people they
cannot trust. With this in mind, inmates at Mitchellville search for that someone special with whom they may form a sincere and trusting relationship.

These three types of relationships meet many of the needs of the inmates, including companionship, emotional support and trust. These are needs that cannot be met through isolating oneself or by the general population of the prison. Because these relationships meet so many of the same needs, it is not easy to distinguish between them. One possible difference among these adaptive modes would be to look at the power differential between actors. An apparent power differential exists in the quasi-families, with the mother figures exerting some influence over their daughters. But, the same can be said about any relationship, including couples and rap-partners, where one person may have more influence over another in that relationship. The primary difference that does exist among these affective relationships involves the issue of a romantic and sexual component. This romantic and sexual component is clearly present in couple relationship, but not in the quasi-family where an incest taboo is operative, or in rap-partnerships, although it is possible for this friendship to develop into a couple relationship.

The findings of this study are consistent with certain aspects of the literature on the experience of women in prison. In the next chapter, I will discuss the findings of this study in relationship to the existing literature on women in prison.
Discussion

The first major study of the informal social structure of women in prison was conducted by Ward and Kassebaum (1965). They focused much of their attention on the deprivations that women experienced as a result of incarceration and how they responded to these deprivations. Ward and Kassebaum concluded that there are two major deprivations women experienced, separation from family and institutional uncertainty. They also concluded that the primary mode of adaptation for these women was the homosexual alliance.

The findings from the Mitchellville study are consistent with many facets of the Ward and Kassebaum study. As with Ward and Kassebaum, the primary deprivations faced by women at Mitchellville is separation from family and friends. At Mitchellville, two other deprivations commonly expressed by the inmates are the restrictive rules that inmates are expected to follow and being around others that cannot be trusted. These deprivations are similar to institutional uncertainty as discussed by Ward and Kassebaum.

However, a point of disagreement arises in the women's response to
incarceration. For Ward and Kassebaum, the primary mode of adaptation is the homosexual dyad. They observed that these homosexual "marriages" took place without the subsequent appearance of any form of extended kinship structure. At Mitchellville, the homosexual dyad, or coupling, is only one of three primary responses to incarceration, and this is the least common mode of adaptation reported by the inmates. The most common response to imprisonment for the women at Mitchellville is the "quasi-family," a phenomena not observed by Ward and Kassebaum.

Ward and Kassebaum were also interested in whether the reactions of incarcerated women were similar to those reported for men, especially in the endorsement of the convict code. They found that overall support for the inmate code is minimal because of what they referred to as "institutional immaturity." Code adoption was found to be related to age at first arrest and the number of disciplinary reports for the inmates. This is also true at Mitchellville; more specifically, the inmates most likely to endorse the inmate code are those inmates who have been exposed to the code through their pre-prison relationships with former male prison inmates.

The findings of Giallombardo's (1966) study are similar in many respects to those of Ward and Kassebaum. Like Ward and Kassebaum, Giallombardo found that female inmates share the same problems of confinement as male inmates and that psychological and physical isolation, or withdrawal, are not typical responses to incarceration. One other similarity between the two studies is the finding of the existence and voluntary nature of homosexual relationships among women
prisoners. This is also true at Mitchellville. As previously reported, female prisoners share the same problems of confinement which confront males. While some inmates do mention the possibility of "going it alone," or psychological and physical withdrawal, few inmates actually choose this adaptive mode. As discussed in Chapter Four, affectional relationships fulfill many important needs for the inmates at Mitchellville, and "going it alone" is not considered a satisfactory way to mitigate the pains of incarceration. Finally, the couple relationships that exist at Mitchellville, similar to the studies of Ward and Kassebaum and Giallombardo, develop without force or coercion.

The major difference between the findings of Giallombardo and of Ward and Kassebaum is that Giallombardo asserts that the homosexual dyad is the basic nucleus around which the inmate social structure revolves. For Giallombardo, the focal point of inmate adaptation is the creation of make-believe family structures in order to preserve a female identity. At Mitchellville, there are make-believe or "quasi-families," but these families develop independent of the homosexual dyad. Although some of the "Moms" reported being involved in a couple relationship at some point in their prison career, this relationship was not in any way related to the quasi-family that she was a part of.

LeShanna (1969) also observed the make-believe family, but, contrary to Giallombardo, these were not based on the homosexual dyad. Rather, she found that most of the families were matricentric and that the most influential role at the reformatory was that of "mother." Findings at Mitchellville support LaShanna's observations. At
Mitchellville, the "quasi-family" is not based on the homosexual dyad, and the most influential role in the prison is that of the "Mom."

Heffernan (1972) found that there is not one but three distinct inmate subcultures existing in women's prison and that members of each subculture approach imprisonment with a different world view. The "square" identifies with outside reference groups and official policies of the institution; the "cool" consists of professional criminals and stresses inmate solidarity; and the "life" is the habitual criminal who is considered to be institutionalized. At Mitchellville, three subcultures were also observed and it was observed that each subculture approached imprisonment from a different orientation. The "country" is similar to Heffernan's "square" in that she identifies with the official rules and regulations and is more oriented toward the outside world. The "cool" at Mitchellville is the more experienced and streetwise inmate and is similar to the "cool" from Heffernan's study. The third subculture at Mitchellville is the "achiever," and this category of inmates is similar to what Irwin (1970) identified as "gleaners," inmates who are involved in taking advantage of any resource available to better themselves. As was found in Heffernan's study, there is considerable interaction between the members of each subculture at Mitchellville and there is overlapping between the boundaries of these groups.

Heffernan also identified four different levels of affective relationships in her study: friendships, play families, playing, and overt homosexuality. These four levels are also present at
Mitchellville and are identified as rap partners, quasi-families, coupling and lesbians. As Heffernan found, it is difficult at times to distinguish one relationship from another, and it is also difficult to determine the precise number of inmates involved in each of these types of relationships.

One reason for the difficulty in distinguishing these relationships is because these relationships meet all of the same basic needs: companionship, sharing, trust and emotional support. It is fairly easy to distinguish the family relationship from the others, but it is extremely difficult to distinguish partners from couples, and couples from lesbians. The basic difference between partners and couples is the element of romance. The inmates at Mitchellville tend to lump couples and lesbians into one group. The basic difference between these two groups is that lesbians (estimated by inmates at 5% of the prison population) take their relationships to the streets.

Propper (1982) discusses the confusion that exists in the literature between homosexuality and make-believe family relationships. According to Propper, estimates of participation in homosexuality ranges from 0% (Feld, 1977) to 94% (Giallombardo, 1974); for make-believe families, from 0% (Ward and Kassebaum, 1965) to 71% (Wentz, 1965). Propper discusses a variety of reasons for this variability in estimates. This variability could indicate real differences among institutions or spurious variations because researchers used different methods of collecting data or different definitions of the behavior.

This uncertainty is also present at Mitchellville and is
demonstrated by the variability in inmate estimates of homosexual activity and couple relationships. One possible reason for this variability can be attributed to the new inmate's pre-prison fear of homosexuality. If one came into a situation with a belief that homosexuality is very prevalent, this would influence how one defined certain behavior as confirming one's beliefs and expectations. As one inmate stated, inmates come into prison with ideas that homosexuality is everywhere and some gestures she had made were interpreted as a homosexual overture even though they were not intended as such. Rather, they were her way of showing that she cared about a person as a human being.

This uncertainty in labeling relationships may also apply to researchers as they conduct their studies of women in prison. After immersing themselves in the literature on women in prison, researchers discover that homosexual dyads are a primary adaptive response to incarceration. Based on that knowledge, many researchers attempt to find evidence supporting that claim. In this study, observations were made of an inmate brushing the hair of another, inmates scratching the backs of others, and an inmate comforting another by holding her arm and hugging her. All of these behaviors can be considered rule violations for inappropriate physical contact within the institution and can result in a discipline. Does this behavior provide evidence in support of homosexuality in the prison, or are these examples of socially approved behavior outside of the prison? Would these same behaviors be defined in the same way outside the prison? American
culture has always allowed a certain amount of physical contact between women and adolescent girls, including dancing together and hugging each other. It is only once we come into the prison environment, where rules prohibit this behavior, that the behavior becomes defined as inappropriate and evidence of homosexual activity. So, it is quite possible that early research on women in prison has placed blinders on those researchers that followed.

Mawby (1982) studied a British prison and noted a number of differences between the findings of her study and the research on women in American prisons. The major finding from this study is that the inmate subculture in the British prison is not as strong as that in American prisons and that familial structures and lesbian relationships played a less significant role. Mawby believes that the utility of these responses to imprisonment varies according to the types of women sent to prison and the contact that women have with the outside world. The British prison included a higher proportion than American prisons of first offenders and more offenders whose crimes are relatively minor. Also, inmates' contacts with friends and family outside the prison are more frequent in British prisons than in most American prisons. Mitchellville has many similarities to the British prison. It contains a larger number of inmates who are incarcerated for the first time and who have been convicted for relatively minor offenses. Seventy-seven percent of the inmates in this study have no prior prison commitments and fifty percent were convicted for relatively minor offenses such as false use of a financial instrument or prostitution.
This could be one reason why the coupling relationship is not as prevalent at Mitchellville as it has been reported at other U.S. prisons. Because many inmates will be serving shorter sentences at Mitchellville than at other prisons, the inmates may have less of a need to establish the coupling relationship as an adaptive response to incarceration. But being incarcerated for even a very short period of time does create hardships, and these hardships may be eased through participation in partnerships or the quasi-family.

The deprivation and importation models provided the framework for the present study of women in prison. The deprivation model suggests that inmates alleviate the deprivations associated with incarceration through a collective response which is in opposition to the desires of prison officials. The importation model, on the other hand, suggests that pre-prison socialization processes that inmates have been exposed to help determine the adaptive response of the inmates. Specific tests of the deprivation and importation models in prisons for women have provided favorable evidence for both models, but neither model has received unqualified support. Jensen and Jones (1976) concluded that younger inmates, those with urban backgrounds, and felons were more likely to adopt the inmate code. Hartnagel and Gillan (1980) concluded that younger inmates, married inmates, and those with previous imprisonment bring to the prison a set of values supportive of the informal inmate normative system. However, the variables of time served and staff friends from the deprivation model also directly affects adoption of the inmate code.
In the Mitchellville study, overall support of the inmate code is minimal. Fifty-two percent of the inmates state that an inmate code does not exist as compared to sixteen percent who believe the code does exist for all inmates, while another thirty-two percent believe that the code exists among certain groups of inmates. Support for the inmate code is found to be strongest among those women who have family or friends who are or have been in prison. This finding lends support to the importation model in that it appears that some women have been exposed to values prior to incarceration that are consistent with the inmate code. Those inmates not exposed to these values prior to imprisonment are less likely to endorse the inmate code.

Giallombardo (1966) and Heffernan (1972) maintain that prison kinship structures arise out of both the deprivations of imprisonment and pre-prison socialization. Kinship structures provide the integrative and conflict-regulating functions while also meeting many individual needs including affection, security, advice, friendship and loneliness deprivations resulting from incarceration). But both Heffernan and Giallombardo emphasize the role that cultural definitions of the female role in American society plays in the formation of the make-believe family (importation variables). The reason that women construct kinship structures in response to the deprivations of imprisonment is because females are socialized to conceive of themselves, their peer relations, and their need satisfactions primarily in terms of family roles.

At Mitchellville, the affective relationships of quasi-families,
couples, and partners develop in part as a response to the deprivations of incarceration. These relationships meet many needs of the inmates that arise directly from incarceration including companionship, emotional support and trust. Because these needs are not met through contacts with family and friends outside of prison, the inmates must rely on others who are sharing a similar experience to have those needs met.

Why the women at Mitchellville and at other prisons for women respond to incarceration by developing affective relationships appears to relate to the way men and women are socialized for different roles in society. A clear difference exists in comparisons of prisons for men and women. Men's prisons have a considerable amount of violence and aggressive behavior. This does not appear to be the case in most prisons for women. Males are socialized and rewarded for aggressive behavior, and this behavior is one way of affirming their masculinity in an environment where they have been stripped of their male identity. Females, on the other hand, are not rewarded for displays of aggressive behavior. The relationships that develop at men's prisons revolve around security concerns. Since protection from physical violence is not a major concern for the women at Mitchellville, the relationships that they form are aimed at meeting other emotional needs and concerns.

The Distinctiveness of Mitchellville

Before presenting the conclusions of this study, it is important to take a closer look at Mitchellville to compare it with prisons for women in general. As was pointed out in Mawby's study (1982), the
types of offenders and the amount of contact with family and friends outside of prison may influence the response of women to incarceration.

Mitchellville is similar to most prisons for women in one very important aspect. Nearly all prisons for women do not look like traditional prisons. There are no gun towers, stone walls, armed guards, barred windows, doors or gates. Most prisons for women more closely resemble a small college campus with dormitories and rooms rather than cells. Mitchellville is no exception. When one arrives at Mitchellville one sees a small campus surrounded by a chain link fence. Inside are a number of brick buildings that contain living quarters, the chapel and the administration building. The two wooden buildings located behind one of the cottages houses building maintenance and the prison industries. The prison is beautifully landscaped; trees line the sidewalks that connect the buildings.

Despite the similarity in physical appearance between Mitchellville and most prisons for women, there are a number of striking differences. First, Mitchellville is centrally located and is within fifteen miles of the largest city in Iowa. Many prisons for women (and for men) are located in remote rural regions of the state, far from the cities where they draw the largest share of the inmates. This makes it extremely difficult for outside family and friends to visit the prisoners.

Another major difference is the population of the prison. The average female incarcerated population in the United States is 345 inmates per state, with a range of 4 inmates in North Dakota to 1,854
in California. Iowa has one of the smallest inmate populations with approximately 100 inmates. Two of the major studies on women in prison were conducted at relatively large prisons. Alderson, the location of Giallombardo's study (1966), averages 650 inmates while Frontera, the location of Ward and Kassebaum's study (1965), averages 830 inmates.

The larger women's prisons draw the bulk of their population from major metropolitan areas, which in some cases is larger than the total population of Iowa. Also, one finds a much higher percentage of white inmates incarcerated at Mitchellville (although black women are still statistically over-represented in the Iowa prison population) than at most prisons. In addition, there is a higher proportion of property offenders and first-time prison inmates at Mitchellville than at most prisons for women.

Limitations

The major limitation of this study is the sample size. This study has very rich descriptive data and provides a better understanding of the prison experience of women at Mitchellville. But a larger sample would have allowed the opportunity to more closely examine a variety of relationships between variables.

A second limitation of the present research is the time frame in which the data were collected. It would have been desirable to spend more than nine months collecting data for this study, especially with the large turnover in the prison population.

A third limitation relates to the researcher's desire for more participation within the prison. It would have been beneficial to be
able to observe the inmates in a variety of situations. Although I was able to observe and communicate with the inmates through interviews, conversations in the cafeteria and in the classroom, I would have preferred the opportunity to spend some time in the living units of the inmates during the evenings and on weekends.

Finally, it would have been desirable to interview the children of inmates and the outside friends and family members of the inmates. This would have allowed a better understanding of the difficulties associated with trying to maintain a relationship with someone in prison.

Summary and Implications

Many inmates enter Mitchellville with fears and expectations of physical violence and homosexuality. Since few of the inmates had prior experience in a prison for women, the inmates developed these fears from a variety of secondary sources of information. Based on these fears, the inmates develop strategies for coping in this new environment. Some women develop a tough attitude or image while others contemplate isolating themselves or becoming more reserved around others. These fears are resolved and the uncertainty is reduced through observation and participation in the informal culture of the prison.

By virtue of imprisonment, inmates are exposed to a variety of deprivations and restrictions of personal freedom. The primary deprivations encountered by the inmates at Mitchellville are separation from family and friends, dealing with the pettiness of the rules and
the inconsistency of the staff, and being around others one cannot trust. The task for the inmate is to find ways of mitigating these hardships.

The pain of being separated from family and friends can be reduced through visits, letters and phone calls. As has been demonstrated, the inmates receive very little contact from their children and their husbands or boyfriends. But family members provide fairly consistent contact with the inmates. This contact is important to the inmates because it lets them know that they have not been forgotten by the outsiders and that people outside the walls still care about them. Because of the relatively large amount of contact received from family members, it is not surprising to discover that most inmates feel that their relationships with family members improved after incarceration.

The support that could be provided through contacts with family members outside of prison is diminished by the use of information control. Both inmates and outsiders are interested in protecting one another from their fears and from situations that are beyond the control of the other. For this reason, inmates must rely on inmates with whom they are sharing this prison experience for emotional support.

Inmates at Mitchellville deal with the pettiness of the rules and the apparent arbitrariness of the staff by becoming very knowledgeable of the rules and the enforcement practices of the staff. Through reading the handbook and observation and participation in the prison social world, the inmates learn not only what the rules are but, more
Importantly, they learn how to get around the rules. In order to "learn the ropes" at Mitchellville, it is very important for inmates to integrate themselves in some degree in the social world of the prison.

Through greater participation in the prison world, the inmates learn that they need not fear physical violence. What becomes a primary concern for the inmates is the gossiping, backstabbing and snitching by other inmates. These activities lead to an increase in tension and frustration among the inmates. The inmates at Mitchellville never come to completely trust the population of inmates as a whole, and this is reflected in the lack of solidarity or loyalty among the inmates at Mitchellville. But this lack of group cohesion, in turn, leads to an inability of the inmates to control this divisive behavior of the inmates.

The pains of imprisonment are alleviated primarily through one of three affective relationships: the quasi-family, the couple and the rap partner. The types of relationships formed at Mitchellville are functional in nature, since they are important sources of need gratification for many incarcerated females. These relationships help ease the pain associated with imprisonment, especially the separation from family and friends. Beside meeting the needs of companionship, emotional support and trust, these affective relationships also help the new inmate to better understand the prison environment. "Going it alone," although considered by some inmates when they first entered prison, is not a satisfactory way of doing time according to most inmates.
The adaptive responses of women at Mitchellville do not closely resemble those reported in the classic studies of Giallombardo (1966) and Ward and Kassebaum (1965). It is true that homosexual dyads exist at Mitchellville, but the homosexual dyad is not the primary mode of adaptation as was reported by Ward and Kassebaum. The quasi-family is present at Mitchellville, but it is not based on the homosexual marriage as was reported by Giallombardo. The quasi-family is a prevalent adaptive response of women at Mitchellville, and it is matricentric in structure; the mother figure is one of the most respected of inmate role types in the prison.

The differences between the study at Mitchellville and the classic studies by Ward and Kassebaum and Giallombardo could be the result of the use of different methodologies by the researchers, different definitions of the behaviors being studied, or the time period when the studies were being conducted. An alternative reason could be attributed to the differences in the institutions under study. Mitchellville has a much smaller inmate population, a higher percentage of first-time inmates, more inmates incarcerated for less serious property offenses, and a more rural population from which its inmates are drawn than most prisons for women. All of these factors taken together may reduce the need for inmates to become more fully reliant on a strong, tight-knit prison social organization. Since inmates at Mitchellville are less indoctrinated into the prison world, by virtue of their first-time prisoner status, and since they may be serving relatively short prison sentences, these inmates are more concerned
with having the short-term needs of companionship and support met by the inmate population.

Affective relationships are functional for the inmates because they meet many important needs for the inmates that are not being met by contacts with family and friends outside of the prison nor by official programs implemented by the prison administration. As has been demonstrated in the literature on prisons for women, these affective relationships develop as a response to the deprivations of incarceration. Theoretically, the importance of this study lies in the differences in the structure of these affective relationships as compared to other studies of women in prison. These differences suggest that the utility of these affective ties as a response to incarceration may vary according to the types of women sent to prison and the types of institutions that the women are sent to. Future research should examine variations in adaptive responses of women in a variety of correctional institutions.

Future research is also necessary to find out if the adaptive response of women to imprisonment affects the inmate's re-integration into society in any way. Longitudinal studies should follow the progress of participants and non-participants in these affective relationships to determine what impact this participation may have on the future of the inmates. The results of this research can provide some basis for policy makers to determine how they should respond with these relationships that are formed by inmates.

Effective treatment programs should take into account the unique
features of the inmate relationships within the prison and recognize the needs which are being denied the inmates and are thus having to be fulfilled through participation in affective relationships. This could mean changing the balance of the deprivations faced by inmates through the use of furloughs and conjugal visits. For example, a program in the Minimum Security Unit at the Minnesota Correctional Facility in Stillwater allows spouses and children to spend weekends in a house on the prison grounds with the inmate. During this time, inmates and family members receive counseling to assist the family with any difficulties they may be having. This would be an important step at Mitchellville in that it is imperative for inmate mothers and their children to spend more quality time together while the mother is serving her prison term. This would help ease the fears of both mothers and children and help the inmate in her transition to the outside world.

The prison administration could also provide alternative reference groups which would serve the same functions as the existing affective relationships. Mitchellville has attempted this with some success. Many inmates participate in a program called Match-2 partners where inmates are matched with a volunteer outside of prison. These Match-2 partners provide friendship for the inmates at Mitchellville, and it is important that this program be strengthened and maintained.

It is also possible that the administration could utilize the existing affective relationships as a reference group to aid the inmate in her transition to the outside world. It is quite possible to use
the influence that the "Moms" possess in a positive and constructive way to benefit the inmates as they prepare themselves for re-entry into the free world.
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