

# Chapter 10: Inmate World

# Men in Prison <sup>1</sup>

**Total institution:** Place where the same people work, play, eat, sleep, and recreate together on a continuous basis.

- Life within these institutions is planned by those in control, and activities are strictly scheduled.

# Men in Prison <sup>2</sup>

Modes of adaptation to prison life.

- Convert.
- Withdraw.
- Colonize.
- Rebel.

# Inmate Subculture<sup>1</sup>

Habits, customs, mores, values, beliefs, or superstitions of the body of inmates incarcerated in correctional institutions.

- Includes the inmate social world.

**Prisonization:** Process by which inmates adapt to prison society.

- The taking on of the ways, mores, customs, and general culture of the penitentiary.

# Inmate Subculture <sup>2</sup>

**Pains of imprisonment:** Major problems that inmates face include:

- Loss of liberty and personal autonomy.
- Lack of material possessions.
- Loss of heterosexual relationships.
- Reduced personal security.

# Formation of Inmate Subculture

## **Deprivation theory.**

- Inmate subcultures develop in response to the deprivations in prison life.

## **Importation theory.**

- Inmate subcultures are brought into prisons from the outside world.

## **Integration model.**

- Combination of the importation and deprivation theories.
- Norms and standards in prison also affect inmates, regardless of the values gained in childhood.

# Prison Code

- Set of norms and values among prison inmates.
- Antagonistic to the official administration and rehabilitation programs of the prison.
- Violations result in inmate-imposed sanctions.

# Elements of the Prison Code

Do not interfere with the interests of other inmates.

Do not quarrel with other inmates.

Do not exploit other inmates.

Do not whine, be tough, and be a man.

Do not trust the guards or staff.

Remember that prison officials are wrong and inmates are right.

# Prison Argot and Social Structure in Men's Prisons

**Prison argot:** Special language of the inmate subculture.

Social structures.

- Classification of prisoners was by the crimes they had committed or their criminal histories.

**Inmate roles:** Prison lifestyles or forms of ongoing social accommodation to prison life.

# Inmate Types

The real  
man.

The mean  
dude.

The bully.

The agitator.

The  
hedonist.

The  
opportunist.

The  
retreatist.

The legalist.

The radical.

The  
colonist.

The religious  
inmate.

The  
punk.

The gang-  
banger.

# Adapting to Prison Life

Coping strategies that characterize prison life are as follows:

- Behavioral.
- Cognitive.
- Emotional.

# Sexuality in Men's Prisons

- Violence and victimization occur, and violence mostly has sexual overtones.
- Punks are owned by powerful inmates and are forced to fill the role of a traditional wife.
- Targets are physically slight, young, white, nonviolent offenders from nonurban areas.

# Women in Prison <sup>1</sup>

- Number of women in prison has grown faster than that of men.
- Many women's prisons consist of cottages arranged in groupings called pods.
- Security in women's prisons is more relaxed than in men's prisons.

# Women in Prison <sup>2</sup>

- Prisoner programs in women's prisons have been criticized as being inferior to those in men's prisons.
- Overcrowding, violence, and poor conditions are prevalent.

# Characteristics of Women Inmates

- Largely resemble male prisoners in race, ethnic background, and age.
- More likely to be serving time for a drug offense than for a violent crime.
- Have shorter criminal records than male inmates.
- Have experienced far more sexual and physical abuse than men.

# Offenses of Incarcerated Women

Reasons behind the arrests of incarcerated women are:

- Trying to pay for drugs.
- Attempts to relieve economic pressures.
- Poor judgment.

# Social Structure in Women's Prisons

Bases for the social roles assumed by each inmate are based on three elements.

- Individual's level of personal dependence and status needs.
- Individual's needs arising from incarceration combined with the institution's inability to meet female inmates' emotional needs.
- Needs related to the individual's personality.

# Female Inmate Roles

## The cool inmate.

- Has previous criminal records.
- Is in the know and does not cause trouble for other inmates.

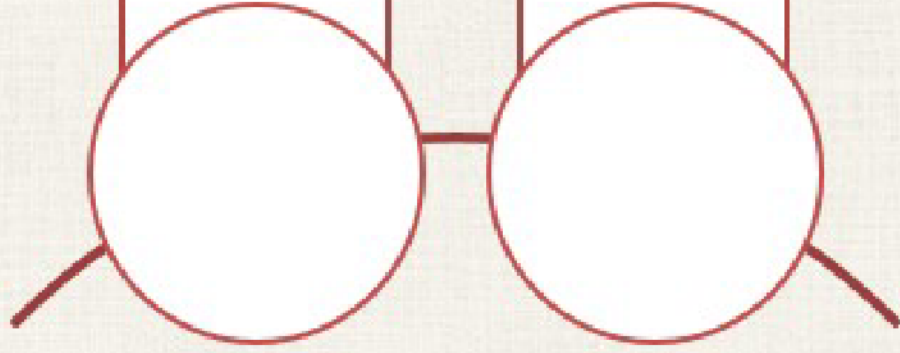
## The square inmate.

- Not familiar with criminal lifestyles.
- Has few, if any, criminal experiences.
- Upholds the values and roles of conventional society.

## The life inmate.

- Habitual or career offender who is well socialized into a life of crime.
- Supports inmate values and subculture.

# Features That Distinguish Women's Prisons from Men's Prisons



Social roles in women's prisons place greater emphasis on homosexual relations as a mode of adaptation to prison life.

Mode of adaptation a female inmate selects is best assessed by studying the inmate's preinstitutional experience.

# Pseudofamilies

- Family-like structures, common in women's prisons.
- Inmates assume roles similar to those of family members in free society.
- Provide inmates with emotional and social support.
- Equivalent to gangs in men's prison.
- Some women take the roles of men.

# Special Needs of Female Inmates

**Gender-responsiveness:** Creating an environment that:

- Reflects an understanding of the realities of women's lives.
- Addresses the special issues of women in correctional settings.

# Mothers in Prison <sup>1</sup>

Women's prisons should make counseling available to pregnant inmates.

- To inform them of the options available.

Child placement is a critical issue.

- Women may lose legal custody of their children.
- Few women's prisons permit newborns with the mother inside.

# Mothers in Prison <sup>2</sup>

- Most children live with the other parent.
- Most inmates are worried about possible alienation from their children.
- Number of women's prisons operate programs designed to develop parenting skills among inmates.
- Effects of parental incarceration on children are significant.

# Cocorrectional Facilities

**Coed prison:** Prison housing both male and female offenders.

**Cocorrections:** Incarceration and interaction of female and male offenders under a single institutional administration.

# Rationales in Support of Cocorrections

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Reduces the dehumanizing and destructive aspects of incarceration.

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Reduces problems of institutional control.

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Creates a more normal atmosphere, reducing privation.

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Allows positive heterosocial skills to emerge.

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Cushions the shock of release.

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Increases the number of program offerings and improves program access for all prisoners.

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Expands career opportunities for women.

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