SOCIOLOGY
AND THE FIELD OF
CORRECTIONS

RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY has long been interested in specific areas of application. The major emphases upon research and methodology of recent decades have shared the scene with the work of those whose acknowledged responsibility was that of the applied sociologist. Indeed, the researcher and the theorist frequently shifted roles to that of the practitioner, or at least that of a middleman mediating between scholarship and its use in the field. The roles of the practitioner or middleman and their special problems have been in process of sharpened definition. In the decade since World War II, the American Sociological Society has expanded rapidly, not only in the number of members whose primary affiliation is with academic institutions but also in the number and variety of those engaged in numerous fields of practice. This has led the Society to focus attention upon the problems raised by the professional practice of sociology.

In a parallel line of interest Russell Sage Foundation undertook to advance the use of accumulated products and methods of the social sciences in selected fields of professional practice—to shorten or bridge the gap between what is known and what we try to do. Therefore, when the American Sociological Society proposed to the Foundation a collaboration in the preparation and publication of a series of short bulletins, each dealing with a single area in which the sociologist is a practitioner or his work is relevant to practice, the Foundation agreed to participate in the joint enterprise. The preparation of three bulletins was undertaken. Dr. John A. Clausen of the National Institute of Mental Health has written one on Sociology and Mental Health. Dr. Albert F. Wessen of Yale University has undertaken another on Sociology and Medicine.

This bulletin on Sociology and Corrections, by Dr. Lloyd Ohlin, is the first in the series to be published. From the Society, his advisory committee consisted of Ernest W. Burgess, University of Chicago; Lloyd McCorkle, Principal Keeper of New Jersey State Prison; Thorsten Sellin, University of Pennsylvania; and Harry M. Shulman, First Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Correction, New York. The general editorial committee for the series consists of Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., representing Russell Sage Foundation, and Wellman J. Warner, representing the American Sociological Society.

These bulletins are designed for the sociologist, although it is hoped that they may prove useful to others. The purpose of the series is explicit and is exemplified by the present bulletin by Dr. Ohlin. It is neither a medium for reporting new research, a history of correctional practice, nor the formulation of recent criminological theory. Sociology in the past has concerned itself with the problems of the criminal and his treatment more than any of the other established disciplines. As a preliminary, one of the tasks of this bulletin is to make a brief and tough-minded appraisal of what sociologists have and have not done in the field of corrections. But the main function is to locate crucial opportunities for sociologists. Even the theoretically significant problems for scientific investigation identified are selected, in part at least, for their relevance to a field of practice. The intent is to indicate a range of occupational outlets for a growing number of men and women whose training in sociology is to be carried over into the applications of the practitioner, and who may be expected to channel back to the study and the research laboratory tested evaluations of research and theory. Such teamwork must increasingly constitute a growing edge of sociology.

WELLMAN J. WARNER

New York University
December 1, 1955

I

THE FIELD OF CORRECTIONS

THE STUDY OF CRIME and the careers of criminal offenders has been for many years a subject of sociological research. Investigations extend back to a period when sociologists brought to the study of social problems the enthusiasm and zeal of social reformers, and have contributed extensive research knowledge of criminal behavior.

However, students of criminology are repeatedly faced with an interesting paradox. As a result of the sociologist's preoccupation with problems of social organization, it is reasonable to expect that sociological research in a special problem area, such as criminology, would first focus attention on the organizational aspects of the field. In criminology the major organizational problems are to be found in the structure and operation of correctional agencies. Yet these problems have received relatively little study by sociologists.

Sociologists have investigated extensively the differential incidence of crime in the community. They have made comparative studies of the crime rates in different societies and in urban and rural areas. The ecological distribution of crime within urban areas has been thoroughly explored. Sociologists have made detailed studies of special crime problems such as prostitution, sex delinquency, alcoholism, narcotic addiction, professional criminality, gang behavior, and racketeering. Many studies have been made of the correlates of crime such as broken homes, nationality and race, intelligence, physiological, economic, and psychological factors. These factors have been related to the incidence of crime in the community and the development of criminal careers. Detailed case studies have been undertaken and authentic personal documents obtained to reveal significant factors in the

criminal environment. Special studies of the development and operation of criminal behavior systems have been made. More recently, sociologists have carried out extensive studies of white-collar crime, that is, criminal violations in the world of business. In short, sociologists have devoted almost their entire research effort to the study of crime in the community, with a view to explaining the causes of crime, or the cultural and social factors which account for the development of criminal careers.[1]

This situation is paradoxical to students of criminology, because the channelizing of research effort has prevented an exploration of the field of corrections which the sociologist is uniquely equipped to investigate. Failure to devote an equal amount of research attention to correctional problems has retarded the development of systematic knowledge of criminal behavior. In all the personal documents which sociologists have gathered from criminal offenders, the experience of arrest, trial, and incarceration has played a particularly significant part in the development of the criminal career.[2] This insight has been securely established through analysis of the documentary material, but sociologists have failed to carry out adequate research investigations which would afford detailed knowledge of the character of this experience. Tannenbaum saw the problem very clearly, and repeatedly pointed to the experiences of the offender with official law enforcement and correctional agencies as the key to understanding the mature criminal.[3] Tannenbaum recognized the dramatic effect of the initial contacts with the police, the courts, and correctional institutions. He pointed to the liability which these experiences imposed upon the offender in returning to the free community.

[1] Appropriate references and critical discussion of these studies may be found in the first half of all criminology textbooks written by sociologists. See particularly Sutherland, Edwin H., and Donald R. Cressey, *Principles of Criminology*, 5th ed., J. B. Lippincott Co., Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, 1955, Part I, The Study of Crime, pp. 3–250.

[2] For example, see the personal documents obtained by Clifford R. Shaw and the supplemental analysis of these life-history materials: *The Jack-Roller*, University of Chicago Press, 1930; *The Natural History of a Delinquent Career*, University of Chicago Press, 1931; *Brothers in Crime*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1938.

[3] Tannenbaum, Frank, *Crime and the Community*. Ginn and Co., Boston, 1938, Chapters 1, 2, and 3.

Sociologists have long been aware of the manner in which conceptions of self arise in the course of social interaction. For the offender who is first exposed to the dramatic experience of arrest and trial, and the routine humiliating experiences encountered during incarceration, the conception that one is criminal is very difficult to escape. This feeling becomes part of the everyday orientation and approach of the offender to the free world. Unless the sociologist examines the content of this experience, as well as that which occurs in the free community, he has managed to achieve only half of the understanding he is in a position to acquire.

The Nature of Corrections

The field of corrections is concerned with the treatment the offender receives after sentence by the court. Thus, "corrections" as the term is employed in this bulletin does not embrace the problems of law enforcement or judicial procedure. Both of these areas need far more extensive investigation by sociologists than they have received to date. It is necessary only to examine any one of the many textbooks in criminology to recognize that few research studies have been carried out by sociologists on problems of law enforcement or court procedure. Virtually all that is written about these areas in criminology textbooks reflects material drawn from studies by investigating commissions, police officials, judges and criminal lawyers, or correctional reform agencies. Insights into the effects of handling by the police or the courts on the offender are drawn primarily from the personal documents written by former offenders.

The actions of these agencies play so significant a part in the career of criminal offenders that it is difficult to explain why they have not claimed more research attention. Such investigations are of special interest for sociologists, for they entail study of the manner in which the orientations of the agency and its members toward their work affect the careers of the men processed by them. The personal documents of criminal careers have furnished repeated evidence of the difficulties of institutional treatment resulting from the handling which offenders received from the

police and the courts. The bitter resentment frequently generated during the process of arrest and conviction must be removed before successful treatment becomes possible.

The field of corrections involves the operation of the probation and parole system and penal institutions such as jails, workhouses, state farms, training schools for boys and girls, reformatories, and prisons. Correctional agencies are charged with a twofold objective: that of maintaining the secure custody of offenders committed to their care, and such treatment of these offenders as will alter the course of their subsequent careers in the direction of conventional behavior. The field of corrections is an interdisciplinary problem area. It utilizes the skills of psychiatrists, psychologists, sociologists, and social workers. In addition, it poses problems of academic and vocational education. In any penal institution there are many needs to be met, and a major part of its administrative problem is to mobilize and integrate the specialized skills required for meeting the needs of the population. The sociologist has a special function to perform in this setting. A penal institution cannot achieve its objective of successful treatment unless it is organized to substitute conventional orientations for the criminal value system of the sentenced offender. This is regarded in the correctional literature as the central function of the penal institution, and the organization of systems of social interaction and cultural values in order to effect changes in behavioral orientations lies within the special province of the sociologist.

Research Opportunities in Corrections

It is doubtful that an adequate science of penology can be created unless more extensive sociological analyses are made of correctional institutions. A number of studies have been made by sociologists of factors associated with success or failure on probation and parole, but few studies have been made of the organization of these agencies or of the operations of penal institutions. The literature in this field is largely the work of practical administrators and is programmatic in character. The only extensive investigation by a sociologist of the operation of the penal system

is the pioneer study by Clemmer of the prison community.[1] Several brief articles by sociologists have also been published on the problems of prison life, but Clemmer's work stands alone in the breadth and scope of its treatment of the prison problem from a sociological standpoint.[2]

This situation still exists despite the fact that there are many opportunities today for such studies of correctional agencies. There is increasing recognition by correctional administrators that the organization of penal establishments and their treatment programs require adequate research evaluation. Furthermore, prison inmates appear to be highly motivated to participate in research experiments. The experience of research investigators has been that many inmates are particularly desirous of engaging in research experiments to secure a better understanding of their own position and their own careers. Frequently they are motivated by curiosity, interest in a new activity, or a desire to remain occupied. The striking fact from a sociological standpoint is that penal institutions represent genuine laboratories for social research hitherto unexploited. They afford a set of controlled conditions, which are impossible to duplicate in other avenues of social life, for social experiments.

In addition, the penal institution constitutes a complex social system which provides an opportunity to engage many types of sociological interests and problems. The penal situation affords broad opportunities for the study of social organization, social

[1] Clemmer, Donald, The Prison Community. The Christopher Publishing House, Boston, 1940.

[2] Riemer, Hans, "Socialization in the Prison Community," Proceedings of the American Prison Association, 1937, pp. 151–155; Clemmer, Donald, "Leadership Phenomena in a Prison Community," Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, vol. 28, March–April, 1938, pp. 851–872; Hayner, Norman S., and Ellis Ash, "The Prisoner Community as a Social Group," American Sociological Review, vol. 4, June, 1939, pp. 362–369, and "The Prison as a Community," American Sociological Review, vol. 5, August, 1940, pp. 577–583; Weinberg, S. Kirson, "Aspects of the Prison's Social Structure," American Journal of Sociology, vol. 47, March, 1942, pp. 717–726; Taft, Donald R., "The Group and Community Organization Approach to Prison Administration," Proceedings of the American Prison Association, 1942, pp. 275–284; Hayner, Norman S., "Washington State Correctional Institutions as Communities," Social Forces, vol. 21, March, 1943, pp. 316–322; Harper, Ida, "The Role of the 'Fringer' in a State Prison for Women," Social Forces, vol. 31, October, 1952, pp. 53–60; Schrag, Clarence, "Leadership Among Prison Inmates," American Sociological Review, vol. 19, February, 1954, pp. 37–42; McCorkle, Lloyd W., and Richard Korn, "Resocialization Within Walls," Annals, vol. 293, May, 1954, pp. 88–98.

psychology, collective behavior, and the study of culture.
Throughout the country administrators of penal institutions are
continuously experimenting by rearranging the organizational
setup of their institutions and treatment programs. The correc-
tional facilities present a variety of types of organization: short-
term jails, training schools for boys and girls, minimum custody
farms and forestry camps, and maximum security prisons of
several hundred to several thousand in population.

Many variations are to be found in the correctional objectives
of different administrations, in programs of treatment, and in
systems of personnel recruitment. Not only do these variations
exist throughout the country at any one time but many changes
occur in given institutions over a period. The penal system, in
short, provides an opportunity for controlled sociological obser-
vation and comparative analysis which is very much needed from
a practical and theoretical standpoint in criminology. It provides
a unique opportunity for sociologists to test sociological theories,
propositions, and insights, and to refine and develop them in the
context of the correctional setting.

II

ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS
OF THE PRISON SYSTEM

THE PRISONS OF THE UNITED STATES reflect a heterogeneous mixture of traditional penal procedures and the latest in correctional techniques. It has been characteristic of correctional institutions in this country that new practices are initiated in work with juvenile offenders. These practices tend to spread from the training schools and juvenile reformatories to the adult prison systems. The system of parole was first initiated at the Elmira Reformatory in New York. From this starting point, it gradually spread throughout the juvenile and adult institutions of the country. The use of professional personnel in correctional institutions first acquired broad acceptance in juvenile institutions and is increasingly characteristic of the adult prisons. Also, juvenile institutions were the first to develop minimum security conditions on a wide scale. The trend in penological thinking is to promote such establishments today for adult institutions. The institution for men in Chino, California, and the federal institution for men in Seagoville, Texas, are examples of this type of development for adults. Juvenile institutions have stressed inmate self-governing techniques and have widely exploited group therapy approaches to correction. It is in juvenile institutions that individualized case study, counseling, and program-planning have found their broadest development. Consequently, it is in the prison system, rather than the juvenile institutions, that the sociological investigator is likely to find the greatest contrast between the old and the new in penal practice.[1]

[1] The limitations of this bulletin prevent detailed consideration of the problems and conditions of research in juvenile institutions. Much of what is discussed, how-

The Prison as a Closed Social System

The prison may be viewed as a social system that is in a large measure closed and self-contained. Contacts are maintained with the outside world through the media of mass communications, newspapers and magazines, radio and television. Letters are regularly received from relatives and friends, and visits are an important part of prison life. Yet all of these contacts are to a remarkable degree controlled and censored, and life within the walls of the prison acquires a unique character. The prison community is constantly in touch with developments and changes in the outside world and receives fresh images of what is going on through reports from the steady stream of inmates who are daily admitted. New ideas and fresh orientations are absorbed into the current of prison life, but the prison community at best is a distorted mirror of the outside community which it serves.

The chief characteristic of this prison social system is the caste-like division between those who rule and those who are ruled.[1] The atmosphere of the prison in varying degrees is strictly authoritarian. The essential character of the relationship between the administrative staff and the inmates is one of conflict. There is a gulf of fear and distrust in most prison systems separating the authorities on the one hand from the inmate body on the other. This gulf is bridged in many ways and at many points, for otherwise the system could not function. Many institutions have sought to mitigate this conflict by the use of different experimental techniques frankly designed to create a greater degree of

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ever, is also applicable to juvenile institutions. Juvenile institutions tend to be less rigidly controlled. The professional staff and the treatment programs are more highly developed. Living arrangements under minimum security conditions are much more characteristic of juvenile institutions. Furthermore, juvenile offenders tend to be less mature and sophisticated from a standpoint of criminal behavior. Though many such differences between juvenile and adult institutions may be pointed out, most of the important problems for sociological research cited in this bulletin are of equal importance for the understanding of the organization and operation of juvenile institutions. Consequently, juvenile institutions should be recognized as offering equally significant problems of sociological research as those found in adult institutions.

[1] Polanski, N. A., "The Prison as an Autocracy," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, vol. 33, May–June, 1942, pp. 16–22.

cooperation and a more democratic atmosphere. The develop-
ment of inmate self-governing bodies, inmate advisory councils,
and the honor farm system represent such attempts.[1] In addition,
programs of group therapy and group discussion have sought to
bridge the gap between the value orientations of the administra-
tion and those of the inmate body.[2] In general, however, there
has grown up within the American prison system a rather well-
defined formal and informal structure of relationships between
the administrative staff and the inmates. A finely balanced system
of interlocking expectations exists to control these relationships.
The limits of this role expectation system are rather tightly drawn
and are easily overstepped, with immediate consequences in the
form of heightened tension and widespread disturbance.

With the recent addition of professionally trained psychiatrists,
psychologists, sociologists, and social workers in prison regimes a
rather marked differentiation of function between the adminis-
trative-custodial staff and the professional staff has become ap-
parent. This cleavage has resulted from what has been perceived
as a basic conflict between a custodial and a treatment orienta-
tion toward prison work. In some few instances in the United
States persons professionally trained in the social sciences have
taken over the administration of the penal institutions. The
majority of the correctional institutions throughout the country,
however, are firmly in the control of persons whose philosophy
and functional approach to the penal institution is that of custody
and security. In such situations the most common form of accom-
modation between the custodial and the professional staff is one
in which the professional staff mediates between the custodial
staff and the inmates to effect greater institutional security. The

[1] For a description of the use of self-governing techniques at Sing Sing Prison in
New York, see Osborne, T. M., *Society and Prisons*, Yale University Press, New
Haven, 1916; Tannenbaum, Frank, *Osborne of Sing Sing*, University of North Caro-
lina Press, Chapel Hill, 1933. For an evaluation and description of an exceedingly
interesting self-governing experiment, see Commons, W. H., T. Yahkub, E. Powers,
and C. R. Doering, *A Report on the Development of Penological Treatment at Norfolk
Prison Colony in Massachusetts*, Bureau of Social Hygiene, New York, 1940. For a
current appraisal of such techniques in modern penal institutions, see *Manual of
Correctional Standards*, American Prison Association, New York, 1954.

[2] McCorkle, Lloyd W., "The Present Status of Group Therapy in United States
Correctional Institutions," *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, vol. 3, January,
1953, pp. 79–87.

professional staff makes diagnoses and classifications that are exploited primarily from a security standpoint. It also deals with various troublesome cases to siphon off resentment and promote acceptance of existing custodial conditions. The existence of the professional staff has little real significance for the prisoners. Communication with the custodial staff is minimal, and the professional staff lacks sufficient administrative control to take positive action. Professional staff members in such a situation are confronted with the dilemma of continuing routine and ineffectual case diagnoses or of leaving the field of work entirely. Relatively little knowledge exists of the conditions under which professional staff members are able to redefine their assigned roles and to share more actively in the administration of the institution and the formulation of treatment policy.

There are many variations in the organizational systems of correctional institutions throughout the country which would permit the sociologist to make informative comparative analyses of these organizational arrangements and their consequences for both the administrative staff and the inmate body. Many penal institutions in the United States have undergone marked alterations in structure and functional organization which merit careful study, not only to advance knowledge of penal treatment but to contribute to sociological theory and research on problems of social organization.

Recruitment of Personnel

State prison systems, with few exceptions, have failed to escape their traditional involvement in party politics. The vast majority of prison workers are recruited from party ranks and look to the political system for job security and promotion. This is particularly true of the detention facilities for adult misdemeanants and is least characteristic of juvenile training schools and reformatories. In recent years, however, penal institutions throughout the country have shown a clear trend toward the development of a career service and recruitment of professionally trained workers. This trend has served to heighten a form of conflict that was barely noticeable twenty or thirty years ago. There is apparent

throughout the correctional field a struggle for control of penal institutions between politically sponsored administrators and persons with a professional career orientation. Also apparent within the penal system is an increased participation by persons trained in schools of social work. Their influence is particularly noticeable in correctional institutions for juvenile offenders. These workers have been trained in individual casework techniques and have approached correctional problems with a well-integrated philosophy and a clearly defined set of casework principles and procedures.

Social workers in the field of corrections have revealed a strong commitment to the humanitarian reform aspects of the social work movement. They have shown a capacity to develop highly articulate and rational programs of treatment consistent with social work philosophy. This has permitted them to exercise an increasing leadership role in national correctional organizations. Consequently, the precepts, standards, and programs sponsored on a national level reveal increasing discrepancy with the correctional practices currently pursued by older administrators recruited from political ranks.

The recent wave of prison riots throughout the country may be partly attributed to this increasing discrepancy between precept and practice. There is deep antagonism between the older workers in corrections and the new professionally trained recruits. It is difficult to determine, however, without adequate research study, just what effect this conflict is having on the operations of the penal system and on the careers of prisoners. A great deal more attention is now being paid to developing minimum standards of correctional treatment.[1] Widespread interest is evident in in-service training programs for correctional workers.[2] As professionally trained workers become more intimately involved and acquainted with the operations of the large maximum security prison systems of the country, there is growing recognition that an individual casework approach is not adequate to meet the treat-

[1] *Manual of Correctional Standards.*

[2] Committee on Personnel Standards and Training, *In-Service Training Standards for Prison Custodial Officers.* American Prison Association, New York, 1951.

ment needs of the large prison population. This may account for the increasing interest in group therapy programs within the prison system. In the absence of sociological research addressed to these problems, no clear assessment can now be made of the effects of these conflicting orientations toward correctional work on the part of persons recruited from different experience and training backgrounds.

Clique Formation and Inmate Solidarity

It is impossible to understand fully the operation of the penal system unless an adequate appraisal is made of the informal system of organization existing among the inmates. It is clear that this informal organization, together with the informal relationships which are maintained with the guards and the professional staff, mediates and controls the functioning of the formal system. The manifest objectives of the formal prison system as already noted are twofold: (1) the custodial security of the inmates, and (2) such rehabilitative effects as are possible within custodial limits. The achievement of these objectives is at all times conditioned by the underlying relationship between the inmates and the administration, which is traditionally one of conflict.

In the majority of prisons throughout the country the leaders among the inmates are those who embody in clearest form anti-administration and anticonventional values. Inmate cliques tend to form about such men, who serve as models of opposition to the administration. Positions of status and prestige sentiments are accorded those members of the inmate community whose behavior embodies an aggressive disregard for administrative interests and conventional values. Such inmate leaders form cliques of other inmates who regard themselves as "right guys" and who define themselves as "cons." As a series of loosely linked, informal groups these cliques stand in opposition to other inmates called "square johns." "Square johns" are inmates who have a basic allegiance to and identification with conventional values. They are persons who believe that they have made a mistake in committing an act of delinquency or crime.

The "cons" or "right guys" hold in contempt those inmates who relate themselves deferentially to the authorities, with a view to gaining privileges or rewards. Such persons are suspected of systematically violating the solidarity of the "con" group. They are defined as "rats," "finks," or "stool pigeons."

The existence of these different informal classifications within the prison community indicates the sense in which inmate solidarity is never complete or certain. The cliques of "right guys" are continually under pressure to extend their control over other inmates in order to improve their power-position in the prisoner community. The control system by which they seek to effect this extension of influence is essentially informal in nature. Such informal pressures as gossip, laughter, ridicule, and isolation are commonplace. There is always the threat of violence for those inmates who seek to breach the solidarity of the "cons" by informing on their activities to the authorities.

It is clear that many inmates are not accepted and do not submit to the control of the leading clique groups in the inmate population. There is also a constant tug-of-war between an aggressive prison administration and the informal clique groups of inmates for the allegiance and personal identification of new inmates. However, because of the lack of adequate research very little knowledge is available of the induction process which new inmates undergo in becoming acquainted with the prison community, nor is there any understanding of the critical stages which the new inmates go through in making choices as to their ultimate allegiance during the course of their imprisonment.[1]

There is a great deal of variation in penal institutions throughout the country in the degree of conflict and opposition that exists between the inmates and the administration. The solidarity of the inmate body is perhaps greatest in maximum security institutions, where more inmates are found with mature criminal values and identifications. In training schools for youthful offenders and

[1] The most detailed discussion of the informal organization of the prisoner community is provided by Clemmer, *op. cit.* See particularly, Chapters 4 to 7 and 12. For an especially penetrating analysis of the power relations among inmates and the nature of the conflict relationships between inmates and the administrative staff, see McCorkle and Korn, *op. cit.*

in many minimum security institutions, the lines of opposition are far less clearly drawn.

It also appears that the organizational arrangements of the institution and the administrative policies and practices markedly affect the degree to which inmate leaders can enforce widespread solidarity of opposition on the part of the inmate body as a whole to the administration. For example, in many maximum security institutions it is the policy of the administration to enforce as great a degree of social distance as possible between the guards and the inmates. The manifest function of such a policy is to ensure the security of the institution. The authorities recognize that "fraternizing" of guards and inmates may lead to serious security violations through the smuggling of contraband in and out of the institution, and by promoting *lax* custodial practices.[1]

Such a policy, however, serves to promote and to sustain conflict relations between inmates and the administrative staff. It permits the inmate leaders to enforce a greater measure of inmate solidarity, to exploit misunderstanding, to further resentment, and to perpetuate unchallenged myths about the character of the officials. This policy also is detrimental to the reorganization of the inmate value system along conventional lines, for it permits an inmate to relate in different ways to other inmates and the administrative staff. In short, it permits the inmate to segmentalize his relational system and to protect himself against the potential conflict of exposure to competing value systems and identifications. He is thus enabled to present himself in a conventional light to officials so as to secure early release on parole, and at the same time to censure the officials when conversing with other inmates in order to reassert his solidarity with the inmate body.[2]

One of the interesting aspects of the informal inmate control system is the use of the "rat" concept. A pertinent study recently

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[1] In McCorkle and Korn, *op. cit.*, this observation is pressed much further, suggesting that the resulting subversion of the formal authority of the administration makes it impossible to establish effective treatment conditions.

[2] A study of this problem concerning the effect of social distance on the relational system of convicted offenders is being carried out by Richard A. Cloward, New York School of Social Work, Columbia University.

carried out by McCleery in a prison in North Carolina suggests that the use of this concept serves a mythical function for the inmate body.[1] Many actions of the administration are incomprehensible to the inmates, since very little effort is made in maximum security institutions to explain official actions. In the face of apparently whimsical and unpredictable official actions, inmates experience an increased sense of tension, anxiety, and feeling of being powerless. The "rat" concept, according to McCleery, serves to explain all that is unpredictable or mystifying about official actions which affect inmate welfare. The free use of such a concept in a tight, maximum security institution breeds suspicion and distrust of anyone seen talking to an official unless other trusted inmates are within immediate hearing distance. The value of this concept as an effective informal control device is abundantly clear, since the inmate defined as a "rat" is automatically excluded from the society of "right guys," who exercise dominant control of inmate attitudes and behavior.

The concept is occasionally applied to those inmates whose actions designate them as inmate "politicians." Such inmates generally pay deference to, and identify with, the criminal value system of the inmate code. But they seek to advance their power-position in the inmate community by securing trusted positions from the prison authorities. They show deference and respect to the prison officials on the one hand and, on the other, they use their position as a trusted person to distribute favors to other inmates, thereby reasserting their basic solidarity with the "right guys" in the inmate population. Such persons secure their positions by doing their jobs efficiently and in such a way as to create a dependency on them by the administrative officials. In this manner they actually impose limitations on the control which the administration can exercise over the prison. Without trusted inmates discharging essential duties throughout the prison, the institution could not run.

Inmate "politicians" also participate actively in the exchange system of the inmate community. Since the use of money is con-

[1] McCleery, Richard, *The Strange Journey*. University of North Carolina, Extension Bulletin, vol. 32, March, 1953, p. 56.

traband in most penal institutions, there is substituted in its stead
a system of obligations. Obligations tend to be incurred or dis-
charged by dealing in contraband or by doing favors. Inmates
who are in positions of power in the institution and thus able to
control and manipulate the exchange system also exercise an in-
formal control function since one cannot be in line for such favors
unless one is a "right guy."

The Problem of Prison Riots

From these observations it is clear that an adequate science of
penology must depend heavily upon the research skills and theo-
retical insights of sociologists who will bring them to bear on the
prison community. However, no more compelling evidence can
be found of the failure of sociologists to take advantage of the rich
research potential of the field of corrections than the nearly total
disregard by sociological investigators of the wave of prison riots
that swept the correctional institutions of the country in the spring
of 1952 and 1953. To the writer's knowledge, only one article,
written jointly by a sociologist and a correctional psychologist,
has attempted to analyze these riots from a sociological perspec-
tive.[1] Yet these riots provided one of the most striking phenomena
of collective behavior which have occurred in recent years in the
United States.

The riots created widespread public concern and a great deal
of anxiety on the part of public administrators and newspaper
columnists. The significant fact of the riots was that they did not
involve attempts to escape, but represented an effort on the part
of the inmate community to dramatize prison conditions and
command a public hearing. The riots cannot wholly be explained
by such a rationalized objective, but they did succeed in instigat-
ing investigations by legislative and expert commissions, which
resulted in many humanitarian recommendations for the allevia-
tion of punitive aspects of the prison system.

One of the most striking features of the riots was the manner in
which the inmate rebellions spread in contagious fashion. This

[1] Flock, Maurice, and Frank E. Hartung, "A Social Psychological Analysis of
Prison Riots." Unpublished paper delivered before the American Sociological
Society, Urbana, Ill., September, 1954.

phenomenon strongly suggests the sense in which prisoners throughout the prison systems of the United States constitute a consciously identified prisoner community. In all prisons there are many inmates who have served time in one or more other prisons. As a consequence, when trouble occurs in one prison system, prison inmates throughout the country are likely to be as well informed on the conditions leading up to the disturbance as those on the scene. This situation is undoubtedly a significant factor in accounting for the contagion aspect of the prison riots in 1952 and 1953.

Geographically, the prison riots were concentrated in the northern states. Yet the northern prisons of the country are generally regarded by penal administrators as having evidenced the greatest progress in terms of humanitarian reform programs. In 1953 a Committee on Riots of the American Prison Association published a report on the basic conditions underlying the riot disturbances.[1] It pointed to the lack of adequate financial support for the prison system, the inadequately trained staffs, the great prevalence of idleness in the prison system, the absence of well-trained leadership, the excessive size and overcrowding of the prisons, and poor sentencing and parole practices. In the opinion of the Committee the immediate causes of the riots were these basic inadequacies of the prison system. An objective view of the prison systems of the United States discloses, however, that these conditions are far worse in many of the prisons where no riots occurred. The riot incidents have been employed by penal administrators as a basis for the reassertion of programmatic standards for the improvement of the prison system, rather than to initiate objective research studies designed to provide a greater understanding of the operations of the prison system.

The demands of the prisoners during the riots appear to have been formulated after the riots had already started. The complaints voiced by the rioting prisoners relating to food, hospital care, disciplinary measures, parole practices, and treatment programs reflect little conscious awareness of the underlying causes

[1] Committee on Riots, *Prison Riots and Disturbances*. American Prison Association, New York, 1953.

of tension and unrest in the prisoner community. A recent analysis of the prison riots suggests that prison reforms over the past decade have had the effect of removing the power of inmate leaders without meeting the inmate needs which the leaders had been able to satisfy.[1] This explanation deserves further investigation with a view to assessing its adequacy in accounting for the occurrence of riots in some prisons and not in others where many humanitarian reforms have also occurred.

An alternative explanation is suggested by the observation that the riots appear to be more closely related to the continuation of reform efforts, than to the introduction of reformative measures in the past decade. Riots do not seem to have occurred in prison systems where reforms have been continuing in the direction of narrowing the gap that currently exists between the public precepts of prison workers and the practices actually carried out. Through the media of mass communications, prisoners keep well informed of the latest developments in correctional principles and standards. Where the administration appears to be making little effort to implement the progressive measures to which they give public allegiance, a basis for widespread inmate dissatisfaction is provided. A review of the investigative reports on the riots indicates that all the riot incidents were preceded by efforts on the part of the prison administration to tighten up the security system. These official security measures were not counterbalanced by reform measures designed to correct inequities in administrative practice. Thus, the prisons where riots occurred do not appear to have experienced organizational movement in the direction of reform, but instead a movement in the direction of reasserting traditional penal organization and procedures.

The rioting institutions also appear to have been characterized by a harmful decentralization of authority with a breakdown of cooperation between different administrative units within the system. The various administrative units operated as self-contained and independent factions without close communication with other units. Competition among the units for administrative control also appears to have been a widespread underlying

[1] Flock and Hartung, *op. cit.*

condition. The net effect of such conditions is disruption of the established expectation system which controls relations between inmates and staff. There appears to have occurred a marked disturbance and disruption of the channels normally established for the airing of grievances and distribution of rewards. The general inmate resentment resulting from this condition was directed, mobilized, and heightened by inmate leaders. The official reaction to this unrest reflected anxious attempts to increase further the security and repressive measures. The situations preceding the riots thus appear to have been characterized by a long period during which this circular buildup of tension occurred. Under such circumstances any minor incident in the prison, or the development of a riot elsewhere as a response to similar conditions in another prison system, would prove sufficient to touch off a major disturbance.

Many reports of the riots attributed a central role to inmate leaders designated as psychopaths. Such leaders, however, are always present in the inmate population. In most instances they are powerless to effect a major disturbance unless the situation is also attended by widespread inmate dissatisfaction and resentment, which the inmate leaders can successfully mobilize to provide a collective expression of dissatisfaction.

The foregoing account of the problem of prison riots is not intended as an explanation of their occurrence. It has been presented to point to a significant sociological problem. The riots appear to have provided a dramatic demonstration of the consequences of an ill-advised attack on the expectation system of the inmate body. It is a task of sociological theory and research to provide an answer to the question of how an existing expectation system may be safely altered in a given direction. It is probable that an adequate explanation of prison riots cannot be developed until more extensive knowledge is acquired of the nature of the prison social structure and the effect of variations in policies and procedures on this structure. A study of the prison system in trouble is a fruitful starting point for analysis of the system, for it is during such incidents as prison riots that the structure of the prison organization is most clearly revealed. Many types of in-

formal relationships among inmates, and between inmates and authorities, in the prison system remain hidden during the course of normal prison operations. But the importance of such relationships comes more clearly to light when their normal operation is disrupted. A careful investigation of the prison riots by sociologists would unquestionably reveal research findings of major importance for the development of a clearer conception of the sociology of prison life.

III

THE PRISON CULTURE

THE CULTURE OF THE PRISON SYSTEM reflects the culture of the
larger society which it serves, but within the prison system the
subcultural contrasts which exist in the larger society are more
clearly revealed. The criminal value system in the free com-
munity blends with the conventional value system, so that it is
often difficult to separate the elements of one from the other or to
find persons whose identifications are not ambiguous. The prison
system reflects the end result of a considerable amount of screen-
ing and sifting of criminal offenders. The process of commitment
results in personal crisis situations which create new definitions of
oneself in opposition to conventional society. Furthermore, the
organization of· the prison system into two major classes, the
custodians and those in custody, serves to heighten the contrast
between the value systems to which each group is committed.

In the free community there are many ambiguities in value
orientation which protect the individual from intense normative
conflict, and there are many culturally established systems of
compromise for the personal rationalization of such conflict.[1] In
the prison system, however, the cultural contrasts of criminal and
conventional value orientations are clear. The prison inmate is
constantly aware of the tremendous power which the prison
authorities, as representatives of conventional society, exercise
over his personal life during confinement. The nature of adminis-
trative and inmate contacts reenforces awareness on the part of
the inmate that his confinement is a consequence of actions which
he himself has taken in opposition to the conventional value
system. Because the normative positions of authorities and in-

[1] For a discussion of this problem in connection with violations of trust, see
Cressey, Donald R., *Other People's Money*, The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., 1953.

mates are so clearly drawn in the prison system, great poten-
tiality for personal conflict exists on the part of the inmate with
reference to his personal identification and allegiance. Such con-
flict is fostered owing to the fact that the prison is committed not
only to the goal of custody but also to treatment. Correctional
practice seeks to bring about an increasing commitment by each
inmate to the conventional value system.

The Prisoners' Code

There exists in the prison a code of values for prisoners which
is defined, sanctioned, and controlled by informal groups in the
prisoner community. This code represents an organization of
criminal values in clear-cut opposition to the values of conven-
tional society, and to prison officials as representatives of that
society. The main tenet of this code forbids any type of supportive
or nonexploitative liaison with prison officials. It seeks to confer
status and prestige on those inmates who stand most clearly in
opposition to the administration. The code incorporates most of
the values and orientations which inmates have shared in their
criminal activities in the free community. These criminal beliefs
and attitudes place a high premium on physical violence and
strength, on exploitative sex relations, and predatory attitudes
toward money and property. They place a strong emphasis on
in-group loyalty and solidarity and on aggressive and exploita-
tive relations with conventionally oriented out-groups. In com-
mon with conventional society, the criminal value system places
a high premium on the attainment of wealth, on the achievement
of success, and on skill and cleverness in the attainment of goals.
But the criminal value system requires the awarding of status in
the degree to which the means employed contradict the conven-
tionally sanctioned means for achieving these ends.

The prisoners' code reflects an adaptation of this criminal value
system to the conditions of prison life. The prison culture pro-
vides, in addition to the basic set of beliefs and values which form
the code, a vast body of prison lore which seeks to define for the
new inmate the manner in which he should act in various kinds
of situations, the nature of the relationships which he should seek

to encourage or to repudiate; in short, the way to do time suc-
cessfully and as comfortably as possible while preserving inmate
solidarity. The prison culture is supported by a distinctive argot
which is continually reinforced with new terms and meanings by
recently committed inmates. The argot is distinctive and im-
portant, for it represents not only a system of recognition, a
method for communicating secret understandings which are not
shared by conventional persons, but a vehicle for shaping and
supporting the basic criminal value orientations. The language of
the criminal offender is different from the language of the con-
ventional person, not only as a symbol of opposition or as a means
of private communication, but also because the words he uses are
completely saturated with attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and orien-
tations in opposition to those of the conventional person.

The language is often confusing. Many words that are used
with a certain meaning in conventional society have precisely op-
posite connotations in criminal society. The "right guy" in prison
is the person who is wrong from the standpoint of conventional
values. The "square john" is one who is held in contempt by the
majority of inmates, whereas in conventional society being
"square" is praiseworthy. The newly admitted inmate, on being
inducted into the prison community, absorbs criminal values,
beliefs, and attitudes along with the words which he requires in
order to communicate successfully with his inmate-fellows. Thus,
the distinctive language of the prison educates, commands, and
controls allegiance to the prisoner code. The prisoner code, of
course, is no more immune from violation than is the code of
conventional society. If the code is not actively promoted by the
majority of inmates in the prison systems of the United States, it
is at least respected and deferred to by them. Deviations from the
code entail consequences in the form of the imposition of informal
inmate sanctions.

Modification of the Criminal Value System

The central task of penal administration is to effect changes in
the criminal value system of the imprisoned inmates. This task
involves the additional problem of devising methods for giving

equal or greater legitimacy to the conventional value system represented by the administrative staff. It is doubtful whether it is possible to make much progress in modifying the criminal value system of the inmates until those inmates who express a willingness to control their prison behavior in terms of a conventional value system feel safe in doing so. This requires reorganization of the formal and informal social structure of the prison system. The solidarity of conventionally oriented inmates must be encouraged and protected. Opposition to the criminal value system must be both feasible and successful from the standpoint of informal prestige relations. It would also require a marked reduction in social distance between the administrative staff and the inmate body so that the prison situation would personalize the normative conflict for the inmate and provide motivation for a shift in value identification.[1]

In most prisons today the inmate spends a major part of his time in close contact with his inmate fellows. The situation places a premium on getting along with one's fellows so that prison time may be passed as comfortably as possible. To structure the prison organization to protect those inmates striving for a conventional value orientation, it would appear necessary to employ classification and segregation procedures whose major operating criteria are based on the susceptibility of the inmate to a shift in value orientation. The administrative manipulation of rewards, favors, privileges, and punishments with a view to promoting changes in value identification would be a central administrative objective. The thorough involvement of inmates in interest-provoking and educative activities has proved beneficial in restricting the dissemination of the criminally oriented prison culture by limiting the amount of time spent in idleness and prison chatter.

In a number of prison systems recent humanitarian reforms designed to alleviate the punitive aspects of prison life have become improperly identified as rehabilitation programs.[2] Such

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[1] Some of the dangers inherent in such a reduction of social distance as it relates to possible corruption of the authority of the custodial staff are elaborated in McCorkle and Korn, *op. cit.*

[2] Lloyd W. McCorkle, principal keeper at Trenton Prison, recently called the writer's attention to the necessity of distinguishing between treatment and humani-

humanitarian reforms appear desirable, for they set the framework within which successful treatment programs may be instituted. These reforms in themselves, however, do not create changes in criminal value systems. In that such reforms give evidence of good intentions and the desire of the prison authorities to interest themselves in the inmate's welfare, they create the possibility of establishing relationships of trust, rapport, and loyalty between the administration and certain conventionally motivated inmates. It is not enough, however, to set such a framework and to expect that changes in value system will follow as a matter of course. It is necessary also to deal directly with the normative conflict involved by systematically frustrating behavioral expressions of the criminal value system and promoting, rewarding, and encouraging behavioral expressions consistent with a conventional value orientation. It is likely that marked personal conflict will take place before an individual inmate is prepared to make a major shift in value identification. It must become clear to the inmates that adherence to a criminal value system is a defeating and frustrating experience; whereas behavior controlled in terms of conventional norms not only will receive the support of the administration and a majority of the inmate body, but will lead to the satisfaction of personal needs, to status and prestige rewards, and to the achievement of goals which are culturally supported and sanctioned.

The achievement of such shifts in value orientation is a most difficult and subtle task. It is not yet apparent what methods are most appropriate for achieving these ends. There has been no systematic evaluation of the effects of different types of treatment efforts in producing such value shifts. In fact, little is actually known about the culture of the prisoner community. Very few studies by sociologists have addressed themselves to this problem. The insights that are available come in large part from the autobiographies of convicted offenders. And these accounts are

tarian measures because of the confusion existing on this point in the correctional field. In his unpublished annual report of 1953 to the Board of Governors, McCorkle has provided an excellent statement of the implications of this distinction for correctional work. The following discussion is consistent with the viewpoint expressed in his report. See also McCorkle and Korn, *op. cit.*, pp. 94–96.

primarily descriptive in nature. Relatively little analytical work has been done on the social and cultural processes operating within the prisoner community to effect or retard shifts in criminal value orientations.

This central task of prison administration poses an extremely challenging problem for sociologists. The problem of changing criminal value orientations in a conventional direction is posed under conditions that afford almost complete control over the lives of individual inmates. The challenge occurs under conditions where the conflict in cultural values is clearly drawn. The situation does not require that sociologists simply invent certain administrative formulas for effecting change, since it is doubtful how successful such prescriptions would be in the present state of our knowledge of these problems. Instead, it calls for exploitation of the opportunity for prison research along sociological lines. There is great need for studies dealing with problems of cultural conflict, diffusion, accommodation, and change. It is possible that research within the prison system could provide a more rapid development of theory and knowledge concerning the relationship between personality and culture and the relationship between culture and social organization than can be secured with comparable effort in other situations in our society.

IV

SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS
OF PRISON LIFE

ONLY A FEW OF THE MANY social-psychological problems in prison
life that require extensive study can be cited here by way of
illustration. Penal institutions are designed as establishments
where personal career decisions are made, though these decisions
frequently pursue directions that are not congruent with the
objectives of penal administration. Because of the degree to which
the prison community is a self-contained system, an extraordinary
opportunity is provided sociologists to coordinate studies of the
social-psychological aspects of prison life with studies of prison
organization and prison culture.

The Criminal Conception of Self

Analyses of personal documents in criminology have repeatedly
pointed to the process of criminal self-definition as the psycho-
logical core of the developing criminal career. Sutherland's
theory of differential association points to the consequences of the
learning experiences to which the offender is exposed in promot-
ing differential identifications and conceptions of self.[1] The self-
defining character of the experiences to which the offender is
exposed by correctional agencies is a significant and integral part
of this whole process. It is clear that the social organization of
penal institutions and the culture of the prison system play a
particularly important part in furthering this kind of identifica-
tion for many offenders. All new inmates of penal institutions
undergo a process of induction into the culture and social life of
the particular institution. The new inmate is instructed as to how

[1] Sutherland and Cressey, *op. cit.*, pp. 77–79.

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he must orient himself in relation to the administrative staff and to other inmates/ Some inmates undergo a process of acquiring models among inmate leaders whom they come to treat with respect and admiration. Often this is the final step in the development of a mature and sophisticated criminal identification of self.

Not all inmates, however, undergo such an experience. There have not been sufficient studies of this process to be able to identify wherein the difference lies. It is possible that it lies in the personality, value orientations, and background of social experiences which the inmate brings to prison. The difference may also lie in differential exposure of inmates to particular types of influences in the prison culture, or in the social interactions which the inmate has with the administrative authorities and with other inmates. There appear to be significant differences in the extent to which the organization of different prison systems foster further criminal identification of self. But again because of lack of adequate research on this problem, it is difficult to do more than speculate concerning those features of the social organization of the prison system that promote or retard such criminal identifications.

Role Conflicts

/Many types of personal conflicts are experienced by the new inmate in making his adjustment within the prison community./ Such conflicts may be particularly intense for those inmates who participate intimately both with other inmates and also with the administrative staff because of their jobs within the institution or as the result of involvement in various types of treatment programs. A suggestive illustration of such conflict may be found in group therapy or group discussion programs, which are becoming accepted with increasing frequency as an integral part of the treatment programs of penal institutions. These programs seek to help the inmate redefine himself in conventional terms and to bring about a shift of value orientations in a conventional direction. Most of the group therapy programs have been sponsored by psychologists or psychiatrists whose interests center on the individual case. These therapy programs seek to employ the group

support of other inmates to create a permissive atmosphere and to release personal hostilities and aggression in order to formulate new personality orientations.[1]

Because of the tendency of therapists to fix their attention on the personal interactions and effects that are achieved within the group therapy sessions, little thought is directed to the effects of participation on the inmate's position in the larger social structure of the prison system. It is, in fact, questionable how successful the therapy can be in achieving new value orientations for the inmate unless account is taken of the inmate's experience outside the therapy session. For example, a common experience of therapists in penal institutions has been that the participating inmates, early in the treatment program, display marked aggression against administrative authorities outside the group session.[2] Generally this has been attributed by the therapists to an effort on the part of the inmate to extend the permissive atmosphere of the group sessions to the rest of the institution. Such an interpretation holds that the inmate develops hostile and aggressive behavior as the result of the personal conflicts and frustrations which he experiences in the group sessions. The inmate then is regarded as acting out this hostility not only within but outside the group.[3]

An alternative sociological explanation is also possible. The inmate who participates in group therapy in most prison systems spends two to three hours a week at the session. The remainder of the time is spent in intimate contact with other inmates, the majority of whom do not participate. In fact, the tendency is for the other inmates to regard therapy sessions with a great deal of distrust and suspicion, as an effort on the part of the administration to breach the solidarity of the inmate body. The participating inmate may for a time meet inmate disapproval of his participation by saying that he is just killing time or is curious about

[1] Slavson, S. R., "Group Therapy in Delinquency Prevention," *Journal of Educational Psychology*, vol. 24, September, 1950, pp. 45–51.

[2] Bixby, F. Lovell, and Lloyd W. McCorkle, "Applying the Principles of Group Therapy in Correctional Institutions," *Federal Probation*, vol. 14, March, 1950, pp. 36–40.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

what is going on. His continued participation, however, soon brings pressure from the other inmates to reaffirm his continued allegiance and identification with the inmate value system. The participating inmate can handle this kind of pressure for a time by displaying conspicuous acts of aggression against authorities both within and outside the therapy group. Such acts will be accepted by his inmate fellows as a reassertion of his loyalty and a demonstration that the sessions have failed to breach the understandings which exist between them. A final choice, however, cannot long be deferred, for the participating inmate is having experiences which he cannot share with his fellows, which they would not understand, and which they distrust on principle. He must accordingly resolve the personal conflict either by withdrawing from the therapy group or by severing his contacts with nonparticipating inmates.

The effects of participation in therapy programs on the inmate's relations with friends who do not participate have not been systematically examined. A close analysis of this problem is likely to reveal information of major importance for the organization of such therapy sessions. The interpretation presented above implies that the inmate who continues to participate ultimately becomes an isolate from the standpoint of his former inmate associations. Most of the group therapy sessions in penal institutions today are organized on a volunteer basis. Volunteers are sought throughout the institution and only rarely are they persons who formerly had friendly relations with each other in the prisoner community. The possibility exists that the rehabilitative consequences of the therapy sessions would be much greater, and the amount of interpersonal conflict markedly reduced, if the group sessions were organized around natural informal groupings in the prison community. The sessions would then become a vehicle for directly attacking and disrupting the criminal value system without introducing additional conflicts involved in the severing of former friendship ties. The initial resistance of such a natural informal grouping of inmates to the therapy sessions might be expected to be greater than is currently the case. However, once the anticonventional and antiadministration solidarity

of such a group is breached, the existing friendship ties can be exploited to promote a quicker and stronger identification with conventional value orientations.[1]

It is to be expected that at many other points in the treatment and work program of the institution a reduction in social distance between the administration and the inmates will result in some measure of personal conflict. Various forms of accommodation are likely to arise under these conditions, since inmates run the risk of isolation from former friendship contacts in the inmate community while trying to resolve the competing loyalties arising from close contact both with other inmates and with the administration staff. Such problems are of major importance for carrying out effective treatment and work programs. They merit considerable study and research as a contribution to penal administration and to sociological theory and knowledge of the organizational and psychological aspects of role conflict.

Prisonization

The term "prisonization" was introduced by Clemmer in referring to the process of acculturation and assimilation which the inmate undergoes in becoming acquainted with the prison world.[2] In his pioneer study of the problem Clemmer learned that the process of prisonization affected new inmates differently. He found prisoners who went through the entire period of their incarceration with relatively little contact with the principal underlying themes of the prison culture. Some were persons whose previous social experience and isolation in their prison jobs protected them from intimate or prolonged exposure to the prison code and its criminal orientations. Others were prisoners who retained close contacts with the outside world through constant visits and letters from relatives and friends and failed to become completely immersed in the prison culture and social life. The

[1] It seems likely that part of the success attributed to "guided group interaction" sessions conducted in the experimental Highfields Project at Hopewell, New Jersey, results from the involvement of all of the boys at the project in the treatment sessions. See McCorkle, Lloyd W., "Group Therapy in the Treatment of Offenders," *Federal Probation*, vol. 16, December, 1952, pp. 22–27.

[2] Clemmer, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

most prisonized inmates were those who had a relatively well-developed and mature set of criminal value orientations on their admission to prison. They were persons relatively isolated from conventional contacts in the outside world and motivated to seek status and prestige within the informal groupings of the prison community. Prisonization was also found to be related in some degree to the length of the incarceration. The process proceeded very rapidly in some cases and slowly or not at all in others.

Clemmer's investigations did not account satisfactorily for the factors that were most influential in speeding up or retarding the process of prisonization. It was apparent, however, that this process was intimately related to the degree of participation in the informal social life of the prison community. In addition, the degree of prisonization seemed to follow a cyclical pattern. In Clemmer's judgment, the degree of prisonization varied directly with the closeness of the inmate's ties with informal inmate groupings. When these ties were disrupted, for one reason or another, the prisonized inmate lost some of his opposition toward the administration and maintained an isolated, routinized kind of existence, involving a minimum of close social contact with inmate groups. Clemmer did not regard the psychological and social state of reverie and isolation as part of the prisonization pattern.

Serious question might be raised, however, as to whether or not this state of reverie and isolated routinization of behavior might not actually be a continuing stage in the process of prisonization as conceived from the standpoint of the total prison experience of an inmate. Clemmer addressed his attention to the problem of assimilation in the prison world and differentiated this process from psychological states and processes of social interaction which might well be conceived as correlates of various stages of the acculturation process. Further research may demonstrate that the term "prisonization" should have this broader connotation.

The process of prisonization appears to be accompanied by an increasing restriction of the prisoner's world to the confines of the prison community. Within that community his life becomes routinized in the prison pattern. A loss of flexibility and adaptability is evident as this process goes on, so that the prisonized inmate

shows progressively greater tension with the disruption of the routine of prison life. Prisonization in its larger sense is accompanied by restlessness and an incapacity for sustained activity. There are frequent contacts with other inmates but they are tangential in character. They are not intimate and absorbing. It is as if all other inmates possess a positive but low stimulus value for the prisonized individual which he requires to sustain himself.[1] For the prisonized individual any sustained and intimate contacts of long duration which have the effect of diverting his self-preoccupation and disrupting his reverie states are impossible to maintain. There is evident in the prisonized individual, in this larger sense, an increased tendency toward self-isolation from intimate social contact in the prison community. He continues his support of the prisoners' code and abides by it. But he gradually loses his capacity for intense self-involvement in the affairs of the inmate community. It is only during periods of considerable tension, stress, or personal excitement that he permits himself to again become involved in free informal contacts with other inmates to any profound degree.

Since the prisonized inmate's world is circumscribed by the confines of the prison, all incidents that occur within the prison are exaggerated and distorted beyond all measure of their importance. Such an individual becomes a channel for rumor and gossip, which he passes on readily in his brief social contacts. The development of such a pattern is related to the length of incarceration, but includes many other variables. There are many persons confined for long periods who successfully resist this self-isolation from social contacts and who struggle to maintain interest in activities outside themselves. These, however, are the relatively few sophisticated offenders who recognize the deteriorating effects of prolonged confinement.

As Clemmer employs the term, prisonization reflects a continuous acculturation and assimilation to the criminal value system and the prisoner code of the inmate community. It has been suggested above that this term be enlarged to take account

[1] Phillips, Bernard, "Notes on the Prison Community" in *Prison Etiquette*, edited by Holley Cantine and Dachine Rainer. Retort Press, Bearsville, N. Y., 1950, p. 104.

of the various stages of this process and of the accompanying social-psychological states. In its most advanced state, prisonization does not lead to a continuation of informal social contacts but to a highly dangerous psychological and social self-isolation, accompanied by an increased incapacity to meet the social demands for intimate sharing of the experiences and reflections of other inmates. It is clear that this process of prisonization can seriously restrict the ability of the offender to adjust successfully in the outside world upon his release from prison. The study of the phenomenon of prisonization, therefore, has extremely significant practical as well as theoretical value. It represents a problem that could profitably be studied from an interdisciplinary standpoint. The cultural, social, and psychological elements, in the development of the prisonization pattern, fuse to create subtle changes as various stages in the process are reached.

V

PROBATION AND PAROLE

MANY MORE RESEARCH STUDIES have been carried out by sociologists on probation and parole problems than of the penal system. But these studies, as already noted, have shown little concern for problems relating to the organization and operation of probation and parole systems. The major research efforts have been concerned with the statistical problem of determining the rates of probation and parole violation and predictions of the likelihood of violation or continued criminal recidivism in the postparole period.

Parole Prediction and Selection

A number of historical and critical reviews of studies in the field of parole prediction have already been published.[1] It is thus perhaps sufficient to review briefly the current state of research development in this field. The majority of the prediction studies have followed the pattern initiated by Burgess in his pioneer study of parole from the Illinois prison system in 1928.[2] The research studies by Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck at Harvard University,

[1] Monachesi, Elio D., "An Evaluation of Recent Major Efforts at Prediction," *American Sociological Review,* vol. 6, August, 1941, pp. 478–486; Allen, Robert M., "A Review of Parole Prediction Literature," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology,* vol. 32, January–February, 1942, pp. 548–554; Schuessler, Karl F., "Review of Parole Prediction," *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science,* vol. 45, November–December, 1954, pp. 425–431. National reports on prediction efforts in the United States have been submitted by Elio D. Monachesi and Lloyd E. Ohlin in connection with the proceedings of the International Congress of Criminology, London, England, September, 1955.

[2] Burgess, Ernest W., "Factors Determining Success or Failure on Parole" in *The Workings of the Indeterminate Sentence Law and the Parole System in Illinois,* by Andrew A. Bruce and others, pp. 205–249. Illinois State Board of Parole, Springfield, 1928.

however, represent an independent development in this field.[1] The Gluecks have been primarily concerned with the problem of determining the rates of postinstitutional recidivism, identifying the factors most closely related to the continuing development of criminal careers, and perfecting the methodology of postinstitutional field investigations of recidivism. Their studies have revealed extremely high rates of postinstitutional recidivism and have been widely quoted in criminological literature as a critical commentary on the failure of the penal system to treat committed offenders effectively.

With the exception of the studies by the Gluecks, the research in the field of parole and probation prediction has concerned itself with an attempt to predict success or failure within the limits of the parole or probation supervision period. The studies have been primarily concerned with the identification of social background factors and items relating to prior criminal experience that would provide an accurate and efficient basis for predicting the outcome of probation or parole. Most of the studies have simply drawn on items in prison, parole, or probation department records in order to isolate those with the highest correlation with outcome. Very few studies have actually involved the interviewing of prisoners or parolees with a view to securing appropriate background or criminal experience items on which to base the prediction of outcome.

A noteworthy exception was the study carried out by Ferris Laune at Joliet Penitentiary in Illinois.[2] Laune developed an attitude questionnaire which stressed very heavily the offender's experiences not only prior to, but during, incarceration with a view to obtaining more sensitive indices of future success or failure. A recent reevaluation of Laune's efforts demonstrates

[1] Glueck, Sheldon and Eleanor, *500 Criminal Careers*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1930; *Five Hundred Delinquent Women*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1934; *One Thousand Juvenile Delinquents*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1934; *Later Criminal Careers*, Commonwealth Fund, New York, 1937; *Juvenile Delinquents Grown Up*, Commonwealth Fund, 1940; *Criminal Careers in Retrospect*, Commonwealth Fund, 1943; *After-Conduct of Discharged Offenders*, Macmillan Co., New York, 1945; *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency*, Commonwealth Fund, 1950.

[2] Laune, Ferris, *Predicting Criminality:* Forecasting Behavior on Parole. Northwestern University Studies in the Social Sciences, No. 1. Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1936.

that the objective factor approach introduced by Burgess succeeds as well as the attitude questionnaire developed by Laune in predicting parole outcome.[1] However, such studies as that by Laune are to be greatly encouraged since current prediction instruments still fail to take adequately into account the content of the prison experience. This situation implies that the prison experience is of no consequence for future activity on parole. In the light of what is already known concerning penal confinement, such an assumption is highly questionable. The greatest current need in the field of parole prediction lies in the development of new factors that are related to a systematic theoretical understanding of the significance of the prison and pre-prison experiences of the offender. It will be necessary to relate intensive sociological research on the prison system to the current interest in the development of more stable and efficient factors for parole prediction purposes.

Interest in predicting probation and parole adjustment has been centered almost entirely on the methodological refinement of prediction instruments. A recent study has attempted to increase the accuracy of prediction instruments by taking account of the intercorrelations between the items, and between the items and the criterion, through the use of multiple correlation techniques.[2] A slight increase in predictability for the original sample was demonstrated but no effort was made to validate this instrument on a new sample of cases. Adequate follow-up validation studies of prediction instruments are now being accepted as an indispensable part of prediction technique. It has been demonstrated that a small number of reliable, stable, and efficient factors highly associated with the criterion of outcome will yield the most accurate, stable, and efficient prediction instrument for use in follow-up samples.[3]

[1] Ohlin, Lloyd E., and Richard A. Lawrence, "A Comparison of Alternative Methods of Parole Prediction," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 17, June, 1952, pp. 268–274.

[2] Kirby, Bernard C., "Parole Prediction Using Multiple Correlation," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 59, May, 1954, pp. 539–551.

[3] Reiss, Albert J., Jr., "The Accuracy, Efficiency, and Validity of a Prediction Instrument," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 56, May, 1951, pp. 552–561.

One of the most difficult problems in this field from a method-
ological standpoint concerns the problem of predictive stability.
It has been demonstrated that parole prediction instruments are
soon outmoded by changes in the parole conditions encountered
by the parolee on his release.[1] Parole prediction instruments as-
sume the existence of a constant universe of conditions during the
period in which the instrument is in use. Yet sociologists have
been foremost in pointing to the dynamic and changing character
of social life. Methods are required for adjusting the predictions to
take account of the changes that occur in parole conditions with
the passage of time. The successful development of such methods
would reduce the most serious errors that are made in applying
current prediction instruments. One attempt to deal with this
problem of predictive stability has been reported in the litera-
ture.[2] The suggested technique involves the routine readjustment
of the prediction instruments so that predictions are made for
shorter periods of time, during which the assumption of a con-
stant universe does less violence to the facts of the parole situation.

The application of prediction techniques in the correctional
field is now quite firmly established and will develop along with
prediction applications in other fields where selection decisions
must be made by administrators, boards, or commissions. The
preoccupation of sociologists, however, with the development and
testing of parole prediction instruments has involved neglect of
the way these instruments may be applied. The principal excep-
tion is in Illinois, where parole prediction instruments have been
in routine administrative use since 1933. A recent review of this
experience described the manner in which prediction instru-
ments as selection devices might be integrated into the parole
decision-making process.[3] The widespread adoption of selection
techniques of this kind requires more extensive documentation
and analysis of the nature of the decision-making process in
parole. Increasing awareness is evident in the sociological field of

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[1] Ohlin, Lloyd E., "The Routinization of Correctional Change," *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science*, vol. 45, November–December, 1954, pp. 400–411.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Ohlin, Lloyd E., *Selection for Parole*. Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1951.

the importance of careful research on the decision-making process as a way of systematically exploring the practical operations of administrative agencies.[1] The parole decision is an important one in the correctional field and would represent a useful point of departure for this type of sociological investigation.

Organization of the Probation and Parole System

As indicated above, sociological research in the field of probation and parole has not included investigation of the organizational aspects of the probation and parole system. Investigation, discussion, and analysis of the problems that arise in its operation have been left to the practical administrators of the system. Their concern has been less with the development of theoretical and research understanding than with the promotion of particular types of organizational and treatment programs, consistent with different ideological approaches to the field.

Exploratory investigations of these problems are now being carried out at the Center for Education and Research in Corrections at the University of Chicago to provide a framework for the analysis of these organizational problems and to define the critical problem areas. It would be premature to attempt a discussion of work which is still in progress. However, it is appropriate here to indicate some of the main organizational problems in relation to the research needs in this field.[2]

Perhaps to a greater degree than in penal institutions, the probation and parole systems of the country are involved in a transitional period of organizational conflict as a consequence of moving from a politically oriented to a professionally career-oriented service. Professionally oriented workers are being drawn with increasing frequency to probation and parole work from the

[1] Merton, Robert K., and others, *Reader in Bureaucracy.* The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., 1952. See particularly Section 4, Authority and Decision-Making, pp. 180–240.

[2] In connection with the following brief comments on the organizational problems of probation and parole systems, the writer acknowledges the cooperative efforts of the Associate Director of the Center, Professor Frank Flynn, School of Social Service Administration, University of Chicago, and recognizes his special indebtedness to the thoughtful and careful work of his two research assistants, Donnell Pappenfort and Herman Piven.

social work field. The social work movement ideologically may be characterized as humanitarian and liberal, involving appropriate recognition of the dignity of the human personality. The movement has developed an integrated philosophy and set of principles consistent with this ideology. These are taught as part of a generic course in casework training in approved schools of social work. It is around the field of casework rather than group work that most probation and parole systems are traditionally organized to deal with cases on an individual basis, and this orientation is congruent with the individual and interpersonal orientation of casework training. The central focus of this generic casework training is on the supportive aspects of the client-worker relationship.

The social worker in the field of probation and parole conceives of his function as that of promoting the welfare of the community by aiding the offender. From the standpoint of his professional career his appropriate reference group is the larger field of social work, rather than the more limited correctional organizations. In his relations with other authorities and the general public, the social worker in this field regards himself as having a high commitment to educate others in accordance with the ideals of social work philosophy and objectives.

The older workers in the probation and parole systems stand in quite marked contrast to the new influx of professionally oriented workers. The older worker draws his ideological support from a conservative, middle-class philosophy of life. He regards his job as serving the dual objective of protecting both society and the individual. The offender is regarded as acting from his own volition, and the older probation and parole worker stands in relation to the offender as a friendly, paternal counselor. The older worker stresses common sense and experience as adequate prerequisites for the job.

In the transitional stage the differing orientations of these two main groups of workers results in a struggle for control of the agency. One of the important elements in the resolution of this conflict lies in the orientation and personal commitment of the administrators who control the operation of the agency at the top

levels. It is doubtful whether professionally oriented persons trained in social work would remain long in a probation and parole system unless they were encouraged by the top administrators in the agency to look upon the current status of the agency as a transitional phase which would ultimately be resolved in favor of a professional career-oriented service. The broader commitment of the social worker to the field of social work also carries broader job opportunities. In addition, the demand for personnel in well-established professional social work agencies precludes the possibility that social workers in the probation and parole field would long endure the frustration of what would be regarded as nonprofessional supervision. The problem is also complicated by the existence of the civil service system, which provides job security for older workers and promotions in terms of seniority.

The field of probation and parole poses special problems for the social worker because the field is traditionally organized around the use of authority in the handling of cases. Such practices as covert surveillance, arrest, and revocation of probation and parole are regarded by many social workers as purely custodial and security functions that are incompatible with the treatment orientation implicit in the application of casework principles.

These differing orientations to the job have important consequences for the way parole and probation cases are handled. Competing philosophies and working principles within the agency result in the inconsistent handling of cases and produce frustrations on the part of the workers which, in turn, affect the counseling and disposition of problem cases. One of the major needs in the field of probation and parole is for evaluative research that would seek to define the effect of the formal and informal structure of the agency and its conflicting work orientations on the cases processed through the agency. There is a need for research on the way appropriate influences are mobilized to effect changes in correctional agencies from a politically oriented to a professional career-oriented service. The problems that arise in various transitional states of the agency require more complete investigation. There is also a need to assess from a systematic theoretical

perspective the adequacy of various techniques for achieving changes in the value orientation of offenders within the community.

The sociologist has much to contribute to casework technique through research on the processes by which convicted offenders are reassimilated into conventionally oriented groups in the free community. Such research may lead to a basic reevaluation of the appropriate functions and work orientations of probation and parole officers. Little attention is now directed toward creating receptive channels in the community for the reintegration of released offenders into conventional groups. There is increasing interest on the part of probation and parole authorities in the development of better public relations for their agencies. Such public relations programs have the derivative effect of creating a larger measure of communal understanding of the problems of released offenders. Their chief function, however, is to create greater security for the agency and to promote understanding and acceptance of an individual casework orientation in the probation and parole field. If the major task of criminal rehabilitation is the achievement of changes in value orientation, the training of pro- bation and parole officers should not be confined to individual casework, but should involve expert knowledge of group and community work as a basis for establishing adequate communal channels for the assimilation of released offenders into stable net- works of conventional association. It is altogether possible that adequate sociological research on this problem could result in a far-reaching reconceptualization of the organizational structure and function, training requirements, and work orientations of probation and parole agencies.

VI

CORRECTIONAL CAREER
OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIOLOGISTS

THE PRECEDING CHAPTERS have described certain correctional
problems which the sociologist is singularly well equipped to
investigate. These problems are of central significance in the
development of an adequate science of penology and corrections,
but they are also problems from which the sociologist can derive
great benefit in the testing and refining of theoretical insights.
The field of corrections has been proposed as a laboratory for
sociological research with equal benefit to correctional adminis-
tration and sociology. There is increasing awareness in the correc-
tional field that far more extensive research is required before
well-informed decisions can be made as to the proper content and
structure of the prison system and its treatment programs. There
is an increasing willingness on the part of correctional adminis-
trators to cooperate in such programs of research, and a growing
interest in the development of adequate knowledge of how the
rehabilitation of criminal offenders can be effected. Correspond-
ingly, research foundations are evidencing greater interest in
supporting sociological investigation of problems of delinquency,
corrections, and crime control.

Prison Management

There are both administrative and research opportunities for
sociologists in connection with the management of penal institu-
tions and probation and parole systems. Persons trained in sociol-
ogy and criminology are securing positions in probation and pa-
role agencies that are developing professional career-oriented
services. Several sociologists in recent years have obtained leaves

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of absence from their academic duties to serve on parole boards. Joseph D. Lohman, of the University of Chicago, served as chairman of the Illinois Parole and Pardon Board for four years during the administration of Governor Adlai Stevenson. Professor Norman Hayner is on leave of absence from the University of Washington while serving as chairman of the Board of Prison Terms and Parole of the State of Washington. Professor Paul W. Tappan, of New York University, recently completed a year's service as chairman of the Federal Parole and Pardon Board. John Landesco served eight years (1933–1941) as a member of the Illinois Parole and Pardon Board under Governor Henry Horner.

Sociologists have also obtained positions in penal administration. Dr. Clarence Shragg of the University of Washington, is currently on leave of absence as Director of Corrections of the State of Washington. Lloyd W. McCorkle is principal keeper (warden) of the New Jersey State Penitentiary at Trenton and has served as deputy commissioner in charge of corrections for the State of New Jersey. Many sociologists are employed in professional tasks within penal institutions. The State of Michigan employs sociologists as professional counselors in connection with its classification program. The State of Illinois employs a number of sociologists as part of the classification staff of the diagnostic depots in Illinois. Sociologists are also employed in Illinois as actuaries preparing prediction reports and case-history interviews for the Parole and Pardon Board. Both the former and present superintendent of the Highfields Project in Hopewell, New Jersey, are sociologists, and two sociologists are recruited on an internship training basis each year to participate in the project. In addition, there are many sociologists employed in the classification and treatment programs of juvenile training schools throughout the country.

These professional staff functions carry almost unlimited possibilities for research, though often the pressure of routine case study and diagnosis limits the amount of time devoted to research activities. The interest in research in the correctional field has developed to the point where research positions for sociologists

can be created within the correctional system. The American
Sociological Society could assist by defining the research func-
tions of sociologists in correctional institutions, in cooperation
with the American Correctional Association. Coordination of
research interests at this level would be extremely helpful in open-
ing the prisons, reformatories, jails, and training schools of the
country to systematic research investigation.

Many prison administrators are skeptical of research along
sociological lines because they fear that they may be embarrassed
by public disclosure of administrative deficiencies in their pro-
gram. Persons interested in correctional research must be pre-
pared to understand and deal with this administrative concern
with public relations. Most penal administrators will respond
positively to proposals that indicate how the results of research
may be employed administratively as constructive solutions to
administrative problems. Sociological research in correctional
institutions need not, and in fact cannot, be dictated wholly by
administrative needs, if it is to make substantive contributions to
penological theory and knowledge. But most sociological research
problems in the correctional field will produce results relevant to
the guidance of administrative actions or policies and will add
materially to the administrator's understanding of his correctional
problems.

For example, in making a sociological analysis of prison organ-
ization, the investigator must take account of the decision-
making functions carried out at various levels in the organization.
He will need to examine the role orientations and other con-
siderations involved in making certain kinds of decisions. The
penal administrator must make many decisions relating to the
control and discipline of inmates and also of staff members.
Decisions must be made concerning the work assignments of
inmates, the housing of inmates, the segregation and classifica-
tion of inmates, the inclusion of inmates in treatment programs,
and the handling of threats to security. Examination of the bases
of such decisions have practical as well as theoretical conse-
quences. The research sociologist is in a position to promote more
efficient penal administration, more effective treatment for in-

mates, and a more rapid development of theory and knowledge about prison life.

One of the most poorly developed areas in the correctional field is that of criminal statistics. The sociologist experienced in population study could be of considerable assistance to penal administrators and make significant contributions of factual data to a science of penology. Statistical systems in the correctional field are not only poorly designed and inadequate in coverage, but are oriented primarily to assembling the minimum statistical facts required by statute. The statistics in most instances reflect little more than a count of heads of those who are admitted, transferred, or discharged from the correctional system. Knowledge of correctional operations would be greatly facilitated if statistical reporting systems were organized within the various states so that facts of significant research value would be collected routinely. Such information could be used in assessing the future needs of the correctional system and in planning adequate facilities and programs of treatment for correctional establishments. In terms of both immediate and long-range effects the correctional systems of the United States will be greatly benefited by the immediate organization of adequate programs of statistical recording, oriented not only to the problems of administration but also to those of research and planning.

One of the foremost obstacles to the development of a science of penology has been the lack of adequate techniques for the evaluation of correctional treatment programs and administrative policies. Sociologists have failed to concern themselves with the methodological problems involved in such evaluation. Yet the creation of a realistic design for evaluative research would unquestionably do more to speed the development of a science of penology than any other single contribution that the sociologist might make. Research methods of this type would provide the basis for comparative analysis of different prison systems and the effects of various organizational arrangements on the careers of convicted offenders. There is scarcely a prison, probation, or parole administrator in the country who is in a position to say unequivocally that a particular policy or program which he has

instituted is preferable to some alternative policy or program in terms of the consequences it has had on the careers of convicted offenders.

The correctional systems of the country today are guided in considerable part by standards and principles consistent with a humanitarian approach to the correctional problem. They are also guided by the personal hunches of the administrator, and the accumulated wisdom which he has derived from his past experience. However, there are few policies, programs, or practices that can point to established research evidence as the basis for their formulation. This indicates something of the breadth of the task that faces the sociological researcher in the correctional field.

Research Problems

There is a wealth of literature in the correctional field. Many books and articles have been published on problems of prison life and those of probation and parole. This literature may be classified into three general types. Books and articles have been written by convicted offenders who have recorded autobiographical accounts of their experiences. These writings provide the basic source for most of the commentaries contained in books of criminology on the operations of the prison community, the character of prison culture, and the nature of the psychological experiences an offender undergoes during his incarceration. These publications have also been employed as a basis for attacking the organization and operation of the probation, parole, and penal systems of the country, despite the fact that many of these criticisms were written primarily to startle the public and bring financial profit to the writer. Some are sincere, frank, and honest revelations of the offender's experiences, but this becomes apparent only as these accounts are confirmed by the results of sociological and psychological inquiry into the operations of the correctional system.

The second major source of contributions to the literature of corrections represents books and articles prepared by practical administrators relating to the problems they encounter and the programs they seek to institute. In this category also may be

found the reports of legislative investigating commissions on prison and parole conditions and the various exposés by newspapers or magazines seeking to disclose corruption or malpractice in the operations of the correctional system. Analyses made by correctional reform agencies are also consistent with the other contributions to this category, for they seek to reveal the dimensions of certain kinds of correctional problems and the inadequacy of current correctional practice for dealing with these problems. They also set forth programmatic reform recommendations designed to effect changes in correctional organization and procedure.

The third major contribution to the literature of corrections represents the results of scientific research by social and psychological scientists. These studies range from descriptive surveys of current conditions in the correctional field to statistical and theoretical analyses of the problems of correctional administration. Unfortunately, however, the studies in this third category are very few in number. There are a large number of psychological and psychiatrically oriented case studies of offenders committed to the care of various correctional agencies. These studies, however, are mainly concerned with the analysis of the psychological and personality problems of the individual case.

We have already pointed out that sociologists are not yet taking advantage of the research opportunities offered by the problems in corrections. The limited amount of rigorous sociological research in the correctional field appears to be largely attributable to the general lack of acquaintance on the part of sociologists with research potentialities in the correctional field. In considerable part, too, the lack of sociological studies may be attributed to the anticipated difficulties of acquiring access to correctional materials for research purposes.

The paucity of sociological research in the field of corrections cannot be attributed to a lack of theoretical insight or research competence, for these exist in a form directly applicable to correctional problems. There is an urgent need in the correctional field for a sociological analysis of the structure and function of prison organization and the effects of alteration in structure and

function. Such a study should include an analysis of role expecta-
tions and the relational systems of which they are a part, as well
as an analysis of the processes of change which these organiza-
tional features of prisons undergo with the passage of time. Re-
search of this kind should highlight the strategic role of the guard
force in the operation of the prison system. A great deal more
understanding is required of the way in which the recruitment,
training, and past experience of guards in a correctional institu-
tion affect the performance of their duties.[1] It is essential that
greater understanding be developed concerning the nature of the
relationships that develop between inmates and guards and their
effect on the security and treatment programs of the institution.[2]

Analysis of the role of professional persons in correctional insti-
tutions is also of considerable importance. Today, the professional
staff appears to stand between the guard force and the inmates
as a mediating influence. The suggestion has been made, how-
ever, that professional persons in correctional institutions have
permitted themselves to be maneuvered into a position where
they are defined by inmates as objects to be exploited for such
help and assistance as they may render, with the result that pro-
fessional personnel function as a threat to custodial security and
an obstacle to effective treatment.[3] Much more detailed and
systematic study of this problem is required before a satisfactory
prescription of the most effective institutional roles and work

[1] A questionnaire dealing with the role and training of guards has been developed
by Lloyd W. McCorkle in New Jersey. Preliminary analysis of some of the early
questionnaire results suggests that certain ideal types of guards may be described; for
example, those who are bureaucratically oriented, crisis oriented, future pensioner,
and so on. The purpose of this study is to develop more appropriate training methods
and materials on the basis of an analysis of existing guard orientations and practices.

[2] A recent unpublished study by Gresham M. Sykes of the Department of Eco-
nomics and Sociology, Princeton University, New Jersey, explored the effects of re-
duced social distance between inmates and guards on the job performance of the
guard force. This study suggests three ways in which the authority of untrained
guards becomes subverted when close personal relationships develop with inmates.
Corruption of authority may occur through personal friendships between inmates
and guards. It may also occur through the gradual development of a system of recip-
rocal favors. And finally it may occur through the tendency of the guard to default
in the proper performance of his duties, that is, simply to let the inmates do it. Sykes
perceives a serious threat to the security and rehabilitation systems of correctional
institutions when such conditions prevail. These New Jersey studies raise significant
questions as to the structural-functional conditions which must prevail if effective
treatment programs are to be carried out.

[3] McCorkle and Korn, *op. cit.*, pp. 94–96.

orientations of professional staff members can be outlined. Initially, such research should focus on the role dilemmas which the professional is forced to resolve in response to the competing demands of both the custodial staff and the inmates for his help and support.

In other fields of sociological investigation research methods and theoretical knowledge have been developed which would be pertinent in the study of these problems. There exists a fairly comprehensive literature relating to studies of bureaucratic organization. The theory and the research results derived from these studies are directly applicable to the situation existing in the correctional field. Correctional organizations provide, in turn, a major resource for the development and refinement of bureaucratic theory and knowledge.

There is also considerable current interest in sociological studies of occupations and professions. The correctional field would profit from detailed analysis of the conflicting orientations of professional and nonprofessional personnel in penal administration, probation, and parole, to determine their effect on the agency's work.

In addition, many of the industrial relations studies deal with problems of administration, communication, training, attitude change, and work organization. The factual and theoretical results of these studies, as well as their research methodology, appear applicable to problems of correctional organization. Industrial sociologists would also find in the prison-work situation a particularly relevant field of study. Not only is the prison-work situation subject to experimental control, but it is possible in the context of a correctional institution to analyze work orientations and practice in relation to the total system of life that exists under these controlled conditions. Analysis of this kind is capable of providing sorely needed understanding and enlightenment on the rehabilitative possibilities or deficiencies in prison-work situations. It may also serve to test the generality of sociological observations derived from more democratically controlled work situations.

Recently, considerable interest has been evidenced by students of small group phenomena in studies of the social organization of

hospital wards. The social situations existing in the prison system are comparable in many ways to problems of organization studied in the hospital situation. Development of theoretical knowledge of these problems of social organization would profit considerably from the carrying out of similar studies in the field of penal administration.

There also exists in the penal field the possibility of comparative study of the organization of different types of penal atmospheres. The studies made in the field of small groups relating to the creation of democratic and authoritarian atmospheres and their effects on group and individual action have relevant application in the correctional field. Some correctional leaders are experimenting to reduce repressive elements in penal organization and could derive considerable assistance from studies of the relation between penal atmosphere and changes in attitude and behavior.[1]

Perhaps one of the least charted areas of correctional research concerns the study of informal inmate organization and the factors relating to the development of particular types of inmate roles. There is a great deal more to be learned about the types of roles that inmates develop, the way in which these roles relate to, or affect, personality organization, the place of these roles in the status and prestige systems of the prisoner community, and so on.[2] Studies of the inmate social system have great relevance for the various therapeutic efforts that are now being carried out in correctional institutions throughout the country. Programs of group therapy are becoming increasingly widespread. The varying degrees of effectiveness of such treatment programs cannot be understood until they are seen in relation to the operation of the various role systems within the prisoner community.[3]

[1] Scudder, Kenyon J., *Prisoners Are People*. Doubleday and Co., New York, 1952.

[2] A study along these lines is now being carried out by Gresham M. Sykes in New Jersey. Sykes is attempting to determine the variety of social roles that exist within the prisoner community and to investigate the relationship between these roles and certain attitudes inimical to the subsequent rehabilitation of the inmates. He also is studying the dynamics of role-playing including an inquiry as to the process of acquiring various types of roles.

[3] It is generally conceded that the Alcoholics Anonymous programs have been extremely effective in prisons and jails throughout the country. Yet there is little understanding as to why this has been so. Intensive sociological research of the operations of the Alcoholics Anonymous program in correctional institutions would be likely to provide highly valuable insights as to the appropriate objectives, methods, and organization of future treatment programs.

Small group studies bearing on problems of inducing con-formity and uniformity of decision and action deal directly with one of the important preoccupations of correctional administra-tion. The small group research being carried out on clique formation, group behavior, and leadership in informal groups is beginning to accumulate a body of tested knowledge concerning these phenomena. In penal institutions such problems could be studied under field conditions yet with a degree of control ap-proaching that of a laboratory. Questionnaire and sociometric analysis of penal populations also afford considerable promise of significant contribution to both penological and sociological theory because of the degree of control the correctional situation affords over the work and housing assignment of inmates.

The various areas of sociological studies cited above have not yet succeeded in accumulating a general body of theory, inclusive of such situations as the correctional system, where the control feature is so dominant. There is consequently a need to expand these studies to the correctional field, to broaden the basis of sociological propositions, and to contribute comparable research results toward the creation of a more systematic and general social theory.