

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL
ENVIRONMENT IN A COED PRISON

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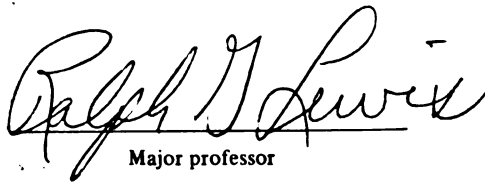
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
OF THE SOCIAL ENVIORNMENT
IN A COED PRISON

presented by

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ABSTRACT

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT IN A COED PRISON

By

John Ortiz Smykla

The Issue

A qualitative approach to the study of the social environment in a coed prison is the issue here. Cocorrections, as coed prisons are called, is advanced under the ideology of being a more normal social environment than one-sex prisons. The social environment and its dimensions were chosen for discussion because they were considered important issues by the staff and inmates at the Federal Correctional Institution at Pleasanton, California. I also wished to compare with other literature on cocorrections and single-sex prisons some major issues of relevance for administrative and legislative policy makers. The issues treated here include sexual adaptation in a sexually integrated prison, the role of cocorrections in reducing prison violence, and the organization of staff-inmate communication and relations.

Study Design

The method of study for this dissertation was primarily participant observation. For seven months of intensive fieldwork, I became a participant observer at the coed Federal Correctional Institution at Pleasanton, California. I interacted on a day-to-day basis with inmates and staff learning how they make sense out of their world. I attended staff and inmate meetings and gatherings in private and public places within the institution. I formally and informally interviewed staff and inmates. In addition, I used informants, made use of the institution's facilities, and distributed questionnaires to inmates to tap some of their attitudes about the social environment. Phenomenology is the major theoretical perspective guiding the collection and analysis of the data.

Interpretation

This research project brought about several interesting descriptions and explanations. On the patterns of sexual adaptation I found that in comparison with same-sex institutions the predatory type of homosexual activity found in same-sex prisons is virtually absent at Pleasanton. The majority of the inmates are heterosexually oriented and they find fewer putative differences between themselves and staff. Hence, they question the label,

the assumptions, and identities the institution has designed for their control.

On the role of cocorrections in reducing prison violence, I describe a model of inmate adjustment to FCI Pleasanton that encourages inmates to talk with staff while reinforcing traditional and individualistic patterns of "doing you own time." However benign, relatively little inmate collectivism is found to exist.

Lastly, the organization of communication and staff-inmate relations is discussed. The use of formal and informal arrangements in creating staff-inmate relations is presented. Inmate pressure groups in these arrangements are found to be minimal. In the end, the concept of cocorrections as a normal environment is rejected because communication seldom goes beyond the point of an exchange of information.

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL
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John Ortiz Smykla

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College of Social Science
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1977

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**Dedicated to the
Concept of Making
Prisons Better**

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Hopefully these acknowledgments are only making public what has already happened in a more private and personal way.

I am indebted to Dr. Ralph Lewis for more than chairing this dissertation. He has given me another piece of the perspective and I think I learned much more from him than he suspects. Dr. Barrie Thorne has been a source of inspiration since we met. I am indebted to her for what she laid before me on matters of female and male liberation and participant observation. Her effect on my career will be forever. And to Dr. Robert Trojanowicz, who supported my idea from the beginning and gave me the research time to check it all out, I am most thankful.

Implementing the project would have never happened, as the reader will soon learn, without the entry that was paved by Norman Carlson, Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and Howard Kitchener, Director of Research with the Bureau. They recognized the timely need for the project and supported me all the way. Kitch has since become a good critic.

At Pleasanton there are so many to thank. Among them are former Warden Walter Lumpkin and the present

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Warden Bill Garrison; Associate Warden Jay Alman and then-Associate Warden Ann Weist; Jim Meko, then-Case Management Coordinator; Chief Correctional Supervisors John Brown and Ray McCroskey; then-Unit Managers Bert Ricks and Ron Morgan; Correctional Officers Greg Liska, Aloyne Wilkins, and Reuben Troncoso; and Helene Cavior, Programs Research Analyst, who became my sponsor, my critic, and my counsel. For living in wonder for seven months of whatever I was doing, I hope you find this report easily read, a true picture of what it was like then, and a source of issues to consider in decision making. Its intentions and purpose are quite simple--namely, to describe and offer some explanation of what inmates and staff say and do as a product of how they interpret Pleasanton. That I add to it theory and relate it to other issues are tangents I have taken for academic purposes. Hopefully they serve to illuminate the issues here. I especially thank Jim Meko and Ron Morgan for having read and critiqued this manuscript several times. Their help was most valuable.

The inmates. My chief debt is to the inmates themselves. A few I would like to acknowledge here are T.C., Lew, Randall, Jeannie, Theresa, Cathy, Larry, Marna, Bob, Anita, Jeannie, J.J., Mike, Mary, Carolyn, Carl, Coty, Rosalind, Sheila, Robin, Steve, Zulu, Terry, Veronica and the Family, and the 230 others.

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The person who gave me the most in all of this was, and still is, Evelyn, my wife. She agreed to all the travelling and cheap living. She put up with my shuffling prison schedule believing in my research strategy of seeing the field under a variety of times and conditions. With few complaints she listened to my boring voice and transcribed field notes for seven months. Her stamina is phenomenal. Her part in how I felt about myself, my research, my data, and my relationships at Pleasanton is central to this dissertation and should not be lost in the methodological forest. I also thank her for teaching me

the art of eavesdropping. I learned from her a new and exciting research strategy.

I realize that what I say here may sometimes appear sharply critical of corrections and cocorrections, and this may disappoint some of the readers. At the same time, however, for every person who winces at these words of description and explanation there will probably be others who will protest that I am too charitable. This happens in part from the problem of having to describe in general terms a system that is so broad that anything at all can be said about it and still be correct for some part of it somewhere. All that appears here should be taken as representing no other person than myself.

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INTRODUCTION¹

Since May 1955, the Federal Correctional Institution at Terminal Island, California, has been a quasi-cocorrectional environment housing female and male inmates.

On July 14, 1971, the Robert F. Kennedy Youth Center in Morgantown, West Virginia, became the first Federal correctional institution to operate a coed (cocorrections) program. Three months later, on October 18, 1971, the United States Bureau of Prisons having assumed ownership of a former mental health "narcotics farm" in Fort Worth, Texas, run by the Department of HEW, converted it into a Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) and reopened as the first cocorrections adult prison for women and men.

In 1974 two more coed FCI's opened. The first, an adult facility, opened at Lexington, Kentucky, and the second, a youth facility, opened at Pleasanton, California.

In the summer of 1975, four years after becoming a cocorrectional institution, the Robert F. Kennedy Youth Center (KYC) transferred out all of its female inmates to other Bureau of Prisons (BOP) facilities in light of operational and programmatic problems and some staff's attitudes about coed corrections in operations there.

In January 1977, Wardens from coed FCI's, together with regional and national Bureau of Prisons administrators, met in conference at Terminal Island (TI). They focused on cocorrections and among other things they discussed the issue of the separation of the sexes at TI. They concluded that FCI Terminal Island should plan to overcome the operational and programmatic barriers presently blocking the integration of female and male inmates. Suggestions in this regard were made but no timetable was planned.

Temporarily excluding the facility at TI, then, there are three fully operational cocorrectional FCI's: Ft. Worth, Texas; Lexington, Kentucky; and Pleasanton, California. This dissertation is an ethnography of one of them--the FCI at Pleasanton, California. It is the first attempt to meet the needs for recording and understanding life for prisoners and staff in a cocorrectional setting, on their grounds and on their terms. The data were collected primarily by participant observation. Other sources of data collection, however, were used. Semi-structured interviews were asked of about half the staff and a social climate questionnaire was given to the inmates. Some inmate files were read and access to other institutional documents was obtained. Inmate poetry, letters, dances, and talent shows add yet another dimension to the data. The bulk of the data was gathered over a period of seven

months of intensive field work. Data analysis developed along with data collection to avoid structuring data collection in ways that were alien to the data itself. I have taken the social environment of the coed institution as the framework for the presentation and analysis of the data. The data were not collected with this framework in mind, but the material falls quite nicely into it.

Research on prisons quite forcefully points to negative environmental conditions--the boredom, pettiness, repetitive meaningless activities, and the deprivation of heterosexual contact. To some extent the coed concept was brought forth to counter these degrading environmental conditions as well as to serve some pragmatic needs of the federal prison system: where to put the increasing numbers of women being sent to prison; higher construction, operation, and program costs for separate female and male institutions; and some thoughts about mixing adults with youths and offenders with varying degrees of criminal background.

What interpretation do women and men, inmates and staff, give to a cocrrectional environment and how does that process of interpretation shape their beings, their actions, and their associations is the subject of this dissertation. To that end, I have woven together data from many sources to present my findings.

CHAPTER I

STUDY DESIGN, THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES, AND THE NATURE OF THE QUESTION

Selecting Cocorrections

Back in the summer of 1973, I chaired a workshop on the treatment of special offenders at a midwest college. One of the workshop speakers was the Warden from the Illinois State Penitentiary for Women at Dwight, Illinois. He spoke with the group about female offenders and coed prisons. It was then I began mentally to outline this dissertation.

About a year later I read an article on "Coed Incarceration" in Time (September 16, 1974). The one-page report included a photograph of "Boy Meets Girl at Pleasanton. . . ." The article reported on female and male prisoners in their twenties strolling arm in arm around a lake, watching movies, listening to quadraphonic stereo, or playing pool in their glass-and-redwood housing complexes. Despite the physical luxuries, however, the Warden there remarked, "A prison is still a prison."

The article identified several substantive and theoretical issues in cocorrections. Among them were the banning of sexual activity, the move toward creating a

more normal prison environment, inmate custody appropriate for classification in a cocorrectional facility, modern architecture, new patterns of staff's exercise of authority, street clothing for inmates, inmate job training, inmate responsibility, drug trafficking, and a reduction in homosexual prison rapes. The article was also informative, in that it listed the names of three other coed federal prisons besides Pleasanton.

During the next few weeks I talked about cocorrections with the criminal justice faculty at Michigan State University. For the most part they, too, were unaware of the developments in coed prisons. To build my own knowledge on the subject, I wrote the coed federal prisons at Morgantown, West Virginia; Lexington, Kentucky; Fort Worth, Texas; and Pleasanton, California. I made known my intentions to conduct my doctoral research on cocorrections and asked them to share with me sources of information on cocorrections. I received back analyses of several surveys on cocorrections at the FCI's at Lexington and Morgantown by the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) research staff. I was pleased to learn what research was going on in the field, but was disappointed with the fact that almost without exception the research I had before me was limited to the positive aspects of cocorrections, its atmosphere, and staff interaction. I planned that a phenomenological perspective would give insight into the negative outcomes

of cocorrections, whether overt or unintentional. I knew that if cocorrections was so successful in improving behavior as Warden Charles Campbell of the coed Fort Worth facility reported in Time (op. cit), then it must be due to the meaning inmates and staff were giving to cocorrections. What was this process of interpretation and what behavior did it bring about were issues in cocorrections I began to consider.

The Phenomenological Perspective

Phenomenology is central to qualitative methodology and hence, to participant observation. What participant observers choose to research, how they go about that research, and what they choose to say about that research all depends upon their theoretical perspective.

As phenomenologists, we commit ourselves to viewing human behavior as a product of how people interpret their world. Schutz tells us that "The phenomenologist . . . does not have to do with the objects themselves; he is interested in their meaning, as it is constituted by the activities of our minds" (1962, p. 115). As phenomenologists we begin with the assumption that social phenomena are negotiated and sustained through the intersubjective process of meaning construction. Behavior is the contingent product of these processes. The problem for phenomenology is to describe the nature of social

phenomena as it is experienced by people in their everyday activities. This is to be done by examining how members construct their realities, how they account for them, and what they account.

The two most dominant forces in social science supporting this view of human behavior are symbolic interaction and ethnomethodology. Advocates of both approaches agree that if the goal of social science is the understanding of human behavior, then researchers need to shrink the gap that exists between them and the empirical social world that contains the ultimate test of that understanding.

Scholars like George Herbert Mead (1934, 1938) and Herbert Blumer (1962) have laid the fundamental premises and methodological implications of symbolic interaction, while Garfinkel (1967) and Douglas (1970) have done similarly in ethnomethodology. The term "symbolic interaction," as defined by Herbert Blumer, refers to the peculiar and notable character of interaction as it happens between human beings (1962, pp. 179-192). Peculiar in the fact that this interaction is mediated by a process of interpretation (self-indication) and definitions as people move from one situation to another. This process of interpretation should not be cast aside as esoteric or swallowed up in psychological categories. Blumer describes it as a dynamic process "in which the individual

notes things, assesses them, gives them meaning, and decides to act on the basis of the meaning" (1962, p. 142). It is to influence the individual to action. Blumer says that

Environmental pressures, external stimuli, organic drives, wishes, attitudes, feelings, ideas, and the like do not cover or explain the process of self-indication. The process of self-indication stands over against them in that the individual points out to himself and interprets the appearance or expression of such things, noting a given social demand that is made on him, recognizing a command, observing he is hungry, realizing that he wishes to buy something. . . . By virtue of indicating such things to himself, he places himself over against them and is able to act back against them, accepting them, rejecting them, or transferring them in accordance with how he defines or interprets them (Ibid., pp. 141-42).

Behavior in the symbolic tradition, then, is not understood by simply turning to the environment, attitudes, or other stimuli, but arises instead from how people interpret and define these conditions in the behavior they construct.

The methodological implication of this approach is to catch the process of interpretation through which actors construct their behavior. The process is not understood by merely turning to conditions like sex, race, attitudes, offense, or SES for explanation nor inferring its nature from behavior itself. "To catch the process, the student must take the role of the acting unit whose behavior he is studying . . . the process has to be seen from the standpoint of the acting unit" (Ibid., p. 145).

The valued marks of traditional scientism--neutrality and detachment--run a greater risk of distortion and subjectivism in learning about system linkages, participants, and their interactions. Researchers who operate in this tradition run a greater risk of error than qualitative researchers either in the process of omitting the interpretation in their research; subsuming it under other conditions like sex, race, attitudes, offense, SES; inferring it from the behavior itself; or filling in the process of interpretation with their own surmises.

In a very similar way, Harold Garfinkel (1967), a pioneer in the ethnomethodological approach, tells us to "bracket" our own assumptions in research to study how common sense is used in everyday life. He advises that we suspend our belief in the existence of an external objective social world and learn to step outside of it in order to reflect upon it and its construction. In this manner the everyday world of common sense becomes topic for examination.

Ethnomethodology refers not to a style of doing research but rather to the methodology by which people make sense out of the conditions in which they find themselves. Scholars like Garfinkel (1967) and Douglas (1970) write that the social world is not a reality sui generis. It does not exist apart from its members' definitions of it. Societal members make social reality in the course of

their everyday activities. The ethnomethodological task is to study those processes by which members assemble their social reality and social structure. From this perspective, "meaning" is always problematic for both the members of society and for the researcher attempting to understand it. Ethnomethodologists, symbolic interactionists, and phenomenologists attempt ideally to "cleanse" their minds of presuppositions before observing and describing the behavior of individuals in social situations. No one can ever completely rid himself of presuppositions and preconceived notions before entering the field, so the issue is really one of a matter of degree. For instance, throughout my academic studies I have been heavily influenced by the social-psychological writings of Erving Goffman (1961b) on "total institutions." His insight into the formal and informal worlds of staff and inmates was a source of ideas for the ways I collected and analyzed data on staff-inmate interaction and communication and on the inmates' sexual adjustment and violence at FCI Pleasanton. Goffman's notions of the inmate underworld influenced my thinking about inmate social systems in a much broader way than those authors who write about prison subcultures. In spite of this knowledge that I took with me to the field (some ethnographers would call it "baggage"), I claim I fairly observed, described, and explained inmate and staff behavior.

The literature has also been a source of preconceived ideas about what to research in cocorrections. So much of the literature on prison life points to negative environmental conditions. The scant cocorrections literature made claim that cocorrections alters these negative environmental conditions. Did it and if so how, were issues I carried in to the field with me. From the beginning of my fieldwork I raised issues like sexual adaptation, violence, and communication. The staff and inmates at Pleasanton were raising them to me. Bureau officials in Washington, D.C., impressed upon me the concern in these areas by legislative and administrative policy makers. Could I address them and would I address them were questions they asked me. Hence, I began this research with a sense of the salient issues that my supporters and informants were raising to me prior to and during my fieldwork. The choice of topics for discussions did not emerge in a purely grounded or natural way as Glaser and Strauss (1967) would have us think. What I observed, describe, and explain have been influenced heavily by these sources.

To say, then, that we, as phenomenologists, should "bracket" or "rid" ourselves of presuppositions or preconceived notions would be to point out the degree to which these presuppositions or preconceived notions have affected our research. What I demonstrated here is that my choice of topic, the method I choose to go about understanding

[illegible]

that topic, a sense of the issues raised in the existing literature, a desire to appeal to a university and agency audience, and a framework for the analysis of the data were issues that I carried into my fieldwork that have affected this research. Subsequent checks on validity suggest that these pre-fieldwork experiences did not radically alter my observations, descriptions, or explanations of the facts at FCI Pleasanton.

As phenomenologists we share a common goal in understanding the process of interpretation and the ways in which people apply order to their lives. The phenomenological perspective uses symbolic interaction and ethnomethodology to understand human behavior better. Their application in this dissertation is central to the ways women and men, staff and inmates, define, interpret, and order their behavior, their lives, and their associations in a cocorrectional institution.

Choosing Participant Observation

For the past five years I have been instructing courses in social science research methodology. Through my Masters program I had been trained in quantitative approaches to research. In the spring of 1973 I enrolled in an advanced research methods seminar at Northern Illinois University. The course requirement was either to analyze the July 1972 survey data gathered by the

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National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago or the field notes that someone else collected on a group of local male university students who grouped together socially and called themselves the Power Ports. I might have chosen the former had it not been for the fact that I lived far enough away that I could not commute as required for extra computer time. By forced choice, then, I analyzed field notes and this was my first formal introduction to qualitative methodology. I grew to appreciate the contribution qualitative researchers give to science. The feature I liked most then, and appreciate even more now, is the commitment they make to data collection and analysis. Give the reality of human bias in research, whatever the methodology, qualitative researchers collect data in ways that are more sensitive to on-going phenomena being investigated. Unlike surveys and experimental designs which are generally preconceived and then taken to the group under study, techniques like participant observation and unstructured interviewing are more adaptable and fluid in the research process. The notion of a "working hypothesis," that is, a process of turning observations into hypotheses for verification, modification, or deletion by checking with the group under study, is a salient feature of this approach. However, the approach has met with resistance. Qualitative researchers have been put on the defensive by quantitative

researchers. The two have split in often fiery competition. The latter, with their valued marks of scientism such as separate and distinct research phases, politics, economics, and deterministic attitudes to replicate the prestige of the natural sciences, and the qualitative researchers' insistence on their own criteria for assessing the credibility of their approaches in generating and verifying theory, has kept the two approaches regrettably distinct.

The choice to use the qualitative approaches of participant observation and unstructured interviewing as the major data-collection methods for this dissertation provides greater knowledge in the linkages between variables, and hence, in the subjects themselves and their interactions. This means that the researcher must view a culture in the same way that the people see it, not as functions or experimental causes as would the quantitative researcher. It also means that the qualitative researcher sees people in the reality in which they present themselves in daily experiences, not as abstractions as would the quantitative researcher.

When I began my research I had no specific hypotheses to test. In this sense, there were few inferences of what was or was not relevant. The focus was to be on cocorrections and to describe and explain what goes on in a cocorrections institution. I entered the field with

an awareness of the official lines of justification for cocrrections.

The correctional programs offered at the Pleasanton Federal Youth Center are designed to provide an atmosphere for personal change in an environment that is as close to "community normal" as possible. In order to decrease the socially debilitating effects of a traditional institutional setting, Pleasanton's supportive milieu will stress the acceptance of personal responsibility and positive interaction between staff and residents. The process will utilize several differential approaches in establishing programs for the care and resocialization of offenders committed to our custody. All available resources will be combined to provide a total, cohesive program for residents in an effort to increase their social effectiveness (Pleasanton Master Plan, February 1975).

Gaining Entry to Pleasanton

A few of the major theoretic and conceptual issues and problems encountered by researchers using qualitative methodology in their research that affected this study included issues of access, sponsorship, establishing field relations, field work roles, and the collection of data. Each of these issues will now be discussed, noting the adjustments made in this research as they affect issues of reliability and validity.

Getting access to conduct my fieldwork at the FCI, Pleasanton, was not a smooth nor expeditious set of events. In January 1976 I wrote Norman Carlson, Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and Warden Walter Lumpkin, FCI, Pleasanton, about my research in cocrrections. I asked their approval to conduct my field work at the Pleasanton

Facility. In my letter I said, "Because of its relatively small size, distribution of the sexes, residents' age, proportion of residents to staff and geographical location, the Center at Pleasanton is a unique facility." I asked to enter Pleasanton as a resident (inmate) but not in any disguised sense. I planned that all staff and inmates would know my true identity as a researcher/doctoral student from Michigan State University and my purpose for being there. I also shared some personal history in my letter as well as past and present work experience and future goals. My letter was accompanied by a letter of support from my dissertation advisor, Dr. Ralph Lewis.

A month later I received a phone call from Howard Kitchener, Director of Research with the BOP. He shared with me the Bureau's interest in my research project with one exception--I could not enter Pleasanton as a resident nor could I live in the institution. He told me the Director had written "No" near that paragraph in my letter. Otherwise, the facility would be open to me and I would have the freedom to interact with staff and inmates. He explained that the sense of the Director's recommendation at this point is positive and it would be up to me to firm up the arrangements with Warden Lumpkin and his staff. A formal letter of BOP interest followed, suggesting I contact Warden Lumpkin at Pleasanton. Within a week of

hearing from Washington I received a letter from Warden Lumpkin. He wrote,

Although it is not possible to conduct research here using the participant-observer method, this need not eliminate Pleasanton as the site for your study. I would be willing to consider a research proposal utilizing an observer-oriented data collection procedure or one employing a traditional experimental design.

He suggested I phone the institution's research analyst for further information.

A week later I spoke with Helene Cavior, Program Research Analyst at the FCI, Pleasanton. Her concerns were threefold: first, what would I be studying substantively; second, what is my theoretical perspective; and third, how would I support myself.

I addressed her concerns succinctly. First, given my exposure to the scant amount of published material on cocorrections, I mentioned research topics like inmate sexual behavior, instructional milieu as it affects inmate responsibility and staff-inmate interaction, coed programming, dating, cultural-ethnic and sexual bonding patterns, and issues of social control. Second, my theoretical approach I told her would be phenomenology, including symbolic interaction and ethnomethodology. I claimed this theoretical perspective is central to the concept of qualitative methodology. I explained I would be interested in what inmates and staff say and do as a product of how they interpret their world. And third,

I informed her that I was making application for an Institution LEAA Fellowship to be administered through the School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University that would support me and my wife, Evelyn. Helene was aware of my prior conversation and correspondence with the Central Office in Washington, D.C. She also told me that since the Director hinted approval for the project it would probably be approved by the Research Committee at Pleasanton. She told me I would receive a letter in a few weeks after the Research Committee met and discussed my proposal.

Mid-March 1976 I received a letter from Pleasanton. All of my prior conversations cultivated an expectation of institution approval. I was stunned to read:

The Research Committee at Pleasanton has disapproved your request to carry out your dissertation research at this institution. Two factors contributed to this decision. They felt that the design of the study was not specific enough and in particular, were concerned about the absence of identifiable hypotheses. Secondly, they had reservations regarding the amount of time you want to spend at the institution and the potentially disruptive effects on program operation.

The letter was signed by Warden Lumpkin. I shared my disappointment with Dr. Ralph Lewis, who assured me that we could, if necessary, develop specific hypotheses and more clearly define and provide sound justification for the time needed in the field. "It's odd," I remember him telling me, "that the Central Office in Washington

would recommend approval to the hosting institution and its Research Committee and then receive this kind of response." He suggested I wait.

Later that same day Howard Kitchener, Director of Research with the Bureau of Prisons, phoned me at home. He received a copy of the letter Pleasanton sent me and asked me to wait patiently until he phoned Pleasanton. He phoned me back shortly and apologized for the letter. He explained that the thrust of the Director's suggestion for approval of the project was not clear to Pleasanton's Research Committee. He assured me that the project itself was worthy and would add to the growing body of the literature on cocrrections. On the politics of it all he told me I would have to establish my own rapport and overcome whatever institutional roadblocks were set up for me. I was on my own.

My final step in gaining access was to fly to the Pleasanton FCI in California and meet with the Warden and his staff. I phoned ahead for an appointment, followed it up with a letter, and phoned once again to confirm the meeting and hotel accommodations. Still the meeting was not held as planned. The day I arrived at Pleasanton in April 1976 a defendant of considerable notoriety had been temporarily moved to the Pleasanton FCI. I conducted some preliminary field work on the operations of the institution per that person's arrival

rather than become disappointed with the "catch what you can" type of itinerary. Additional security measures were implemented. Armed correctional officers patrolled the outside prison perimeter. I listened while inmates complained about the tight security and the staff's pre-occupation with that person's case.

The morning I was scheduled to leave Pleasanton, I met briefly with Warden Lumpkin. We talked about my doctoral program and what I expected to do at Pleasanton and for how long. At the end, I presented him with a letter I had composed that approved my research plans at Pleasanton. I explained that I needed such a letter as part of the supportive materials for a fellowship award. He read the letter and turned to the Chief of Psychological Services, who accompanied me, and asked, "Is this okay?" Affirmative. I left Pleasanton with formal site approval and a taste of my field work.

A New Warden

Before I returned to Pleasanton in August 1976, I knew Warden Lumpkin had transferred as Warden to the Metropolitan Community Center (MCC) in San Diego. His replacement was William (Bill) Garrison, a more conservative administrator than Warden Lumpkin according to staff and inmates who knew and worked under both Wardens.

This was Bill Garrison's first assignment as Warden, coming to Pleasanton from the Central Office in Washington, D.C., where he had been Correctional Management Administrator. He had started with the Bureau about 14 years earlier as a correctional officer.

My first day at Pleasanton, Helene escorted me to Bill's office, where Bill and I talked for about 40 minutes. We discussed my doctoral studies, what I planned to research at Pleasanton to which I responded "Cocorrections, in general," the length of time I would spend in fieldwork (about seven months), prior research on cocorrections, and what I would offer the Bureau in return for granting me access. Without pause, he suggested I give him something like the research done at the coed FCI, Fort Worth, Texas. I assured him he would receive copies of my final product.

Bill also covered a list of "don'ts" with me. He told me if my presence became disruptive to the orderly running of the institution, our relationship would be terminated. He advised me against becoming a "social champion" for the inmates. "The staff can take care of the inmates' concerns," he said. "Regarding contraband," he continued, "the rule is simple. Take nothing in. Take nothing out. See, isn't that simple?" I nodded in agreement. "And don't take up staff's time." He also requested I collaborate with the institution before

I publish my material. I reinforced his last concern, adding, "That type of feedback is a key feature in my methodology that brings about validity in what I do." Bill also had a few more concerns about my methodology, specifically my sources of data collection. "Don't overfocus with a few inmates. Don't let a handful of inmates color your perspectives. You'll have to sift through talking with the same inmates."

During my next seven months at Pleasanton I would observe and listen to staff and inmates as they compared program and operation similarities and differences between Wardens Garrison and Lumpkin. A few months under Garrison's administration, inmate and staff perception of Pleasanton changed. Bill came to Pleasanton only six weeks before me and I had the advantage of systematically observing the planning and implementation of new and modified prison policies. Whereas inmates used to comment, "This place is a kiddy farm. It's so petty here it reminds me of junior high school," and similarly staff who would at first describe Pleasanton as "The Disneyland of the North," soon changed their perceptions about Pleasanton. Over the next seven months, inmates became increasingly angered over formal social control mechanisms such as more restrictions and loss of movement. They would complain to me, "This place is a real bitch now. I want out. It used to be so cool but now it's like any

other joint. I'd rather be at TI." Staff differed in their attitudes toward the two Wardens. Some said, "We used to give them everything they wanted and if we didn't Walt would. You just can't take it back after you give it all out. We had no power. He [Walt] was on their side more than ours. It's different now. Bill's showing direction and it's going to change even more." Some staff, however, were not so pleased with the changes coming about. They felt Pleasanton was moving away from its mission. They interpreted operation and program changes far more negatively than they ever admitted to their supervisor. They vociferously challenged the institution's policies on the level of implementation. Observation suggests that their interpretation and behavior added significance to inmates' interpretation and behavior in light of the latter's increasing negative attitude toward Pleasanton.

Meeting Inmates and Staff

My contact person at Pleasanton was the Program Research Analyst. I am not certain why it was she, but probably because the nature of both of our work was research. This sponsorship caused staff and inmates to ask if I worked for the Research office at Pleasanton. My answer was always "No. I am from Michigan State University doing research for my degree." I elected to

be introduced to various department heads for my first two half days in the field. She presented me as a criminal justice graduate student from Michigan State University doing research on cocrrections. Sometimes she would add, ". . . he's been approved by the Bureau," and I would notice a bit of heightened reception from the person to whom I was being introduced. Her sponsorship, I learned, important as it was in establishing a network of staff contacts, had its limitations for me in establishing relations with inmates. Inmates would approach and ask, "Do you go back and report to the Warden?" I would explain that the Bureau was kind enough to give me access to Pleasanton for my research, and other than that I was on my own, reporting only to my faculty back at the university. Some would then get excited, pat me on the shoulder and say, "All right, you're on our side!"

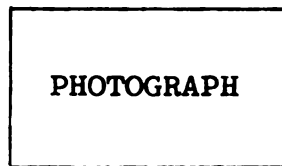
My role as a criminal justice graduate student from MSU doing research on cocrrections was not clear to everybody at Pleasanton in spite of my or others' efforts at explaining my presence there. Because I was approved by the Bureau, some staff and inmates thought I might be from the Central Office in Washington, D.C. If they hinted at that association I would explain inoffensively that I worked at Michigan State University, teaching and taking courses in criminal justice, and not with the Bureau of Prisons. I knew I didn't convince

them all. For instance, one evening, after three months in the field, while watching TV in one of the men's living units I overheard one inmate lean and loudly whisper to another inmate, "Watch what you say. The researcher from the Bureau is behind us." The inmate who warned the other had been present on several occasions when I was introduced to other inmates and staff but never to him directly. I also sat in on his parole hearing and the parole examiner introduced me as a student from Michigan State and asked if he had any objections to my sitting in on his hearing. Still he chose to associate me with the Bureau and not the university. Throughout my fieldwork he overtly ignored me and perhaps because he seemed to be "an organizer" in his counselor's estimation, no doubt he influenced what other inmates also thought about me.

There were other techniques I used to make staff and inmate contact. I supported the idea that a memo be sent from the Warden announcing my identity, university affiliation, and my research interest in cocrrections. The memo included my picture. It read:

To: All Department Heads
 From: William L. Garrison, Warden
 Subject: John Ortiz Smykla

Mr. Smykla, a graduate student in Criminal Justice, Michigan State University, will be conducting research into various aspects of cocorrections at Pleasanton between now and February 1977. Please extend him the usual courtesies.



In addition to department heads, the memo was posted in the staff lounge, control room, and the glass house (known as the glass house because of its walled glass structure, this building is the entry into Pleasanton). The memo also showed up on unit bulletin boards and the business office bulletin board. "Yea, I saw your picture," was always a warmer introductory cue than "Who are you?"

The most common strategy I employed in developing staff and inmate contacts was to be direct without being offensive, to introduce myself to inmates and staff. This is not a strategy I employed just for this research but is part of my way of living and meeting people. I am a direct type of person who will often make the first introduction with a stranger. This method got me started and put me at ease with a growing number of familiar

faces and names at Pleasanton. From then on, establishing relations was easy--a combination of the direct approach and inmate and staff sponsorship.

Within a month my field notes suggested that I was known to most of the people at Pleasanton. I felt I had an easy time making contacts quickly. I became known as "John the research guy" or "the writin' man" because of my constant note-taking. Inmates and staff began to include me in their activities without my asking. And, if I was absent from Pleasanton for a few days, they questioned me on my whereabouts, joking that they were going to write my teachers back at Michigan State and tell them that I was playing hookey.

Becoming a Participant Observer

The skill in becoming a participant observer corresponds with the everyday rules about inoffensive social interaction (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975, Chapter 3). Entry into the field is passive. You come on slowly and learn to meddle inoffensively. I learned to expose myself to inmates and staff in order for them to meet me, trust me, and feel at ease in my presence. I started my fieldwork by joining women and men, inmates and staff, on their jobs. We would talk about the weather, my research, motorcycles, camping, California, drugs, other prisons, with whom they worked, their supervisor, the details of

their work, job satisfaction, and with inmates I tried to uncover their feelings relating their institutional work to their outside work. On other occasions I just "hung around" with inmates or staff, doing whatever they were doing. Sometimes it meant just passing the day and experiencing their boredom and repetitive activities. On more structured occasions inmates would invite me to attend their remedial, college, and vocational classes with them. I would, like they, sit and listen and enter in on class discussion. I assisted some inmates in reading and writing assignments and tutored others in math and sociology. With their permission I sat in on their classifications, their 90-day reviews, their study and observation sessions, their parole board hearings, and their unit disciplinary hearings. With some I observed the intake process to Pleasanton and joyfully with others I experienced their "merry-go-round" (obtaining signatures and checking out the day prior to release) and discharge process. I accepted their invitations to attend Teen Challenge and Seven Step Meetings. I ate their food and let them treat me to tea, avocados, and health foods in their rooms. We went to their movies together and I cheered for them in basketball, baseball, and football. With some I played tennis and with others I played pool and ping-pong. Evelyn and I honored their invitations to attend their dances, their discos, their

talent shows, and their pizza parties. With others I was an only friend. To some I gave lay advice on legal matters. I walked the compound and "spinned the loop" hundreds of times, talking about whatever came naturally. I entered in on serious political, educational, moral, and corrections debates with inmates. I sat in their rooms and comforted some with problems. I made many laugh and probably a few cry. I sat with them in crafts and passed away several evenings. I helped them move furniture in their rooms and complimented them on their appearance. On visiting day I was proud to be introduced to some of their family, friends, and spouses. On other occasions I wondered about their marital relationship with their spouse on the outside when I observed them dating inmates inside. With some I just sat in detention and segregation providing them company. In the units I watched their TV, listened to their music, played cards, stayed late, and arrived early. I shared joy in their rewards like furloughs, restored good time, parole, transfer, babies, and new friends. I shared the pain with the decision of no parole, or an unwanted transfer, or a friend's shot (disciplinary report), or leaving. They took me in to their confidence and I learned about prison sex, drugs, escapes, fights, and contraband. They clued me in on playing prison games with staff and proved to me that it sometimes works. As

I became more involved with inmates, however, I learned that some of the staff were becoming suspicious of me. Was I bringing in contraband? I learned from all levels of staff in conversation that suspicions and hunches are important in prison work. "You never know when they may turn in to the real thing," the Captain once told a group of us during our institution familiarization week. I grew to feel the suspicions as inmates and their rooms were routinely or on a hunch shaken down for contraband. I observed first hand and heard about other accounts of staff-on-staff investigations for suspicious behavior. In this environment it was difficult for me to take the role of the acting unit as Herbert Blumer (1969) suggests in catching the interpretive process. However, by understanding the interpretive process of some staff who thought in this regard, I was able to use that knowledge and overtly avoid transgressing those limits in their presence. I, too, learned how to play prison games.

My involvement with most staff was limited to my contact with them in their work and at Happy Hour on payday drinking beer. I did develop a few close friendships with staff but I never escaped the guilt feelings that other ethnographers have felt when, acting as a "friend," I found myself "doing research."

I had countless opportunities to talk with staff on their jobs. Some of these conversations were casual

and others were guided by either them or me. I would walk the compound with the yard officer, one of the less desirable of the correctional posts because of the square mile of constant walking and surveillance involved under all weather conditions. I would walk and chat with the unit officers as they performed their unit duties such as looking for inmates to deliver a message, answering the telephone, searching for counselors and unit managers and other nearby staff, and supervising inmates in unit housekeeping duties. The unit officer was expected to encourage responsibility and develop sound work habits. Not all inmates, however, accepted this correctional goal for themselves. And therein, between the two, problems developed.

No staff person ever refused me conversation, although some behaviors like quick replies, disapproving head shakes, and turned-away bodies seemed to reveal their unwanted feelings about my presence. In these situations I never pushed my role but would find reason to go elsewhere. In the end, several of them came around to me "to be included in the research." "What are you finding out?" "Where have you been hiding out? I've been looking for you." "You've been here long enough now to probably know that. . . ." Or, "Maybe we should get together before you leave," they would offer. When we did sit down to talk, their revelations did not appear

much different than the data I already knew. That it provided a good check on my reliability and validity, though, was useful. What they did tell me was shared by other staff with like social conditions such as length of the time with the Bureau, current rank, sex, and department. I still heard about "The problem with these kids is they just don't want to work [referring to both inmates and staff]. . . ," or they told me about young officers who turn corrupt, or the pushy college graduates who want to get promoted without first putting in their time, or the female staff who "couldn't handle the men" if a riot ever broke out, and about the inexperienced administrators who give inmates too much, or the reasons for the low staff morale and a shared feeling of "how it used to be" in corrections.

I managed to collect staff data in other ways. I attended unit and departmental staff meetings as an observer with their permission. I was a regular at the Warden's monthly staff meeting to which some department heads, it was told to me, questioned my presence there and by whose authority. I sat in on unit discipline committees with staff and inmates' permission and observed staff relate with inmates, inmates relate with staff, and staff relate with staff in the decision-making process. I lunched and spent breaktime with staff. I walked repetitively the miles spent surveilling the

internal and external compound. I rode over 50 miles on the mile perimeter patrol with staff and learned more about inmates and other staff.

Staff also saw my role in a consulting, professional way. I was asked to give feedback regarding the "goings-on" in their units or departments. Correctional officers would ask me about research in prison and cocorrections work. One ethnic college-graduate corrections officer believed my research plans and strategies were so unique and would be of such benefit to the Bureau in the end that he offered to become one of my consultants and was instrumental in keeping me up on what happened in my absence and provided me with as much data and detail as I cared to know. With his sponsorship I met other like staff and few similar ethnic inmates who identified themselves with their ethnic staff, and I enlarged my pool of informants.

I was also fortunate to participate in a Bureau task group to examine the role of the correctional counselor and the issues that surround that role. I was not asked to be in the group, but after I saw a copy of the project on a counselor's desk I recognized the timeliness of it for my research and received the Warden's approval to participate with a few other staff he chose to review and comment on the document. In the group I tried to speak with moderation, noting that my

silence in an observer role only made the task force group uncomfortable. Beyond appendages like "That's a good point," or "Yes, I've been thinking about that myself." They would say to me, "You're a neutral observer, what do you think?" and I would pull in all the preceding points of thought and find credit in them all. I hoped not to change the focus of the work group or affect their perceptions of the counselor's role at Pleasanton with my observation data. I sometimes felt they wondered why I did not offer any great insight. They seemed to expect clarification or something substantive from me because of my role. They would turn to me and ask, "What do you think?" I explained to two members of the group that I saw my role as an observer not as a participant, and one of the two turned to me and chastised me with, "But it's important enough to use your help." I think that I remained general and noncommittal affected their perceptions of me as uninvolved, unwilling, and maybe even unacquainted with the issues.

Perhaps I learned the most about the staff at Pleasanton as "working units" within one institution with problems, jealousies, rumors, expectations, disappointments, and feelings of being "in prison" during my period of semi-structured staff interviewing. During the 1976 Christmas season, I left the field to spend a few days with friends and relatives. I was able to pull away from

the data and think about some of the recurring themes and those which were not so recurring. I asked myself basic sociological and anthropological questions about groups, members, characteristics, norms, controls, sanctions, rewards, values, etc. The biggest void I noted in my data was from staff. I returned with a plan to interview staff on issues related to their role functions, job satisfactions, attitudes concerning cocorrections and management problems, and their feeling for the environment at Pleasanton.

I obtained a list of employees from Personnel and guided by what Glaser and Strauss (1967, Chapter 3) call "theoretical sampling," whereby the researcher stops sampling when no additional data are being uncovered to develop properties of the category, I built my sample. I did, however, intentionally select all department heads save one, who regularly attended the Warden's monthly conference meeting as part of my sample. I envisioned about 50 to 60 staff interviews that I would probably have to complete in order to saturate the multiplicity of work groups at Pleasanton. All staff I approached granted me interviews, except one. However, toward the end of my fieldwork he hinted at the interview so I asked him again and he consented.

Interviews were conducted with staff on their jobs, walking the compound, sitting in the units, during

lunch, or in their offices. I came to the interviews with key phrases of the issues I wished to cover on a 3 by 5 index card. Interviews lasted anywhere from 40 minutes to over four hours, with about one and a half hours an average. I prefaced each interview saying it would give me a chance to know about the backgrounds of the staff, allow me to check my ideas with them, and hopefully offer me new ideas and insights. I promised each staff person total anonymity, to which most of them responded, "That's okay. I don't care." With their permission, explaining that it was an easier method than recall, I kept notes during the interview. If they started to talk about something that they wished I didn't record, I stopped writing but remembered to note it later for future reference. In the last part of the interview I asked staff to react to a series of agree/disagree statements concerning the environment at Pleasanton. The 18 statements were similar to the questionnaire items I was asking inmates. With these data I intended to compare inmate and staff responses to the social environment at Pleasanton at a later date beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Collecting Data

My method of data collection employed seven major approaches.

1. Observation. Observation was my primary technique. I tried to stay alert at all times, trying to learn something about cocorrections and life at Pleasanton. I seized whatever opportunities came my way as leads on subjects in which I had interest.

2. Attendance at Inmate and Staff Meetings, Gatherings, and Public and Private Places. I attended as many staff and inmate meetings as I knew about and could get access to, mostly as an observant spectator. I walked the compound frequently and accepted invitations to talk and party in inmates' rooms.

3. Informal Interviewing of Inmates and Staff. Most of my interviewing with inmates was informal and semi- to nonstructured. And, to the extent that I observed at Pleasanton daily for seven months, many of my interactions with staff were also informal. I also had the opportunity to talk informally with inmates' families and friends and staff's families.

4. Formal Interviewing of Staff. I formally interviewed almost one-half of the staff (about 60 out of 130), including the Warden, Associate Wardens, Warden's secretary, all but one department head, most assistant department heads, and a selection of department employees. I also talked with volunteers in informal ways.

5. Use of Informants. About a dozen of the inmates and staff became close informants besides

respondents. They kept me up to date on Pleasanton activities with which they were most familiar and offered insight, opinions, and leads on matters of general and specific interest to me.

6. Inmate Questionnaires. I distributed to over half the inmate population a questionnaire designed to tap some dimensions of the social environment at Pleasanton in which I was most interested.

7. Use of Pleasanton's Facilities. I ate in the inmate and staff cafeteria and used its recreation, education, and leisure facilities. This afforded me the opportunity to observe inmates and staff's behavior as actors in the environment.

The data that I collected from most of these methods were written down in field notes. Excluding staff interviews, which alone filled seven 5 by 7 notepads, I collected 1,500 pages of typed, double-spaced field notes. Luckily, my fellowship allowed me to rent dictating, transcribing, and typing equipment, which made the copious and laborious job of writing field notes an easier task. I would use the 30-minute drive home from Pleasanton to start dictating my field notes and Evelyn, my wife, would transcribe and type them while I was at the prison.

Until I had established myself at Pleasanton I did not write field notes with staff or inmates around.

If I needed to jot down a few ideas or a quote, I would go to the men's room and sit in a stall or find someplace alone. In prison, those places are few or locked. After the first month, however, I was active in jotting field notes and ideas as I crossed the compound or in conversation with inmates and staff. Soon inmates and staff would perceive me as a constant writer, and this picture of me caused them to call to me from across the compound, "Hey writin' man, whatcha doin'?" Or they would approach me and look in my shirt pocket to see if I was carrying my pocket recorder, notebook, and pencil. If they didn't see them there, they asked where they were. I soon learned that some of the staff's inquiry was not so casual as I first thought. A few staff hinted at my recorder and once at my camera as sources of carrying contraband into the institution. I recall one evening around 10 p.m., the lieutenant and yard officer came to Unit 3 to unlock the unit doors for my exit. That particular evening I was trying some group interviewing with my conference microphone, which I had carried into the institution earlier that day. Outside the Unit, I remembered leaving the microphone in one of the inmates' rooms, and asked the lieutenant to go back for it. I came back carrying it in my hand, and I caught the lieutenant staring at the small leather case in which I carried the microphone. His stare made me consider his

suspicion about contraband, and I wanted his unspoken doubt cleared. When he asked me how my research was going as we walked toward the glass house, I replied, "Fine. Doing some group interviewing now; that's why I need this (holding up the recorder)." He showed his suspicion by asking, "Anything else in there?" "Here. Care to look?" I offered, holding out the microphone case. "No, you're too willing," he smirked.

Besides taking field notes, I developed more understanding of Pleasanton's programs and operations by "shadowing" a few key staff members. I asked one of the Associate Wardens and two unit managers if I could follow them through their daily rounds of activity. For about one week with each, I started and ended my fieldwork. I learned about their personal lives, their Bureau careers, and their attitudes about cocorrections. In front of me, I encouraged them to think aloud so that I could sense what was going on in their minds. Seeing me shadow a few staff, other staff began to ask when I would be "calling on them." One was quite insistent I shadow him (a term one staff member coined for this phase of my research), giving me his dates of availability. I considered his request, and to make him feel included, I planned to shadow him for a few days. But about that same time I had retreated from the field for a few days to take stock of my fieldwork and I judged "shadowing" too time

consuming for the product received. I moved instead to the semi-structured staff interviews. However, the individual I did not shadow told me he was disappointed that I would not get to know another part of the "key staff."

Without knowing that I would be using the social environment of Pleasanton as the framework for the presentation and analysis of my data, I distributed to inmates a self-abridged version of Rudolf H. Moss' Correctional Institutions Environment Scale (CIES), a forced-choice (true/false) instrument designed to tap nine dimensions of the social environment in a correctional institution. At that time, I was only using the questionnaire to validate some of my hypotheses about the institution's environment and generate some new ideas. Deciding later, however, to view phenomenologically the social environment of Pleasanton as the subject of this dissertation, these questionnaires became subsequent sources of comparison with my observations.

Other data were collected in institutional documents and prisoners' artifacts. Policy statements, memos, inmate payrolls, handbooks, population trends, space study projections, the BOP Director's transition paper to Attorney General Bell, position descriptions, organizational charts, and commissary lists, together with inmates' letters and poetry, shed more understanding in describing and explaining the social climate at Pleasanton.

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The Social Environment Framework

The purpose of this dissertation is to view phenomenologically the social environment of the coed prison at Pleasanton in reference to the dimensions of female-male inmate interaction, inmate sexual behavior, tension and violence, and formal and informal mechanisms of social control. The environment, to be sure, can be viewed from other indicants as well. As Weber (1947) suggests, there is almost an unlimited number of ways that social phenomena can be described. The ones I have chosen were some of the dominant themes while I was at Pleasanton, and have the added advantage of being some of the more salient issues surrounding cocorrections of interest to legislative and administrative policy makers. Further, choosing the environment and organizing the data around female-male inmate interaction, inmate sexual behavior, tension and violence, and formal and informal mechanisms of social control are ways the inmates and staff might organize the data itself.

Still a further advantage of the environment framework organized around indicants commonly recognized as salient features in prison research and by legislative and administrative policy makers is that it lends itself to comparison with other cocorrections and traditional prison models.

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The attempt here is not to describe any coed prison other than the one at Pleasanton. To what extent this description and explanation are applicable to coed prisons elsewhere is a matter for further research. I do not suggest that this prison is so unique with its problems, staff, and inmate population that it lacks transferability. On the contrary, the weight of the data suggests comparisons with other coed and noncoed prison models. Hopefully, other researchers will find merit in some of the analysis offered here and test it elsewhere for its validity and range of applicability.

The idea to write a phenomenological analysis of the social environment in a coed prison was dictated by my choice of the phenomenological perspective from the outset. Reading my field notes, so much of what I learned from inmates and staff was directed to the social environment at Pleasanton, both positive and negative. On the positive side, staff were telling me that Pleasanton is "a mellow place to work." Inmates are young and nonaggressive; they're not too criminal; the institution is coed; it's an open institution; it's colorful, bright, and clean; inmates have private rooms and wear their own clothes; inmates aren't cohesive and don't join cliques; staff authority and power are not threatened; there are few escapes; there's not too much inmate assaultive behavior; other staff are young and have more education

than at other federal prisons; staff and inmates are involved in Pleasanton's programs and operations; they help one another; they say what's on their minds; "all in all, it's just a mellow place to work."

Other staff were negative about the environment. They complained about the older and more criminally sophisticated inmates coming to Pleasanton. They sensed a lack of inmate involvement. They saw problems with the coed concept. They saw problems with overcrowding and double bunking. They observed inmate power groups and racial tensions. They saw injustice in having prison abortions and prison babies.² They complained about a lack of inmate respect. They complained about staff discrimination in writing inmate discipline reports (called "shots"). They opposed overuse and misuse of the institution's segregation and detention facilities. They felt a lack of consistency and pride in their work. They saw and felt themselves like "cops."

Inmates were just as ambivalent about their feelings concerning the environment. Because Pleasanton is coed and new, at first it seems like an easy place to do time. But inmates soon complained that work was boring, meaningless, and repetitive. They felt their spontaneity was stifled and their creativity criticized. Unit spirit seemed fractured. Inmates cared little about other inmates and even less about staff. Inmates expressed

what staff wanted to hear. Inmate autonomy was encouraged if it "seemed appropriate." Inmates felt a lack of job skills. They discussed their problems, for the most part, more with correctional officers rather than with their counselors. Female dependency was accepted as a fact of life and staff did little to effect change. Inmates felt staff condemned heterosexual relations but ignored homosexual relationships. Inmates told me Pleasanton was like their junior high school days. "Staff have all these petty rules about work, sex, education, and becoming a productive citizen. They treat us like kids."

Other inmates, however, felt differently about Pleasanton. For them, Pleasanton offered many advantages. The programs gave them time to think. They felt a young staff ready to help. They saw a small, coed, modern prison. They felt no threat of a shank (knife) in the back. They found time to write and read. Women found it easy to get "the pill." Medical, dental, and mental care was provided free of charge. Food was good and abundant. Other inmates didn't force anything on them if they didn't want it. Recreation was good. Visiting was informal and often. Access to telephones was nearly unlimited. Dating was fun. They told me they looked at themselves and decided to change.

Back in the early seventies, when the Bureau was just talking about it, the social environment of Pleasanton was conceived as a break with the past. The facility was first intended to:

1. place the emphasis of correctional programming on the young and the first offenders where opportunities for effecting change seemed best.
2. reduce the overcrowding in existing institutions.
3. provide smaller institutions with environments designed to facilitate correctional programs and meet human needs for privacy and dignity.
4. replace the most antiquated institutions in the system.

The mission was to create a new kind of social environment with a small, coed, young population in a modern facility. That this dissertation should describe and explain that social environment, then, is most logical. To view it phenomenologically is to understand it from the perspective of those it most affects: its inmates and staff.

Almost by intuition, everyone agrees that the social environment has an impact on the people functioning in it; and conversely, that the people functioning in it affect the social environment. Families, clubs, churches, armies, classrooms, laboratories, political

conventions, mental hospitals, and prisons all arrange environmental conditions that they hope will maximize conformity and minimize deviancy. Many scholars have described social environments in great detail and reached conclusions regarding the importance of the setting in influencing individual behavior. Several authors (for example, Moos, 1975) have written about the "personality" of an environment, but I consider that bad animism and do not subscribe to that school of thought. I do believe that an atmosphere is created within which inmates and staff work and spend part or all of their lives, but I do not believe that this atmosphere takes on attributes of conscious life as some writers suggest.

Socio-anthropological accounts have been written of college and university environments (Riesman and Jencks, 1962; Bushnell, 1962; Rare and Stern, 1958; and Hughes, Becker and Geer, 1962); work environments (Litwin and Stringer, 1968); mental institutions (Greenberg, 1964; Kesey, 1962; and Goffman, 1961); correctional facilities (Cressey, 1965; Clemmer, 1940; Giallombardo, 1966; and Moss, 1975); and prison camps (Solzhenistyn, 1963). The relationships in these studies between human environment and human functioning vary, but they all agree that the social environment within which an individual operates may have a significant impact on his/her attitudes, moods, health, behavior, overall sense

of well being and the social, personal, and intellectual development. Moos (1975, p. 10) tells us, "The systematic assessment of social environments is important precisely because people do vary their behavior in accordance with the characteristics of their social and physical setting."

The environment at Pleasanton is striking. It contrasts sharply with lay views of how prisons are programmed and operated. Still, it is a "total institution" in Goffman's terms. In it, inmates are regimented, surrounded by other inmates, and unable to leave the premises. As with Goffman's research, the most important factor in forming a prisoner is the institution, not the offense, and that the responses and adaptations are similar to those of inmates in other types of total institutions.

The most obvious feature of FCI, Pleasanton, is its sexually integrated inmate population. Women and men stroll the compound arm-in-arm and hand-in-hand. On the walk or off in the grass they will embrace, kiss, touch genitals, and interweave their arms, legs, and heads. Some will develop serious love affairs with one person, others will "play the field," some just want to have members of the other or same sex as friends, some say they want nothing at all; however, most do.

Dating can be problematic at Pleasanton. The small inmate population carries a powerful "grapevine,"

and friendships and love affairs are sometimes destroyed or seriously affected. Dating and friendship rituals become a part of the coed environment, and whether an inmate subscribes to them or not, she/he is confronted with them and is forced in a position to deal with them.

A second most often mentioned feature of the Pleasanton environment is its lack of tension, violence, and assaultive behavior prominent in other prisons, especially compared with those that are not sexually integrated. Inmates and staff agree that at Pleasanton, unlike any other prison, you are not preoccupied with physical survival. It is difficult to ascribe this condition to some other condition, like cocorrections per se, in light of the mix of other factors at Pleasanton. Cocorrections may be most visible but there is also a high staff-inmate ratio; a more youthful inmate population with supposedly less propensity for violent behavior; a sexually integrated staff; a more educated staff than at most prisons; and a modern "open" institution.

In spite of an environment that appears nonviolent and nonthreatening, Pleasanton is not the antithesis of the negative environmental conditions that surround prisons today. Pleasanton does have its share of inter- and intra-racial and sexual problems. Violent and assaultive behavior occurs and it seems to be increasing, evidenced by the increased use of segregation and detention

for these kinds of offenders. That the relationship is spurious, a product of an emphasis on security brought on by the new Warden or changes in methods of reporting, is yet another possibility. Pleasanton's track record on these issues is difficult to know. Where records exist, observation suggests they reflect only a small proportion of the actual behavior. The system values individual treatment and discretion at all levels of staff-inmate contact. Similar or same kinds of inmate negative behavior are likely to be handled differently, depending on who handles it. This ideology, however, raises other issues such as staff control and inmates' feelings of an unjust system in the face of observable differential modes of individualized treatment.

A base for comparing the nature and rate of violence and tension between coed and noncoed prisons could be developed but before that is attempted the coed inmate world as it existed at Pleasanton with its own perceptions and definitions of violence and tension needs examining so as not to compare grapefruits with grape-nuts.

A third feature of the Pleasanton environment that occupies a lot of staff and inmate conversation is inmate sexual behavior. Where social norms support heterosexual relationships, it becomes difficult, from an administrative control standpoint, to keep women and men from

engaging in sex. Heterosexual and homosexual relations at Pleasanton are proscribed. Policy exists which warns inmates of the seriousness and consequences of being caught "in a compromising situation." Inmates are generally aware of the policy, but more importantly, they recognize some staff's discontent with the policy and are more likely to risk homosexual and heterosexual activity with those staff around. The official reporting of sexual activity at Pleasanton is not what observation suggests. This author finds substantially more unreported than reported sexual activity, in spite of the institution's effort to decrease sexual activity by decreasing conditions favorable for sexual relations to occur.

Any prison ethnography would not be complete without discussion of the formal and informal mechanisms of social control in the prison designed to maximize conformity and minimize deviant behavior. Some of the most obvious in this regard are the institution's staff and its policies. Pleasanton's staff, being sexually integrated, is as unique as its population. Female and male staff are co-workers in all line functions, including supervision in other-sex living units. Staff's relations with inmates become sine qua non in the institution's mission to provide for the custody, care, and corrections of its inmates.

CHAPTER II

WOMEN'S PRISONS, MEN'S PRISONS, AND COED PRISONS

Cocorrections History

In the mid-seventeenth century, Philadelphia's Walnut Street Jail--considered to be America's first prison--mixed women, men, children, the aged, the mentally ill, the vicious, and the sick together in the same large prison cells. There was no sexual differentiation and prisoners lived, ate, and slept amidst unhealthy conditions. Because of its mixed inmate population, it is known as the "congregate system." Reporting on prison conditions in the eighteenth century, Gray writes:

It is represented as a scene of promiscuous and unrestricted intercourse, universal riot and debauchery. There was no labor, no separation of those accused, but yet untried, nor even of those confined for debt only, from convicts sentenced for the foulest crimes; no separation of color, age, or sex, by day or by night. . . .
(Gray, 1947, pp. 15-16).

Believing that the criminal's freedom should be further deprived, the Pennsylvania Quakers began the separate and silent prison system. Women were not only separated from men, but also from each other. Each inmate had her/his own cell to maximize penitence.

Cressey reports that "A legislative commission in 1824 investigated the institution (Auburn) and recommended that the practice of solitary confinement be abandoned at once, and this recommendation was followed" (1973, p. 122).

From these origins the Auburn system of "congregate but silent" came to be the accepted form. This represented a compromise between the separate and congregate systems, for it combined the presumed virtues of solitary confinement during evening hours with the efficiency of communal dining, working, and recreation.

The first separate prison for women, the Indiana Women's Prison, opened in 1873. Female prison reformists argued that women should be rehabilitated apart from men, away from the corruption and chaos of the outside world (Burkhardt, 1973). Among the reasons behind the development of separate institutions for women were: sexual exploitation of female prisoners by male guards and male inmates; development of programs to foster independence in women by giving them responsibility for maintaining the operation of their own institution; and to develop career paths for female employees. By 1971, when the coed federal prison in Fort Worth, Texas, opened, there were approximately 40 state institutions for female offenders (American Correctional Association, 1971). It is most obvious to ask what would be the result of

restoring the sexual mix of inmates that existed almost a century ago?

After a century of sexually segregating prisoners, female and male inmates are subject to differential treatment, according to O'Connor (1975) and Arditì (1973), for two reasons: First, differences in population sizes mean gross differences in facilities for each sex. We find, for example, more female than male facilities geographically remote, offering fewer institutional programs, and grouping women together in one institution without regard to security risks as is done with male inmates. And second, sex-role stereotypes result in unequal treatment given women and men prisoners. They find, for instance, more female than male prisons display a home-like atmosphere with private rooms and an emphasis on decor. Women's prisons tend to be more commodious and display less concern with security. Staff-inmate ratio at female prisons is higher and more sexually integrated than at male facilities. Women's prisons have fewer recreational facilities and fewer recreational programs. Educational, vocational, and industrial programs are also fewer in number and variety in women's prisons.

Some have suggested that the idea to "go coed" was to counter the negative environmental conditions that existed in prison and/or smooth the running of male institutions. We learn from the Bureau of Prisons second

conference on cocrrections held at the coed FCI at Terminal Island, California, January 12-13, 1977, that there was no conceptual framework for the design and implementation of cocrrections. The push to cocrrections was based on the pragmatic needs of the Bureau.

It was noted that co-corrections had its beginning in the Federal Prison System at Morgantown, not because of a particular commitment at that time to the co-corrections concept but rather to increase population at Morgantown, which had previously been for young male inmates only. Some time later, after a disturbance at Alderson, a group of difficult female inmates was moved to Fort Worth, and thus began the first co-correctional adult institution (Cocorrections Conference Summary, January 26, 1977).

Most of the cocrrections history is well documented in a paper authored by Charles F. Campbell, one of the precursors of cocrrections, coiner of the term "cocrrections," and now retired Warden of the coed federal prison at Fort Worth, Texas.

It [Ft. Worth] was rushed into use with considerable haste after acquisition of the facilities from HEW in October 1971.

A task force set up by the Director early in 1971 identified the needs upon which the mission of the institution was based and roughed out ideas for a program model developed around five or six functional units. Otherwise, the task force had its hands full in dealing with all sorts of administrative and logistical complications. Virtually all of the detailed planning of FCI Fort Worth programs was done in something of an improvisatory manner after the institution opened.

. . . During the months preceding activation of the facility in the Fall of 1971, we engaged in long hours of cogitation about the problem of how to manage men and women in the same institution. There was nobody of knowledge to rely on. Thus we knew we would need to proceed cautiously and learn

from trial and error. We made certain assumptions about the type of behavior we would be prepared to deal with, but I can think of only a few of these assumptions that haven't proven to be wrong. The assumption that a viable institutional program could be developed for such a varied mix of offender types, including men and women was one which has proven to be right. This was an assumption the Director of the Bureau of Prisons and his task force had before I came on the scene in March of 1971. We engaged in no systematic theorizing as to what might be encountered in a cocorrectional experience. Instead, all we had was a shared conviction that different kinds of things needed to be tried. We had certain pragmatic needs; we had the prospect of a new facility at our disposal, and we had some good experience with innovations like the unit system, the correctional counseling program, and work and study release. Thus it was logical to view Fort Worth as an opportunity to be seized.

. . . Four months before FCI Fort Worth opened, the first contingent of young women arrived at the Kennedy Youth Center (Morgantown, West Virginia).

. . . The advent of the coeds at Kennedy created little public stir, perhaps because for many years there had been a state training school for boys and girls there. Kennedy's program was erroneously seen as similar to these. The fact is that 18, 19, and 20 year olds are men and women, most especially where their sexuality is concerned.

. . . Whether the country's first "coed prison" was the Kennedy Youth Center at Morgantown, West Virginia, the Federal Correctional Institution at Fort Worth, Texas, or someplace else, let it be said that the decision to launch cocorrections was made by Norman Carlson, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. He has given full support to the experiment and has subsequently activated cocorrectional programs at Lexington, Kentucky, and Pleasanton, California.

. . . The FCI experiment has undoubtedly served to alleviate some of the concern over what might happen in a "coed prison," but is it fair for us to be asked, what are the advantages? What anticipated benefits justified such a controversial departure in the first place. I have already referred to the pragmatic aspects of FCI Ft. Worth's beginnings. If a definitive rationale for cocorrections existed prior to our being involved in it here, it was never related to me. A conviction on the part

of the Director and some of his colleagues, including me, that this among other innovations needed to be tried, was what we were going on. Especially at that time, early in 1971, there seemed to be a lot of evidence around that what we were doing wasn't working very well. We were acutely aware that the confinement of offenders under conventional circumstances had an inescapably dehumanizing effect on people, despite strong, well trained staff and a heavy emphasis on helping programs. We were convinced that isolation from the community was a major contributor to the deleterious effects of confinement and we had been talking determined about the "normalization" of our institutions. For several years we have moved not only toward developing better ties with the community, but also toward normalizing prison settings by bringing volunteers and even before this, by the use of female employees in men's institutions. We had lived fretfully for many years with the knowledge that situational and predatory homosexuality in institutions was prevalent. These factors, together with a pressing need for more space for women offenders went in to the making of the decision to have women and men at Ft. Worth. I have come to feel strongly that men need women and women need men, quite aside from their sexual needs and desires. It has become obvious that some of our women residents, who had never before had a relationship with a man other than on the basis of sexual exploitiveness, are now finding out what it means to have a friend who is also a man. And men residents are making similar discoveries about women. Deprivation of this kind of relationship may be one of the more destructive things about confinement. Inability to have this kind of relationship may be a contributing factor to behavior which leads to confinement. But before we got underway at FCI Ft. Worth, I don't think any of us could have articulated this notion. In all candor, we weren't sure what we were getting in to, but we could hardly visualize its being worse than some things we were already tolerating (Campbell, unpublished paper, n.d.).

Today, criminal justice rhetoric for "going coed" seems to mix the economics of scale with a few assumptions about a more fair and just treatment of inmates and their prison environment. We advance it as being a

"more normal social environment" than same-sex prisons and more economically feasible to handle against a background dominated by rising costs of separate-institution operations and programs. The range of rationales behind the planning and implementation of cocorrections reflects divergent goals and sometimes under circumstances with little planning. In spite of all this, however, coed prisons are becoming popular and part of state and local corrections agencies.

. . . Over a dozen states have either already opened a coed correctional institution, or are at the operational planning stage of opening one, whether by opening the doors of a traditionally single-sex institution to the opposite sex, or by expropriating a facility previously used for non-correctional purposes. Moreover, several states and other jurisdictions have a coed facility "on the drawing boards". . . (Issues Paper, February 4, 1977).

Associated with the advance of cocorrections is a commentary on the failure of single-sex institutions. This position was formally articulated at the national level by the National Advisory Commission, Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, which argued that coed institutions have more program impact on reducing criminal behavior than single-sex institutions.

Institutional programs that provide a single sex social experience contribute to maladaptive behavior in the institution and the community. In sexually segregated facilities it is very difficult for offenders, particularly juveniles and youth, to develop positive, healthy relationships with the opposite sex. A coeducational institution would

provide a more normal situation in which inmates could evaluate their feelings about themselves and others and establish their identity in a more positive way.

. . . The correctional system should abandon the current system of separate institutions based on sex and develop a fully integrated system based on all offenders' needs. The coeducational program can be an invaluable tool for explaining and dealing with social and emotional problems related to identity conflicts that many offenders experience (National Advisory Commission, 1973, p. 179).

Review of Core Literature on Female and
Male Prisons and Prisoners: Some
Suggestions for Cocorrections

Having identified the social environment as the framework for the presentation and analysis of the data on cocorrections, the focus here is to discuss similar dimensions that are found in the social environment in same-sex prisons, namely, inmate sexual behavior, tension and violence, and formal and informal mechanisms of social control.

The most widely cited research on the social environment of male prisoners and prisons is by Sykes and Messinger (1960). From data collected at a maximum, all-male prison in New Jersey by Sykes (1958), the authors develop an analytical scheme that describes the male prisoner's social system, which will be shown to vary considerably from the female prisoner's social system described by Ward and Kassebaum (1965).

The male inmate social system, Sykes and Messinger explain, is a code of conduct in response to prison social

conditions to which the population of prisoners must respond or adapt itself. The chief tenets of the code are: (1) don't interfere with inmate interests; (2) don't lose your head; (3) don't exploit inmates; (4) don't weaken (be tough; be a man); and (5) don't be a sucker (treat guards with suspicion and distrust) (1960, pp. 6-8). In light of the presumed validity of the code, the authors and others who have studied male prisoners have developed a typology of the patterns of inmate behavior for conformity to, or deviation from, the inmate code. The inmate who betrays a fellow prisoner is labeled a rat or squealer. Prisoners who exhibit aggressive behavior, who quarrel easily and fight without cause are referred to as toughs. The prisoner who uses violence as a means to gain ends is called a gorilla. The inmate who exploits other inmates by manipulation and trickery of goods and who sells or trades goods that are in short supply is called a merchant or peddler. The prisoner who is unable to withstand the rigors of prison life is referred to as a weakling or weak sister. The inmate who enters into a homosexual relationship is termed a wolf or fag, depending on whether the role is active or passive. And if the inmate becomes allied with the prison administration, the inmate is a square John. The inmate who most nearly fulfills the norms of the society of prisoners is called the right guy. There are,

however, other authors (for instance, Becker and Geer, 1960; Ward and Kassebaum, 1965; and Giallambardo, 1966) who argue that the social environment described by Sykes and Messinger lacks transferability into the female inmate world. They argue against explaining female inmate behavior solely in terms of internal sources of stress, and urge consideration of factors that predate the prison experience. In her ethnographic study of the female inmates at the Women's Reformatory at Occoquan, District of Columbia, Heffernan (1972) notes that ". . . the key to understanding the [female] system at Occoquan and other prison systems may well be the orientation that typical offender types bring to their imprisonment" (p. 17). All of these authors agree that the inmate code is rooted in subcultural norms and personality characteristics developed in the outside community. Becker and Geer (1960) use the term "latent culture" to describe this process. ". . . [Latent culture] refer[s] to ideas and understandings which have their origin and social support in a group other than the one in which the members are now involved" (p. 306). In prison, some of the adjustment problems faced by inmates may be countered with norms and personality characteristics carried in from the outside world. Contrary to what Sykes and Messinger suggest, to explain inmate behavior solely in terms of its being a response to the

pains and deprivations of imprisonment does not take into account the fact that inmates are differentiated along dimensions which are not related to prison life but which are rooted in their lives outside prison. For example, some prisoners are black and some are white, some are female and some are male, and some are upper class and some are lower class. Among the male prisoners, some are married, others are single, some are fathers, and others have no children. And with the women, some are married and others are single, some are mothers and others have no children.

Female and male inmates respond to the experience of prison life not only because they are reacting to the deprivations of imprisonment, but also because their personalities differ and they have internalized, to varying degrees, the values of criminal subcultures, of prisoner codes, of the conventional society; and they also react as women and men.

Gresham Sykes (1958, pp. 63-83) has delineated the pains of imprisonment which male prisoners must bear. Summarized briefly, these are: (1) deprivation of liberty; (2) deprivation of goods and services; (3) deprivation of heterosexual relationships; (4) deprivation of autonomy; and (5) deprivation of security. In their research on female inmates, Ward and Kassebaum (1965) and Giallombardo (1966) tell us that all these deprivations

differentially apply to women in prison. Women are confined in an institution which is not as harsh in appearance or function as those for men, but their isolation from family and friends and the outside world is just as great. Material deprivations are somewhat less, but the dispossession of the familial roles (sister, wife, mother, daughter, grandmother, aunt) and separation from family are more severe. Other research studies explain this phenomenon, reporting that female offenders tend to be submissive, complacent, lack self-respect, and manifest a low self-concept (Washington Department of Social and Health Services, 1971; and Park, 1963).

There is one sense, Ward and Kassebaum note (1965, p. 14), in which imprisonment is harsher for more mother prisoners than father prisoners. In their data at the Frontera Prison for Women, 59% of the women had minor children and 68% were mothers. The impact of separation from children was considered most difficult for an average of 40% of the women. They report that this frustration did not appreciably lessen over time. They suggest that whereas the male husband-father prisoner finds comfort in the traditional values of wife-mother caring for children while he serves his prison term, the confined mother's concern at Frontera is not only with the separation from her children but also with how they will be cared for while the father works. Whereas the

father in prison presumes his wife will, despite economic hardship, continue to play her role as mother, the mother in prison asks her husband to assume primary child-care responsibility in addition to his employment outside the home. For cocorrections one might wonder what effect it will have on a prisoner's attitudes concerning a spouse's ability for child care and outside employment simultaneously; and secondly, what effect will cocorrections have in causing suspicion in the minds of spouses and lovers on the outside.

After analyzing the data on the female prisoners' reactions to the pains of imprisonment, Ward and Kassebaum conclude that ". . . These maxims and norms [that is, those of the male inmate code delineated by Sykes and Messinger, 1960] are not as salient for women as they are in prisons for men" (1968, p. 48). The female inmate respondents at Frontera tended to see themselves as more similar in outlook to the staff than to their sister inmates whereas the opposite was noted by Sykes' research on male inmates. Ward and Kassebaum note that ". . . The inmates held views which can hardly be characterized as bitter, cynical or those held by criminally mature or con-wise persons" (1965, p. 50). This criminal immaturity makes more understandable the widespread practices of female inmates in switching and acting like staff. Female inmates reveal more information than male inmates,

with less likelihood of feeling guilty over betraying others. Ward and Kessebaum report:

While there is support of the inmate code by right guy types in the female prison community, our data indicate that this "hero of the inmate social system" is in the minority and does not, by any means, represent the approved role model for the majority of female prisoners. The fact that the women do not endorse more strongly norms which characterize male prisoner ideology and, in particular, that they do not feel bound to maintain group solidarity by no-ratting rules, thus has important implications for inmate roles. The lack of importance attributed to the ideals of inmate loyalty and solidarity means that less importance is given to the right guy type of role and at the same time less criticism is directed toward stool pigeons and center men types (1965, p. 53).

Other differences between female and male prisoners reported by Ward and Kassebaum include: (1) fewer female prisoner merchants which may partially be accounted for by the wide variety of goods and personal belongings available to female inmates than to male inmates and a lessened ability to organize illicit merchandising of goods due to the greater number of female than male inmate informers; (2) fewer female inmate politicians due in part to more conversation between female inmates and staff; (3) fewer women inmate toughs or gorillas in the sense of employing physical force or violence to get what they want. "In short, the only roles similar to those of male prisoners which are prevalent among the women are the roles which deny support to the inmate code--the snitch and the related center man

role type, and the square john or prosocial type of prisoner" (1965, p. 54).

In terms, then, of the length and kind of involvement in criminal activities in the free world, and the latent roles and identities prisoners bring to prison with them, we find (1) cultural expectations of female and male roles diverging along orientation of life goals, acceptability of public expressions of affection toward members of the same sex and differential degrees of passive and aggressive behavior; (2) differences in female and male inmate social systems; and (3) differences in the nature of female and male inmate codes and the allegiance women and men prisoners give to them. For the field of cocrrections, then, it is legitimate to ask how these differences will manifest themselves once prisons become sexually integrated.

In summary, then, a review of the literature on female and male prisoners and prisons suggests variations in the degree of support of the prison social structure and the inmate code. It has also been suggested that the quality of prison life and inmate-staff relationships between female and male prisoners and staff is based in large part on sex-role differences. The values embedded in prison research by Sykes (1958), Sykes and Messinger (1960), Clemmer (1940), McCleery (1960), and Schrag (1954) do not fit the women's prison because they are

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directed to features of imprisonment concerning the male and his culturally prescribed role. Traditionally, women in our society have not been taught to "play it cool," "to be objective," "to take it like a man," "to use force when provoked," "to fight for one's rights," or "to hustle." These codes have traditionally been part of the male culture, reflecting male needs for status, autonomy, independence, power, and prestige.³ A study of cocorrections, then, must focus on sex-role differences and the cultural expectations of female and male roles that are brought in from the outside as well as those arising from within the cocorrections institution.

Cocorrections Literature

Research in cocorrections is, like the field itself, new and expanding. In the early years of cocorrections, the only research conducted was by the BOP research staff at the coed prisons, and most of that was done by the research staff at the coed facility at Morgantown, West Virginia. Surveys were used to tap inmate attitudes toward cocorrections, and, overall, inmate responses were fairly positive toward the coed situation there (see, for example, Cavior, 1972; and Karacki, 1972). In a reflection paper on their experience with the coed program at the Kennedy Youth Center, Morgantown, West Virginia (now known as the FCI

Morgantown), Cavior et al. (1972) discuss the reasons for establishing a coed program, what steps were taken to prepare for the arrival of females at KYC, initial experiences, and further expectations. They note that the program objective was to promote a more normal environment by introducing female inmates to an all-male institution, to foster contacts with the outside community and develop work-study, and volunteer programs. Female staff were hired for the women's units and the educational program was expanded. Close surveillance, it was thought, would run contrary to program objectives and defeat the purpose of the coed program. The authors note that no final administrative approval was given, and instead the position taken by the staff in the women's cottage was more restrictive than with the rest of the institution. The authors report that introducing young female inmates to a previously all young male inmate population created a more normal environment, improved personal sanitation, lessened vandalism, and increased competition among students in the education area. In the summer of 1975, however, four years after KYC became a cocorrections facility, the female inmates were transferred out of KYC to other BOP facilities to once again make KYC an all young male inmate population. Some BOP administrators and staff at Pleasanton who had worked at both FCI's told me that cocorrections did not get out of

hand at KYC; rather, it was some KYC administrators' and staff's personal attitudes against the coed concept that affected the cocorrections outcome there. It is interesting to note that after the female inmates were transferred out of KYC to other BOP facilities, KYC staff reported an "uplift," elimination of the cocorrections problems, an improved prison environment. Data are currently being gathered by the BOP Research Office to compare T_1 (the time when FCI Morgantown was an all-male institution) with T_2 (female and male inmates) with T_3 (a return to an all-male prison) on institution operations and program variables.

From February 1973 through March 1975 research on cocorrections was conducted by Sisters Esther Heffernan and Elizabeth Krippel at FCI Ft. Worth, Texas. Their tasks were to develop a descriptive analysis of the internal characteristics, relationships, and structures of control at Ft. Worth, in order to understand the processes involved in the development of a medium cocorrectional, "open" institution. And second, to explore the question of the degree to which the approaches to corrections embodied in the programs at Ft. Worth can be reproduced in other institutional settings (Heffernan and Krippel, Interim Report, 1974).

Beginning in June 1973, one of the researchers (Krippel) lived in staff housing on the institution's

grounds. She spent her first few months becoming acquainted and explaining the research to inmates and staff. "The more structured research began in August, 1973" (Ibid., March 28, 1975, p. 7). A random sample of 105 residents (19% of the total population) was selected for structured interviewing along with the study of the inmate's "jacket." Heffernan supplemented these interviews during her visits to Ft. Worth.

The research question was, ". . . to what degree, if at all, would the internal dynamics of inmates and staff relationships revealed in single sex, 'closed' institutions be found in a cocrrectional, 'open' institution" (Ibid., p. 9). The authors approached their research using three analytical adaptive patterns to prison life that Heffernan developed earlier in her research at the D.C. Reformatory for Women. These are the "square," "cool," and "in the life." They are similar to those adaptive patterns described by Irwin and Cressey (1962) in their work in male California prisons as "square Johns," "thieves," and "convicts." Unlike this dissertation, the work of Heffernan and Krippel and Irwin and Cressey does not focus on the dynamics of the institution or on the interrelationships and interactions that occur within it. Theirs is limited by the nature of their questions and research designs to a normative orientation of categorization of the

inmate social system on variables like offense, personal and institutional history, and prior involvement with the criminal justice system.

The second focus in their research, the degree to which the approaches to corrections embodied in the programs at Ft. Worth can be reproduced in other institutional settings, discusses correctional philosophy, staff recruitment, staff-inmate ratios, selection criterion for inmates, female-male inmate ratios, inmates' programs, institutional size and facilities, geographical resources, and community involvement. The issues are broad, topical, and of particular interest to the fields of criminal justice and corrections. Ways of thinking and dealing with them, however, occur against a political and economic background, which is left mute in the Heffernan and Krippel report.

Perhaps the first published article on cocorrections was Barry Ruback's "The Sexually Integrated Prison: A Legal and Policy Evaluation" (1975). Setting out to discuss which standard is presently appropriate to test the constitutionality, under the equal protection clause, of the current practice of sexually integrated prisons; and second, to describe and evaluate the merits of sexually integrated and nonintegrated prisons, Ruback collected interview data in federal coed and noncoed prisons. He concludes that the advantages of

the sexually integrated prison are largely intangible. Creating a more natural social environment has not been to any large degree a measure of a prison's success. The disadvantages, he reports, are fairly great: increased costs, pregnancies, prostitution, and pimping.

Thus, the decision is between intangibles and observable phenomena. That is, whether the sum of the benefits to each individual resident is greater than the collective disadvantages. From a policy standpoint, one must decide whether the individuals are worth the trouble and expense (1975, p. 329).

Viewing sexually integrated prisons at the level of constitutional rights, Ruback argues that coed prisons have helped eliminate or reduce problems which have plagued the prison system for years. He says,

. . . It may be persuasively argued that legitimate state interests are substantively furthered. Absent grossly inferior facilities for either sex and a lack of alternatives except integration, the present system would undoubtedly withstand a challenge under the equal protection clause. Although the prospects for constitutional support do not seem sanguine, nevertheless the sexually integrated prison offers a means to reduce some of the violence and alienation currently rampant in prison systems (1975, p. 330).

Ruback opined earlier that constitutional support for the sexually integrated prisons is not sanguinary due to the unintended negative consequences that are brought about, such as pimping, pregnancies, increased costs, and prostitution.

Campbell's reflections as Warden at FCI Ft. Worth after three years of being a cocorrectional facility

give a well-written historical account of the cocorrections concept and its operation at Ft. Worth. The author admits with candor that cocorrections was designed to fill the pragmatic needs of the BOP: Where to put the increasing number of offenders, especially women?

Besides the historical narrative quoted earlier in this dissertation, Campbell discloses a sense of failure in the prison system for the ill-effects of same-sex confinement. He suggests that inability to have a relationship with a member of the other sex and deprivation of this kind while in prison may be a contributing factor which leads to confinement and, at the same time, is one of the most destructive things about confinement. He speaks out openly about the advantages and disadvantages of the coed concept in operation there. He proselytizes the reader to examine some of the old shibboleths in corrections and see how foolish some of them are. "Logic," he says, "is on the side of change and if the correctional process is to serve as it should, surely we must know change is imperative" (Campbell, unpublished paper, n.d., p. 24).

One of the first ethnographies on corrections is Jane Patrick's "Doing Time: An Ethnography of a Cocorrectional Institution" (1976). Written for an undergraduate senior anthropology seminar, Patrick became a participant observer at the Ft. Worth FCI. The paper

lacks any analytical and conceptual framework, but it does nicely describe the nature of the institution, the kinds of people who work and stay there, and the ebb and flow of daily prison life. She says her research ". . . permits a picture of FCI through the eyes of the inmates. . . . It relates their experiences and strategies; it speaks of their responses to the atmosphere of the facility and the programs" (1976, p. 4). The paper is more descriptive than inferential and it relates the inmates' perceptions of a coed prison, "doing time," cocorrectional programs, furloughs, parole, staff, boredom, commissary, hassles, incident reports, and release. From her research, the author concludes that,

In view of what traditional prisons are like, FCI Ft. Worth is a step toward making prisons less harmful to the incarcerated person. Furloughs, work and study release, and involvement with the community are most helpful in eliminating isolation from the outside world (1976, p. 69).

Joellen Lambiotte's ethnography, "Sex-Role Differentiation in a Cocorrectional Institution" (1976) is a recent addition to the cocorrections literature. Written for her Masters degree in sociology from the University of California at Santa Barbara, she takes with her to the field some of the ideas on sex-roles developed by feminists like Juliet Mitchell (1973) and Jo Freeman (1971). She collected data to accept or reject the hypothesis that sex-role structure and differentiation

in a cocorrectional institution is maintained in an even stronger way than the traditional division between the sexes. Through observation and interviews with inmates and staff she finds that sex-role structure at the FCI Pleasanton duplicates and reflects the social division between the sexes in society, both by behavior and behavioral norms and adherence to traditional societal sexual standards.

Thus we see most women residents focusing their energies on men and their coed relationships . . . male residents at Pleasanton are better able than female residents to define the nature of the relationships. Even though the general structure of the men's lives is controlled by institutional factors, they control the way in which female residents relate to them through labelling, verbal harassment, violation of women's physical space, initiation of relationships, and leadership (1976, p. 45).

Although her methodology forces the research problem into an a priori scheme and seems merely to illustrate the generalizations from the literature on sex-roles with prison data rather than observing it in the context of the empirical world being investigated, she offers some interesting ideas that have up until now passed unresearched in cocorrections. Her research questions suggest the need for further investigation on sex-roles and inmate subcultures.

In conclusion of the cocorrections literature, a summary statement of the second cocorrections conference attended by administrators of the federal prison system,

January 12-13, 1977, at the FCI Terminal Island, California, seems appropriate.

The conference concluded that cocorrections is obviously not a panacea, that it is not appropriate for all or even a significant proportion of the over 28,000 inmates in the Federal Prison System, and that it is not appropriate to give it a visibility higher than a balance of its advantages and disadvantages warrants (Cocorrections Conference Summary, January 26, 1977).

Their expressions of these concerns are salient issues that I, too, have noted in my research. Among them are: homosexuality among women and men in cocorrections is significantly reduced. Predatory and violent homosexuality is virtually absent. In cocorrections, there is also a reduction in administrative control problems, more staff-inmate involvement, a reduction in the use of psychological medication, and an easier transition for inmates back to the outside coed community upon their release.

However, cocorrections is not without its problems and negative consequences. Public skepticism that cocorrections coddles its inmates, pregnancies, possible staff-inmate romantic and sexual involvement, and increased staff surveillance and supervision at the expense of creating a more normal social environment are no less problematic for corrections than are the problems in same-sex prison settings.

CHAPTER III

THE PHYSICAL STRUCTURE OF FCI PLEASANTON AND ITS STAFF AND INMATES

Physical Structure

The Federal Correctional Institution at Pleasanton, California, was built in 1973-1974 and opened in July 1974 just 20 to 30 miles east of Oakland and San Francisco. This facility is under the jurisdiction of the United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Prisons. It is one of the 48 federal facilities, including 15 halfway houses, across the country, serving specific categories of offenders and offering a variety of correctional programs.

FCI Pleasanton was envisioned as part of a West Coast network of new federal correctional facilities. Lack of community support elsewhere in California, however, dimmed that hope and the Pleasanton facility opened on its own.

The U.S. Bureau of Prisons purchased 93 of the over 1,000 acres belonging to the U.S. Department of Army's Camp Parks Military Base for the FCI site at a cost of \$25,000. The prison rests unnoticed and out of sight on 29 of the 93 acres in the northeast corner of

Camp Parks. Rows of boarded-up Army barracks, a cyclone fence, and a deserted gate house hint at a once-active military base that now functions with only a few Army personnel as a recruiting, training, drill, and education center. Camp Parks does not advertise the FCI in its corner, and only about four small blue FCI signs curtly guide the first-time driver through the abandoned military maze to come upon the correctional facility. It lies in a shallow corner of Camp Parks with rolling hills to the north, east, and west. Due south about one mile past the rows of empty barracks starts the small industrial section of Pleasanton. About four miles southeast of FCI Pleasanton lies the Santa Rita Rehabilitation Center, the County Jail. To mention that one works at FCI Pleasanton generally gets the reaction, "Oh, you mean at Santa Rita." The jail, with its old-style barracks facilities, is highly visible from heavily trafficked Interstate 580, east-west, and is often in the public eye for its escapes and institutional problems. The public identity of FCI Pleasanton is not separate from the Santa Rita Rehabilitation Center.

There has also been speculation that the state of California may construct correctional facilities on the Camp Parks land that might add to some already negative community attitudes toward FCI Pleasanton.⁴

At first sight, FCI Pleasanton seems to resemble a modern junior college complex. The redwood and glass architecture departs from the stone, fortress-like appearance of most female and male prisons. Inmate activities facilities consist of two housing units (one each female and male), segregation and detention unit, education and vocational training facilities, covered recreation area, multipurpose building, visiting room, hobby shop, indoor recreation area, outdoor recreation field, an outdoor covered recreation area, and service facilities such as administration building, medical facility, laundry and clothing, food service, receiving and discharge, warehouse, mechanical services, and a small armory located on the outside perimeter road at the north end of the institution. Each of the two housing units holds two functional units for a total of four functional units: one building (two functional units) for women and one building (two functional units) for men. Each functional unit at one time had two large multipurpose lounge areas. For better control and observation of inmates and spatial considerations, however, it was decided to remove the wall dividing each pair of lounge areas, essentially providing one large multipurpose lounge area for each functional unit. These changes in the physical structure of the housing units were directed and forwarded by the Warden and staff.

Most inmates opposed the structural changes in their housing unit as a loss in privacy and experienced defeat in top staff's insistence with the comment ". . . It's not negotiable." After the walls were removed, however, inmate attitudes moved to neutral to positive. "It's okay," to "It sure looks bigger," were frequently heard.

From 1974 through 1976, FCI Pleasanton was enclosed by two fences: a 12-foot cyclone fence and an electronic field fence. The latter, however, proved unsuccessful because it would sound alarm when the electronic field was broken by blowing brush or roaming rabbits and cats. In the winter of 1976-1977, then, the electronic fence was replaced with a second 12-foot cyclone fence separated by about 12 feet of grey stone from the first cyclone fence. The second cyclone fence evoked community concern that FCI Pleasanton was changing its mission from working with first-time youthful offenders to becoming a penitentiary for more hardened criminals. To counter this reaction, FCI Pleasanton offered the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce a tour of the facility to see firsthand that Pleasanton was not changing its focus with inmates but merely replacing the dysfunctional electronic fence with a more functional 12-foot cyclone fence. The facts are, however, that the inmate population at FCI Pleasanton was changing. A more heterogeneous population developed in terms of

security levels, discipline problems, age, offense background, and length of time to be served which impacted overtly and covertly on the security of the institution.

The grounds outside the 29 acres are tilled earth, grass, trees, and shrubbery. A one-mile, well-worn perimeter patrol road outlines the circumference of the institution.

From 10 miles south on Interstate 680, FCI Pleasanton at night glows bright orange in the sky. Thirty-three sodium vapor lights, each about 35 feet high, environ the 29 acres at 160-foot intervals.

There is no entrance sign that directs the first-time visitor. One seems to intuit from the huddle of cars and the walkways leading to the "glass house" the prison entrance. As its name suggests, "the glass house" has glass walls, save one-half of one wall. Inside sits the receptionist, usually female, who directs all phone calls and visitors. Two orange and black naugahyde benches, a stack of small lockers for visitors' use, and a second-hand American Airlines metal detector are about the only props in the 15 by 20 foot room. Entrance to the prison compound is through a series of two glass doors opened from the Control Room, 100 feet away, at either the receptionist's shout or by the Control Room officer's knowledge of the person seeking entrance.

The doors are referred to as "four" and "five," respectively, and the receptionist will shout toward one of the small speakers in the glass house, "Hit Four," and the door will click. After passing through Four, and only after it closes behind, one stands in a small 4 by 5 foot chamber waiting for Five to click. Passing through, you are now "on the compound."

The compound layout is shown below.

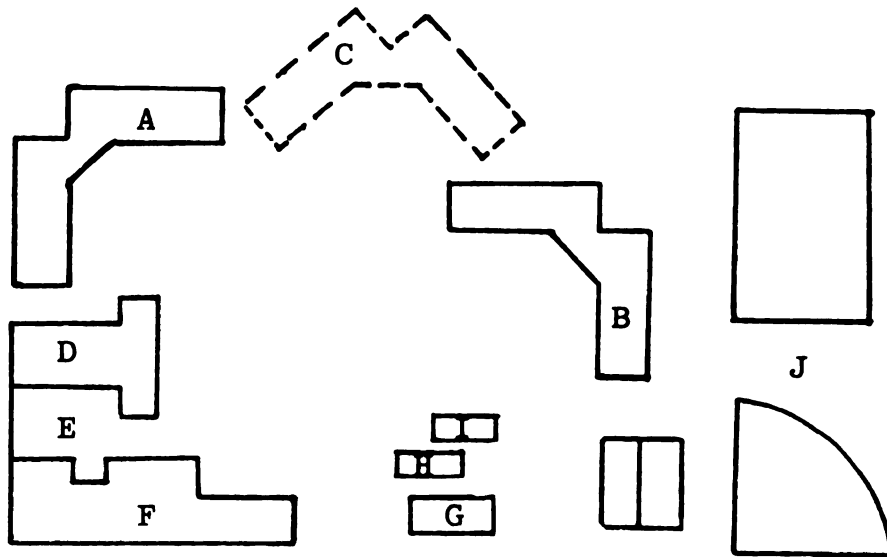


Diagram 1.--FCI Pleasanton physical layout.

A and B (female and male housing units, respectively): Each of the two housing units is separated into two wings with a central core which provides a sun deck and space for recreational and leisure time activities, offices, and special programs. Each wing is designed for 56 inmates with single rooms. The single room design of the housing units was to avoid an institutional

feeling and offer each inmate personal space and the privacy which comes from being able to enter one's own room through one's door, with one's key, closing it firmly behind. The view from the unbarred window in each room is not a wall, but a fence and rolling hills surrounding the institution. Each room has a single bed, a private wet area with commode, sink and mirror, desk and chair, and a five-foot high closet for clothes that hang. Rooms are color coordinated in orange, blue, green, and purple. Half the inmate rooms (28) are on the ground floor and half (28) are upstairs in each of the four wings. The upstairs rooms are bordered with a hallway overlooking the open-air downstairs lounge area and are, in general, preferred to the downstairs rooms where there is more noise and greater correctional officer supervision. Presently each wing has two television viewing rooms on the second floor at opposite ends of the hall. Which room inmates choose to watch TV is generally guided by their race/ethnicity. Black inmates dominate in one TV room and nonblacks dominate in the other. There are also four single shower stalls upstairs and four on the ground floor. One telephone booth with direct hook-up to telephone operators for collect calls only is on the second floor. In addition, there are also two offices on the second floor, one each for the correctional counselors and case manager.

The diagram below is an aerial demonstration of the second floor.

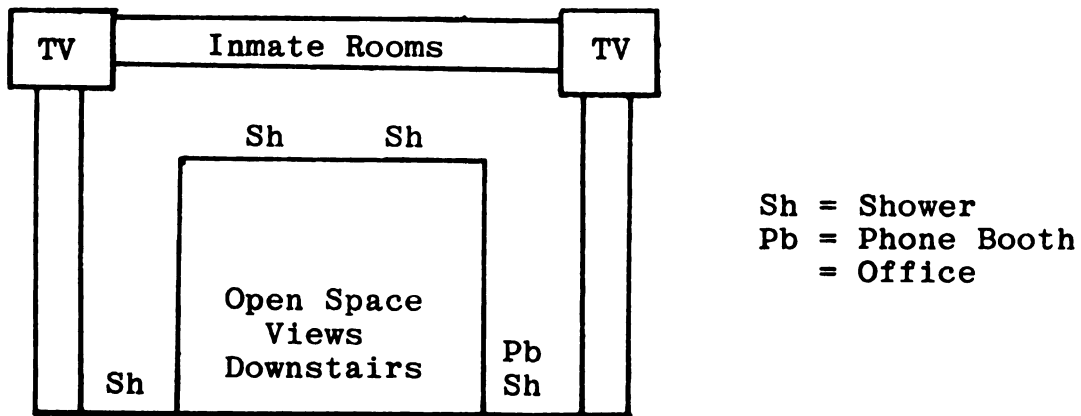


Diagram 2.--Aerial demonstration of the second floor housing unit.

Directly below the TV rooms on the ground floor are the unit manager's office and a combination inmate stereo room/leisure room/ironing area. Opposite the unit manager's office is the unit secretary's office. And, below the correctional counselor's upstairs office, there is also a ground-level correctional counselor's office. On the first floor there are also two washers and dryers for inmate personal use for items not wishing to be institutionally laundered. Each wing also has a storage room for bathroom, bedroom, and cleaning supplies and women's kotex appropriately.

Each open lounge area has two pool tables, suffleboard, ping pong, some exercise equipment, lounge chairs and sofa, card table, and reading materials.

Bulletin boards note unit and institution activities, orders from the Bureau, daily room inspection evaluation scores, monthly movie listing, education, vocation, and recreation notes, and whatever else inmates may decide legally or otherwise to post. The unit officer has her/his desk opposite the unit front door and is expected to control and supervise the flow and flurry of inmate activity inside the unit. Behind the correctional officer's desk is a small kitchen area with an automatic ice machine.

The two wings each of units I and III are joined together by an area of housing referred to as A and O (Admissions and Orientation). New inmates are housed here until they are cleared medically and classified according to Jeaness Interpersonal Maturity Level (I-Level). They are required to sign out and in when leaving or returning to the unit. A and O may take, on the average, two to three weeks to complete. Meanwhile, an A and O inmate will attend institution familiarization sessions visiting all institution departments, complete a series of psychological tests, meet with unit managers, correctional counselors, and psychologists, and work in her/his unit as a unit orderly doing housekeeping chores like vacuuming, washing floors and windows, waxing, dusting, cleaning shower stalls, picking up cigarette butts and papers outside the unit,

sweeping, etc. Inmates tire quickly of this routine and can be heard to complain of the monotony and perceived meaningless activity while waiting to be classified.

Above A and O is an outside sundeck. Inmates from both wings of Units I and III share their respective sundecks for chats, talk, sunshine, or general relaxation. They bring their blankets, radio, cigarettes, Tang jars, candy, books, and except for the missing sound of crashing waves, one may lose one's self somewhere on a beach. Water comes sometimes, but from a hose down below when an inmate will squirt friends on the deck above.

C: Proposed housing unit for another 117 inmates to be constructed by November 1977.

D: Food service, indoor recreation, commissary, hobby shop, laundry/clothing issue, warehouse, and mechanical services. Food services is a cafeteria-style dining area for inmates and staff with round, cafe-style tables and chairs. Observable groups by race/ethnicity, sex, working partners, and coedding inmates sit and eat together. Food is generally plentiful but seconds are sometimes limited. A food services employee or correctional officer generally supervises the line and reprimands inmates who seem to take more than what they can eat. Taking seconds when not allowed is cause for an incident report (shot), so inmates learn techniques for

the collection and storage of foodstuffs from food services. At times I fell prey to blocking an officer's view as hamburgers were wrapped in napkins and put in pockets, or pies, chips, steaks, and crab meat were carried back to the units. Indoor recreation is the outside corner room with the hobby shop on the west and commissary on the north. It houses a pool table and card tables. Staff say it is difficult to supervise and has become a coed hangout.

The commissary is between food services and indoor recreation. Inmates at Pleasanton are not permitted to carry or have in their possession any form of money. Any money that an inmate has upon arrival at Pleasanton and any money which he/she might receive, either as a gift from outsiders or which he/she may earn while at the institution, is credited to his/her Trust Fund Account which is maintained by the Commissary Office. Inmates are permitted to spend up to \$50 per month for a variety of articles including candy, cookies, ice cream, instant coffee, tea, fresh fruit, cigarettes and tobacco, slippers, magazines, greeting cards, radios, organic health foods, chips and snacks, canned soups, soaps and shampoos, toiletries, deodorants, oral hygiene items, ladies' hygiene items, lotions and powders, shaving accessories, combs and brushes, hair preparation and other miscellaneous items like writing

tablets, pens, playing cards, sunglasses, watches, shoes, laces, and polish. The commissary is open for inmates Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 4:30 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. Avon sales are directed through the recreation unit every other Tuesday.

Commissary sales are part of the inmate economic organization. A few inmates, because of their prison capital worth, can loan other inmates good and services (such as purchasing them something from the commissary) who are short of money "on the books" and hence unable to purchase items themselves. Repayment is not only the item initially borrowed or one like it that the borrower returns, but also an item of like worth to the lender's liking. In this way, lenders have ready supplies of commissary items available and their capital stock continues to grow. The free enterprise system of supply and demand adds to an inmate's status from peers and some staff. On the other hand, however, an inmate lender can accumulate too much wealth and be reprimanded by staff for an abundance of nuisance contraband. It also happens sometimes that an inmate-lender exerts too much pressure on other inmates and may eventually be "snitched-off." The institution frowns on inmates who pressure other inmates. "They're just too sophisticated for this immature population. They just don't fit it," not only tells what happens to inmates who pressure

other inmates, but underlying this comment is the assumption that inmates at Pleasanton are immature and it is the administration's duty to protect these inmates from more mature, experienced offenders. Bought, sold, loaned, and transferred were not only commissary items but also personal clothing, and contraband like drugs, including alcohol, and sex.

The hobby shop is located adjacent to the laundry/clothing issue. Inmates do mostly pottery and ceramics in the evening. The hobby shop is also a place to coed, exchange information and sometimes contraband, and plan for the future.

Laundry/Clothing: Inmates at Pleasanton may wear their own civilian clothing if they so desire. If not, the institution will issue clothing for each individual. Men receive surplus khaki issue and women are brought blue jeans and blouses and jerseys. Inmates are not permitted to accumulate excess clothing in their rooms and are required to adhere to all institutional policy statements regarding the number of items that may be in their possession at any given time. The actual number of some pieces of clothing, however, is problematic. For example, women inmates contend that during their menstrual cycle they require more than the seven pieces of underpants the institution allows without having to wash clothes daily. Still the policy stands unchanged.

Towels, washcloths, pillowcases, and sheets are furnished by the institution according to posted schedules. Inmates are responsible for all materials issued them by the institution and charged for any lost or destroyed items at the time of their release.

Warehouse holds the supplies and materials for FCI Pleasanton. It receives truck deliveries at the rear sally port (rear gate). The demand for more storage space is increasing with the inmate population increase.

Mechanical Shops houses offices and work space for inmates and staff working in this department. It includes operations like landscaping, construction, plumbing, heating, and air-conditioning. Next to food services, it employs a large number of inmate laborers, mostly males.

E: Covered Outside Recreation Area lies between mechanical shops and vocational training. This area is primarily used as a basketball court, tennis court, and weight-lifting area. The small room in the back that holds the weight-lifting equipment is rumored by inmates to be a place for sex. Not many inmates I talked with ever used this room for sex, only two for sure. Its reputation seemed to have exceeded its actual use.

F: Control Room, Administration, Education and Vocational Training. The control room operates 24 hours a

day. Encased by bullet-proof glass on three sides, entrance to it is through doors One and Two, with a small waiting chamber between them. Inside, the office opens and closes doors and gates with the push of a button. She/he monitors on TV screens traffic at the glass house and the rear sally port. She/he coordinates the intercom system, the emergency phone system, "the hot line," and most importantly, validates the accuracy of the official counts at 12 midnight, 2 a.m., 5 a.m., 4 p.m., and 9 p.m. These are labelled the official counts. From time to time, unofficial counts are taken and inmates are expected to adhere to the same regulations connected with the official counts. When count is called ("Count time!") inmates must go to their respective rooms. They must remain quiet. They are not to be loud, play radios or musical instruments. Shots are often written on inmates for interfering with count.

The Administration Building is crowded with staff, inmates, and visitors. Offices for the Warden, Associate Wardens, Operations and Programs, Warden's secretary, Warden's conference room, personnel offices, business offices, cashier, mailroom, computer terminal room, and visiting room seem to have outgrown the existing space. A present space study has recommended physical changes to accommodate the expansion of operations and services here.

Educational and Vocational Training offer a range of programs from remedial subjects through an Associate of Arts Degree from a local community college. A high school general education equivalency course is available and a certificate of completion may be obtained. Educational classes are taught during daytime and evening hours and are taught by instructors from FCI Pleasanton and those on contract through the community college. Some inmates are also enrolled in correspondence courses from nearby universities. In these cases, the inmate must assume costs for tuition. The Education Department also sponsors self-improvement programs like Weight Watchers, AA, Jaycees, Teen Challenge, 7 Steps, and yoga. The department also operates and maintains the inmate library and legal law library.

Inmates in Admission and Orientation are given a General Aptitude Test Battery and the Kuder Vocational Interest Survey and "I-Level" classification tests. The results are used by unit staff to discuss an inmate's strengths and weaknesses as they apply to learning various trades per the inmate's enrollment in vocational training.

Several vocational training programs are available to inmates: clerical-secretarial, auto mechanics, welding and small engine repair. One finds more female than male inmates in clerical-secretarial classes and

almost exclusively male inmates in auto mechanics, welding, and small engine repairs. When I asked why, I was told bluntly, "That's how it is on the outside. If we didn't prepare them for how it really is, we'd be doing them an injustice." The problem, however, as inmates perceive it is that more male inmates than female inmates leave Pleasanton with a job skill that is more marketable on the outside. So as not to err with false consciousness, it should also be noted that not all inmates perceive vocational training in terms of it being a marketable skill upon release. Some inmates become involved with it for a lack of something better to do and for others it's under psychological pressure, real or fantasy, from staff and hints that the parole board will view education and vocational training positively and hence, improve an inmate's chances for parole. More female inmates than male inmates, however, complain about a lack of opportunities for themselves. "Sure the guys got weights and most of the recreation and all the V.T. stuff. We got classes to be a secretary and everybody's pushin' us to be good mothers and wives. I'm not goin' back to that. I think I'm here cuz of that. When I get out it'll not be because of this place but in spite of it. Don't ask me what I'll do later though," was the kind of female complaints about Pleasanton very often voiced and supported with

"me too!" from other women. The implications in this area of sexual inequality are significant for cocorrections. Are women being afforded constitutional rights in institution work and job training? Is the sexism that appears to exist noted here and elsewhere (for instance, see Lambiotte, 1976) an unintended consequence of Pleasanton's programs, operations, staff, and inmate population? And, on a very personal level that contributes significantly to successful adjustment on parole, are women and men leaving FCI Pleasanton with an equal number of resources at their disposal? It appears male inmates are more advantaged. So, while Ruback (1975, p. 329) suggests sexually integrated prisons could withstand a challenge under the equal protection clause, closer inspection in the areas of prison work assignments and training for release suggests benefits are skewed more for men than for women.

G: The Multipurpose Building is used for movies, dances, inmate parties, religious services, and provides a practice area for musical groups. The chapel function is located on the stage and is separated from the large multipurpose space with a sound rates folding partition. The room spaces on the east and behind the chapel are occupied by the Chaplain, Research, and Mental Health.

H: Hospital. The hospital at FCI Pleasanton is staffed by a hospital administrator, three physician assistants,

and one full-time dentist. As in other departments of the prison, inmates are a substantial part of the hospital staff, performing clerical duties, scheduling appointments, and running routine laboratory work. A consulting psychiatrist, optometrist, gynecologist, and dermatologist provide inmates services on a weekly to bi-weekly basis. FCI Pleasanton also employs two full-time staff mental health psychologists and has a working relationship with contract community medical facilities.

The clinic includes an X-ray room, pharmacy, laboratory, physical therapy, ward, dental facilities, and examination room. At present, some hospital space is occupied by nonhospital staff such as the training officer, safety officer, and correctional supervisors (lieutenants).

To use the hospital resources an inmate must request her/his staff supervisor to phone the hospital for an appointment. This is done to control the flow of inmates in and out of the hospital as well as to deter some inmates from faking an illness and wasting hospital time.

I: Detention and Segregation, Receiving and Discharge, Chief Correctional Services and Case Management Coordination. This unit is comprised of nine single rooms, each with its own commode and sink. Three more such

segregation rooms are available in the hospital adjacent to this facility. An angular wood slatted wall has been constructed along one side of this unit that has the most detention and segregation rooms to eliminate the problems of passing contraband and observations and conversations between detention and segregation inmates with the general population, and to provide additional security and comfort to detention and segregation inmates. Observation also suggests that prior to the construction of the outside wall and of the architectural modifications like securing beds, and removing objects that could be used in suicide attempts inmates did not perceive "the hole" as such a bad place to be. "The hole here is better than my cell at Englewood or TI," inmates would tell me. Similarly, staff told me that the hole "just isn't a deterrent to writing shots. It doesn't scare 'em." The hole was not a dehumanizing deterrent factor that the old shibboleths in corrections deemed it to be until structural changes were made in line with tradition that affected staff and inmates' attitudes toward the hole. The unit houses both female and male inmates for segregation and detention purposes. It has two shower stalls and an outside circle for exercise of its inmates.

New inmate admissions and discharges enter and leave FCI Pleasanton through this unit also. In an

inside office, U.S. Marshals hand over transfer papers and federal inmates to the R and D officer. On the day of their parole, inmates strip search and sign out here upon their release. Their personal goods and money from their account are handed them once they are in the glass house.

Once an incoming inmate's goods are inventoried, a medical clearance given, and a photograph and fingerprints taken, the R and D officer escorts the inmate to either the female or male A and O unit, where the unit officer assigns the inmate a room, bedding and towels, relates what to expect in the next few weeks, and answers inmates' questions about visiting, packages, coedding, and telephones. Introduction to the inmate social system designed to cope with coed prison life is the great socializer. The process and inmate's reactions to it are discussed in the next four chapters.

In addition, the Case Management Coordinator, Chief Correctional Services, Records Administrator, and three clerk/secretaries, along with two inmate employees, occupy space in the front of this building.

J: Recreation Field. Outdoor recreation includes a football field, baseball diamond, handball areas, tennis courts, an earth-trodden track path, and an unused miniature golf area. The recreation field is located along the east and northeast perimeter of the compound just

behind the male housing unit. The frequency with which the recreation yard is opened varies with the number of staff employed. Several times during this fieldwork the administration was short-handed and could not supervise the recreation yard on a regular basis. Inmates were bitter. When the recreation area was opened regularly on schedule, however, inmate reaction was courteous and favorable and one area of prison life--recreation--was made more tolerable.

K: Communal Area. For lack of a better name, I refer to the open space in the center of the building complex as the communal area. Here inmates walk the paths, lounge on the grass, sit on the benches, and stroll up to their own or another's housing unit. A thin yellow line has been painted in front of each living unit that serves as the boundary past which inmates not living in that housing unit cannot go, especially for inmates of the other sex. Experience with women and men congregating in the foyers of the housing units was considered a control and security problem. The new boundaries have eliminated that problem. At the time the boundaries were being considered, inmates were angry over the incurred loss of their freedom and the administration's insistent remark, ". . . it is not negotiable." It has since been forgotten and staff are happy that a control

problem has been eliminated. Other areas that are out of bounds include:

. . . the recreation field is out of bounds after dark and when no staff supervision is provided. Other peripheral areas are identified as out of bounds to inmates except when they are on official work details. The area West of Mechanical Services Building is out of bounds after normal working hours. Areas out of bounds after dark are the areas East and South of the Segregation Building. During daylight hours, the area directly South of the Segregation Building is also out of bounds to inmates. The areas noted in front of each living unit are out of bounds to male and female inmates as noted (FCI Pleasanton Policy Statement Number 20001.5, Subject: inmate boundaries).

FCI Pleasanton was initially built at a cost of \$5.5 million. The third housing unit, located between Units I and III, will cost slightly over \$2 million. Escalation in construction costs, engineering fill, better materials, and tougher specifications make the construction costs higher today than four years ago when Pleasanton was built. "Still," the Business Manager explained to me, "construction costs are cheaper here at Pleasanton than, say, at Morgantown, because there you have to pay for winterizing."

Staff and Inmates: Who Are They?

Staff

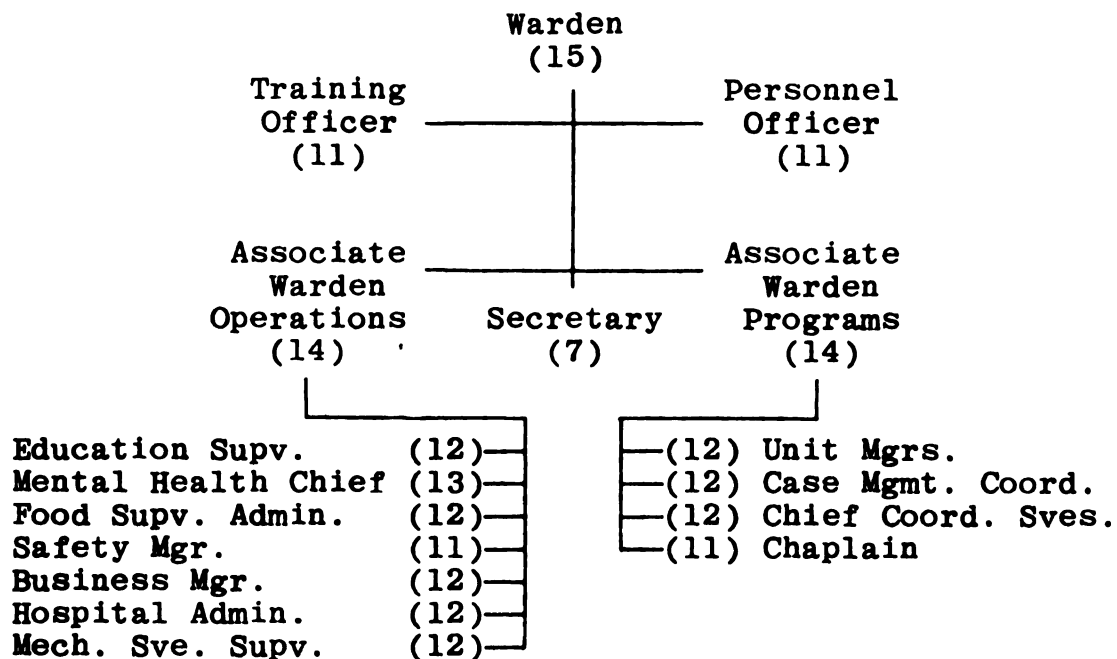
The staff at FCI Pleasanton is comprised of about 143 individuals. By sex, 44 of the 143 employees are female and 99 are male. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 56 staff, and observations were made

with practically all. The various departments at Pleasanton total 13. Their composition is shown in Table 1.

Table 1.--Department staff by sex.

Department	Staff Complement	Females	Males
Warden's Office	5	2	3
Personnel	2	2	0
Training	1	0	1
Business	9	2	7
Education	11	4	7
Religion	1	0	1
Hospital	5	2	3
Mental Health	5	4	1
Case Management	6	3	3
Functional Units	24	8	16
Food Service	9	1	8
Technical Service	8	0	8
Correctional Service	57	16	24
Total	143	44	99

The Warden is the Executive Administrator at Pleasanton. He maintains total administrative control over inmates and staff. A simple chart of power and authority levels at FCI Pleasanton is shown in Diagram 3.



(Numbers in parentheses are the Civil Service G.S. ratings for those positions.)

Diagram 3.--FCI Pleasanton organizational chart.

Salaries vary with a 10-step increment in each G.S. level. The range of pay for the positions shown in Diagram 3, plus G.S. 5 and G.S. 6, clerks and corrections officers, respectively, are shown in Table 2.

Correctional Services

From the standpoint of most inmates and staff, Correctional Services has the most important continuous contact with inmates. Similar observations are made by Giallombardo (1965, p. 29) in a federal all-women's prison and by Cavior (March 1976, p. 4) at the Pleasanton FCI. Because of its importance, then, it will be discussed here.

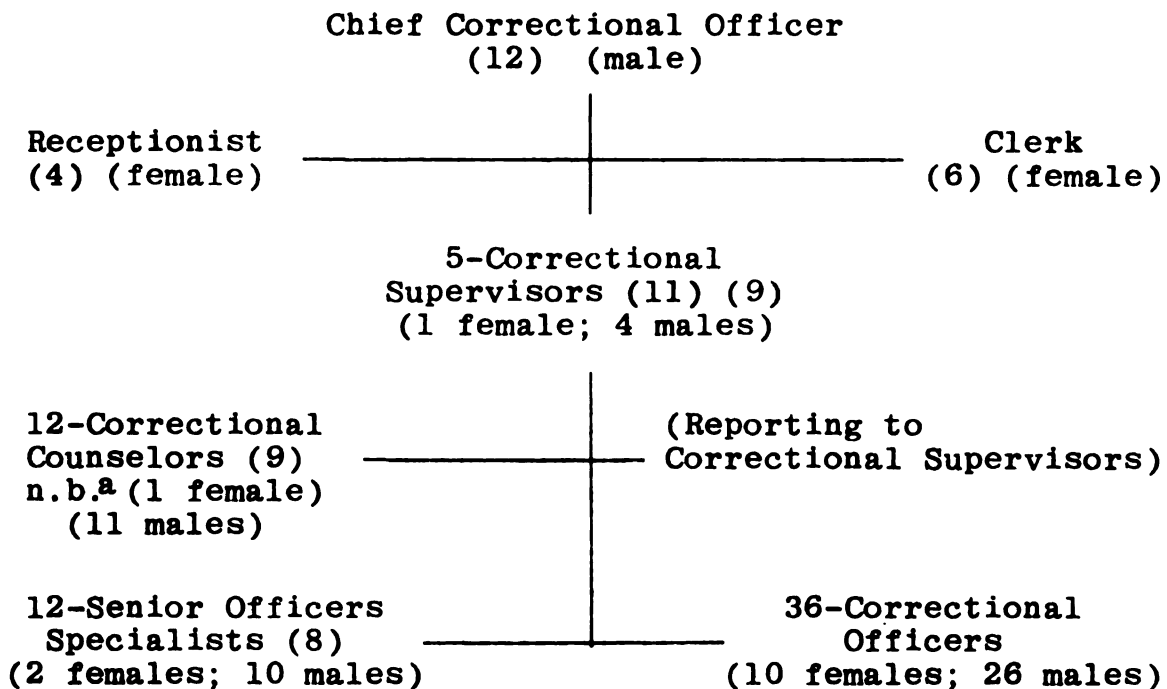
Table 2.--Salary range by G.S. rating.

G.S. Rating	Salary Range
5	\$ 9,303-12,093
6	10,370-13,484
7	11,523-14,979
8	12,763-16,588
9	14,097-18,327
10	15,524-20,177
11	17,056-22,177
12	20,442-26,571
13	24,308-31,598
14	28,725-37,347
15	33,789-43,923 ^a

^aExecutive salary is limited to \$39,600 by section 5308 of Title 5 of the U.S. Code to the rate for level V of the Executive Schedule.

Correctional Services at Pleasanton employs about 57 persons, of whom 16 are female and 41 male. The department carries the dual responsibility of custody and treatment of the entire inmate population. It employs the largest number of employees at FCI Pleasanton. The lines of power and authority are depicted in Diagram 4.

Federal laws governing access to employee files limited this researcher's ability to collect demographic data without the written permission of each staff member. Discussing this research limitation one day with one



^aCorrectional counselors have dual supervision from correctional supervisors and unit managers. Oftentimes, the treatment goals and the primacy of custody conflict and correctional counselors are asked to both secure and treat. More will be discussed later in this chapter.

Diagram 4.--Correctional services organizational chart including G.S. rating and distribution of employees by sex.

department head, he told me frankly that he would not let anyone in his file unless he knew what they wanted, ". . . and by the time they tell me what they want I will have told them what they wanted to know so then there'll be no need for them to use the files." I extracted from his conversation not only his perceptions of his privacy but also a glimmer of the interview process that I would four months later put into practice.

Correctional officers begin employment at a starting salary of \$10,370. At the end of one probationary year, she/he is promoted to the level of G.S. at a salary of \$11,523. Within each grade level step increases are earned as long as the employee maintains an acceptable level of performance. The general complaints of beginning correctional officers are salary, staff morale, and the nature of the work. The saliency of any or all of these seems to vary with marital status, age, and education. Officers with more education seem to verbalize considerably more about the nature of the correctional work than do officers with less education.

Some of their reactions are:

"I went to school for this?"

"I'm in to working with people, not being a guard."

"I think it's good to get the experience but you burn out fast doing nothing for a minimum of 3 years. We should be able to use our skills sooner."

One of the major staff splits at Pleasanton is a philosophical argument about the custody and the care and corrections of inmates. Sometimes, in conversation, it will get referred to as the "new and old philosophy." It basically points to differing assumptions about the nature of criminals and hence, to different methods of controlling and rechanneling their deviance while in prison. The controversy is well documented in Cressey's

"Limitation on the Organization of Treatment" (1960, Chapter 4). Suffice to note, however, that the controversy deals with the conflicting implications on contemporary attitudes about punishment and treatment in our society for prison organization. The call for a dramatic break with the past in prison architecture, its programs and operations, and in its staff-inmate interactions is documented in literature about FCI Pleasanton and in the correctional officer's position description serving the Bureau cited earlier. "The Challenge," the corrections officer's position description reads, is to:

- *enforce the rules and regulations. . . .
- *supervise the various work assignments. . . .
- *counseling inmates on personal and family goals and problems, and
- *participating as a member of the corrections team of Case Workers, Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Teachers and others working to help institutional inmates.

Before long, correctional officers feel reprimanded by supervisors and sometimes by other department heads for doing "too much counseling and not enough supervising. Remember we have correctional counselors for each inmate." The officer feels pushed back to traditional, unchanging, and impersonal views of corrections. In a system where custody, control, and security are, and have been, primary goals that are more operationally defined and measured and more related to

showing success than goals like care and corrections, there is a sense of validity in Cressey's position that

. . . [guards] do not use inmates productively any more than they themselves are used productively by prison managers. Guards manage and are managed in organizations where management is an end, not a means (1960, p. 79).

Correctional officers soon learn that not only are they supposed to limit their counseling functions, but that they are not a continuous member of the corrections team to help the individual inmate. Seldom is the correctional officer a regular working member of an inmate's team, say as are psychologists, teachers, and counselors. Ironical is the fact that even the Bureau notes in the Correctional Officer's position description that "The largest group of line staff who also have the most direct day-to-day contact with inmates are the Correctional Officers." As Cressey opines, officers are no more used productively by prison managers than they use inmates productively. One male officer expressed this quite succinctly:

I've been told by the Lieutenant not to get involved. You shouldn't be jokin' and laughin'. After eight years in the service I expected this place to contain professionalism. You get here and get your staff who don't give a fuck, counselors who sit around and drink coffee and managers who run around putting toilet paper in bathrooms. Shit! I expected Pleasanton to have top notch people. I expected community involvement. We got nothing. Community doesn't know we're here.

. . . I think this place is unique in that we don't do anything with inmates. Kids get 180 hours

in food service and get VT welding or small engines. Nobody's involved. Nothing here is unique. People from other institutions have the same things there and more.

As the unit officer I'm the go-fer. Call food service, get sugar for some staff's coffee, pass this out, answer the phone, wake inmates up, nurse 'em. For what I feel I can do here, I'm doin' a damned good job. I like the inmates. They like me. They know I respect them. I don't consider them mother fuckers, homosexuals, perverts or queers who are sent up for life. I don't enjoy the over-all programs and policies set up, however.

Not all staff, however, believe that line correctional work is boring or low status. The problem they see is the correctional officer's overzealous need for immediate gratification. One department head, for example, who influences many new correctional officers, felt that age, value orientation, and education were critical variables in becoming a successful correctional officer. His comments about the young, educated officer are common to other interviews with older, less educated staff:

Part of the problem with today's correctional officers is that they're young people, your age group, mid-20's, fresh out of the military or college with 3 to 4 years experience, and some limited work experience. People in this age bracket, in this generation, have different concepts of values. Their values are different than mine. They want it today. They feel their potential is now. They don't want to develop it. A lot has been given to them. They all had cars and hi-fis. In my day, if you had shoes and a bike you were lucky. Everything is immediate. When you [correctional officers] come here, you're on probation for one year and if you put your heart and soul in becoming a good CO then we'll show you a good career ladder. But they see the cart before the horse. They see career opportunities and want it now. They feel someone owes them something. . . .

. . . The other thing wrong is with education. They come in sayin' "We want to be counselors." But you can't start at that level. We want you to be a correctional officer and work from the bottom up on a day-to-day routine, supervise, washing windows, scrubbing down showers. After a few months they'll tell you, "Hell, I didn't go to college to do this!" They become dissatisfied because they don't make case worker overnight. Why? "Because you don't have what I want, soon enough," they say. It falls back on their values of wanting it all now. They don't know what it's like to start at the bottom and work up. Work! It's a now society-- everything is now. We're not going to make them counselors. The ones satisfied here have no education. They married early and know the value of a dollar. They got out and had to work for it. These are the ones who are more mature and have made a more mature commitment to life. In the long run they'll come out on top. I know this is not the whole picture but it's a big hunk of the pie.

Today you hire 12 and within 6 months to 1 year you're lucky you have 2 left! I needed a job when I started with the bureau [12½ years ago]. I had a family. I was scared they'd fire me. I wasn't going to let them do it. I worked hard. Today you say to someone, "You're fired," and they say, "I quit." It's values, that's what it is. So we'll keep on hiring and they'll keep on quitting. I've seen some come here just to see California and they're here like it's a vacation. Once they see California they quit. They want it all now.

The same department head suggested that criteria for a good correctional officer is not college, but a high school diploma and some experience with people. "We're not lookin' for someone who works in a flower shop making bouquets for 6 years." He continued,

A person who comes here knows basically what they're getting into with pay and job expectations. If they don't they're wearing blinders. When you come through that door [pointing to the glass house] and it slams behind you, well what do you think this is? This is the DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, BUREAU

OF PRISONS. They're just fooling themselves. I just look at them and laugh. It'll be one disillusionment after another for them.

A second concern correctional officers discuss is salary. The cost of living in and around Pleasanton is relatively high. The Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce reports the average Pleasanton income as \$20,000. Livermore, another popular nearby town, reports a median income of \$14,000 for its residents. Whether one rents or buys, housing costs are prohibitive. About half of the probationary (less than one year) correctional officers are married. They tell me either they spend all they have to live close by waiting for the year's end and a salary increase; move farther away where rent is cheaper and end up getting frustrated with the commuting; encourage their spouses to work, which adds additional hardship where small children are present; or they start to look for work elsewhere. Most department heads will admit that a correctional officer's beginning salary is low per the surrounding cost of living, especially if a family is being supported. The ultimate reaction, however, is "there's nothing I can do. The government sets the salary schedule." Hence, correctional officers perceive defeat in face of an undefinable system removed from the realities of what it's really like.

What struggling correctional officers lack in salary and job satisfaction they try to make up in a group esprit de corps. When new correctional officers arrive at Pleasanton they experience a sense of estrangement from senior correctional officers. One put it this way: "They make you feel like they're too good for you. They'll test you first to see your real colors." At the same time, inmates are testing new correctional officers and department heads, especially unit managers, ask new correctional officers not to be too harsh with inmates. "Get to know who they are before you react," one unit manager advised a new correctional officer in the unit. So new correctional officers feel a bind of being alone. They learn to cope with these feelings by a sense of group affection for each other's situation. For instance, newer officers are often found at lunch or dinner together in either the staff lounge, visiting room, or food services. They also tend to talk more frequently and longer with each other than they do with more experienced staff. They share not only complaints about salary but their experiences in "being taken and learning the ropes." And quite frequently newer correctional officers will seek each other out for a beer after work, dinner together, or some other social occasion. I was asked to join their activities on several occasions.

Inmates

During the period of this research the inmate population at FCI Pleasanton varied between 230 and 250 inmates. Distribution by sex is about equal. The kinds of inmates that Pleasanton was designed to incarcerate were offenders whose records generally do not include assaultive behavior and who do not represent significant escape risks. The anticipated age range is 18 to 26 years at the time of commitment. The position description for Warden at FCI Pleasanton says about the inmate population: "Because of their volatile nature combined with youthful energy and immature judgment, this age group presents a most challenging opportunity for constructive treatment and rehabilitation." The inmates are also seen as unable to make it in other BOP facilities because of their age and lack of criminal sophistication. When asked about the mission of Pleasanton, the Warden replied that "It's a place safe for inmates who couldn't survive in other institutions. It's for inmates who aren't so far down the road in crime. It's the 'nip in the bud' theory--to prevent their graduation into lives of crime."

Reference to inmates also reflects an attitude of incarcerating a youthful, less criminally sophisticated population. "Kids" is the most popularly used reference to inmates, in spite of the fact that

biological age is about 22½. The inmates themselves do not share staff's perceptions of inmates as "kids."

"It really bothers me to hear staff call us kids. Then they turn around and treat you otherwise. It's petty. It's really petty. One minute they say 'kids' and the next they're demanding adult things like parole, detention and obedience." Campbell mentioned a similar status problem regarding the age of youth at FCI Morgantown:

"The fact is that 18, 19, and 20 year olds are men and women, most especially where their sexuality is concerned (Campbell, n.d.). The origins of this age discrimination may not only lie in the Bureau's expectation of the ideal inmate profile but also in what was once the name of FCI Pleasanton as the Federal Youth Center. What began in July 1974 as the Federal Youth Center (FYC) at Pleasanton was changed by the U.S. Attorney General's Office in 1976 to a Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) to standardize the terminology of federal correctional facilities by reducing the number of categorical descriptions of the over 40 federal facilities. Still the institution receives over 70% of its inmates on the Federal Juvenile Delinquency Act and the Youth Corrections Act, labels which predispose the staff to perceive and treat inmates like "kids."

Inmate Offenses

Table 3 was constructed as a comparative summary chart reporting percentages of broad crime categories by sex for the years 1974, 1975, and 1976 on inmates incarcerated at FCI Pleasanton.

The following observations can be made from the data contained in Table 3. First, more female than male inmates were incarcerated for drug-related offenses during the years 1974, 1975, and 1976. The direction and strength of this finding appears relatively consistent. Second, just about as many women and men were incarcerated for property crimes not involving force during the years 1974, 1975, and 1976. Third, approximately 100% more men than women were incarcerated for offenses involving force against persons during the years 1974, 1975, and 1976. Fourth, no pattern can be established between women and men for crimes against persons.

Inmate Demography

Several demographic variables describing some characteristics of inmates at Pleasanton by sex for 1974, 1975, and 1976 are presented in Table 4. Rather than select aggregate data and report on demographic averages for the entire year, I have chosen to report snapshot profile demographic characteristics of the

Table 3.--Crime categories by sex for 1974, 1975, and 1976.

Crime Category	1976 (N=161)		1975 (N=199)		1974 (N=228)	
	Women (N=49)	Men (N=112)	Women (N=59)	Men (N=140)	Women (N=102)	Men (N=126)
Drug-related offenses for distribution, possession, and importation of narcotic and non-narcotic drugs.	51%	32%	44%	39%	52%	41%
Property crimes not involving force against people, including forgery, uttering, counterfeiting, mail theft, fraud, car theft, interstate theft, burglary, and larceny.	32%	21%	16%	23%	18%	17%
Offenses involving force against persons, such as bank robbery and armed robbery.	13%	26%	12%	21%	10%	20%
Crimes against persons, including murder, manslaughter, kidnapping, and assault.	4%	5%	7%	1%	2%	1%
Others including firearms, explosives, illegal transport of aliens.	9%	16%	21%	16%	18%	21%

Table 4.--Selected inmate demographic variables by sex for 1974, 1975, and 1976.

Demographic Variable	1976		1975		1974	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
Number	164	155	59	140	49	112
Average Age	23.3	21.5	21.8	21.4	21.3	21.7
Commitment Source:						
Court	76%	59%	63%	61%	33%	38%
Transfer	24%	41%	37%	39%	67%	62%
Ethnicity:						
White	52%	57%	62%	61%	61%	57%
Black	23%	24%	16%	20%	24%	25%
Oriental	1%	2%	1%	2%	..	2%
American Indian	2%	8%	4%	3%	4%	4%
Hispanic	21%	9%	18%	14%	11%	13%

inmate population on December 31, 1974, and December 31, 1975, the last day of the fourth reporting quarter. For 1976, however, this piece of data was not available. Instead, population demographic data on all admissions for the fourth quarter of 1976 were chosen representing October 1, 1976, through December 31, 1976. Any differences between the 1976 end-of-year snapshot profile characteristics and all 1976 fourth quarter admissions would seem to lack direction and strength.

The table shows that the average age for female inmates at Pleasanton is almost two years older than male inmates. The data do not show it here; however, there was a small group of women inmates in their late twenties to early thirties that skews the mean data reported here. Commitment source from court is higher for women than men. That more men than women come to Pleasanton from other institutions, particularly same-sex prisons, impacts of the values they have assimilated in other institutions that they bring to Pleasanton, and the socialization of court commitments to these values, including issues of inmate social systems, inmate codes, and homosexuality. That FCI Pleasanton began in 1974 with over two-thirds of its inmate population from other Bureau facility transfers, mostly same-sex prison transfers, suggests that the origin and nature of Pleasanton's coed inmate social system was a

forced fit between the differences that earmark women and men prisons and prisoners discussed earlier. The fact that the current coed inmate social system evolved from these roots adds more insight into the nature of the present sexually integrated inmate social system. Several of the original inmates were still at Pleasanton during the course of this study and provided the author with historical data and impressions of the evolutionary cocorrectional inmate social system. The nature of that system as part of the prison social environment at Pleasanton will now be discussed.

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CHAPTER IV

PATTERNS OF SEXUAL ADAPTATION IN A SEXUALLY INTEGRATED PRISON

One of the most painful conditions of confinement which female and male prisoners in one-sex institutions must bear is the deprivation of heterosexual contact. As one of the "pains of imprisonment," as Sykes (1958) has referred to them, the deprivation of heterosexual contact has been the unit of both policy and research analysis. Correctional administrators have had to deal with the problems created by the abnormality of these environments in operating their institutions. They have had to develop and implement policy to counter the homosexual response inmates make in order to deal with the deprivation of heterosexual contact.

As the unit of research analysis, authors have described and explained the inmate social system that has developed in response to the deprivations to which the population of inmates must respond or adapt itself. As noted earlier, female and male prisoners react differently to these deprivations. It was reported, for example, that while female inmates tend to establish

extended familial homosexual networks, male inmates develop more nuclear homosexual alliances. The use of force and violence in these situations between female and male prisoners has also varied. There is more predatory and violent homosexuality among male than female prisoners. One explanation revolves around stereotyped assumptions about female and male roles. Males in this society are taught and encouraged to play it tough, don't give in, don't weaken, take it like a man, display their macho. These same norms are recorded in male prisons. The use of force in a prison homosexual affair among men may be one of the male responses in maintaining their machoism and their male identity. The fact that another male is involved is excused by the absence of the other sex.

It was also noted in research on women in prison by Giallombardo (1966) that staff seem more tolerant of homosexuality among women. A mix of factors like cultural expectations of female and male roles, a greater acceptance of public expression of affection among women, differences in the nature of female and male inmate homosexual patterns of adaptation, and the less harsh and more commodious design of the female prison add to this greater degree of tolerance. At Pleasanton one may wonder what degree of tolerance female and male staff give female and male homosexuality. As a result

of my interviews and observations with staff, the majority are still more critical of male homosexuality than female homosexuality. And by sex it appears that many more male staff than female staff criticize male homosexuality while both female and male staff "excuse" or "understand" female homosexuality. The issue of the degrees of tolerance of homosexuality in a sexually integrated prison by a sexually integrated staff has policy implications that reach beyond the scope of this dissertation. I raise it here only to suggest its importance for further investigation.

The question posed for cocorrections, then, is to describe the patterns of sexual interaction among female and male inmates and to note the similarities and differences with single-sex prisons in this regard. It is important to note that at the time of this study, two years after FCI Pleasanton opened, statistical data were not yet available with which to make observation or interview comparisons. In discussing issues related to sex and violence at Pleasanton, I attempt some ballpark estimates which offer some feel for the frequency of those behaviors. It will be interesting once those statistical data are available to compare research findings. It is in this kind of situation, one where statistical data are not available or cannot be readily obtained, that participant observation offers the kind

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of understanding needed by viewing the phenomenon from the participants' perspectives.

Assumptions and Policies About the Sexual
Interaction in a Sexually
Integrated Prison

Before policies are developed and sanctions are enforced, groups develop, intentionally or not, underlying propositions that influence program development and implementation. This proposition itself is neither trite nor esoteric. We can see, for instance, that five years before FCI Pleasanton's policy statement on physical contact between the sexes was written, the BOP envisioned the manageable existence of a coed correctional institution. Recounting the corrections history, Warden Campbell from the FCI Ft. Worth facility reports:

We made certain assumptions about the type of behavior we would be prepared to deal with, but I can think of only a few of these assumptions that haven't proven to be wrong. The assumption that a viable institutional program could be developed for such a varied mix of offender types, including men and women, was one which has proven to be right (Campbell, n.d.).

Some of the assumptions articulated during interviews with FCI Pleasanton staff that influence sexual contact policy and sanctions at Pleasanton include the belief that men need women and women need men, quite aside from their sexual needs and desires. As Warden Garrison explained it to me:

One of our major concerns is to teach inmates that other relationships besides physical and sexual ones do exist. . . . It's their learning to have a number of relationships. To enlarge their limits and meet people of different racial, ethnic, sex and socio-economic status. There's more of that interaction here. It happens here more than it does in one-sex institutions. There there's strength in numbers. Racially, sexually, and SES, there's more interaction here. In a one-sex institution that doesn't happen.

As Warden Garrison is pointing out, most of the one-sex institutions in our correctional system are large institutions. Overpopulation in the Bureau of Prisons has reached critical proportions in several institutions and it is a serious problem throughout the system.⁵ It has made the work of the Bureau more difficult in providing a safe and humane environment for its inmates. In these settings there is strength in numbers. Warden Garrison is arguing that where a maximum number of people congregate, it becomes easier to share characteristics on a variety of personal, social, and cultural dimensions. At Pleasanton, however, where we find a minimum number of people of any group, it becomes more difficult to find all these characteristics within one group so it becomes necessary to go outside traditional group boundaries and develop relationships with several groups. Examples at Pleasanton are numerous.

Take the Family, for instance, a group of Mexican women. I asked one of its members, Veronica, about its membership and she told me that it's not just for Mexicans

because there weren't enough at Pleasanton. "Anybody who likes what we like can join us," she told me. The Family consisted of about 12 Mexican women, 4 white women, and 1 black woman. The group shared clothing and room keys, watched TV together, ate together, disclosed their personal lives to each other, and relied on each other for emotional support.

Dating, too, crosses traditional boundaries in a small population.

Do your friends here ever get down on you for dating a black woman? (asked to a white male)

No, not really. I don't know what'd happen outside but here you make do. Know what I mean? If you put yourself on front street someone always says something. But you learn to live with it. We all do.

The incidence of mixed racial dating among Hispanic, Oriental, and American Indians was more because of their fewer ethnic numbers. Among blacks and whites, however, because they were one-fourth and one-half of the population, respectively, dating was mostly intra-racial. However, as can be sensed in the above quote, inter-racial dating between whites and blacks when it occurred was accepted.

Group activities in motion is another way to observe what Warden Garrison is suggesting about the benefits of a relatively small, heterogeneous inmate population like Pleasanton's. At unit parties and dances

a mix of ethnic, education, and poor to rich inmates work on decorations, printing invitations, setting up stereos, serving cokes, setting up tables, dancing, kissing, and hugging. So many admitted to me how amazed they were that they got involved with a coke and cookie party. "I'm so used to gettin' buzzed this is a trip," is typical of how inmates perceived themselves learning to have a number of relationships and experiences that they did not have before coming to Pleasanton.

Another obvious display of what happens in a relatively small and heterogeneous inmate population can be seen daily in Food Services, where inmates mix perceptions of their ethnicity, sex, education, and wealth with a large batch of others with whom they share bits and pieces of their lives. And for the staff this means less of the racial and cultural grouping with its accompanying defensive and aggressive tensions and pressure groups.

Once the belief in the assumption of other sex interaction is rooted, other assumptions follow. From my interviews with department heads, two additional assumptions emerged which reinforce the coed concept and relate to policy development and implementation. These assumptions parallel those expressed by Campbell. First, an inability to have a heterosexual relationship may be one of the contributing factors to behavior which

leads to confinement; and second, deprivation of this kind of relationship may be one of the more destructive things about confinement.

Part of my interviews with two department heads was done together at their request over lunch and they concurred that:

Pleasanton tries to socialize its inmates into a lot of things besides sex. If we can get them to get along with each other we're doing good. I know from working at Englewood that the younger men there didn't know how to react with women. You could tell that by listening to them. They couldn't get along with their teachers, or any woman in authority. That's half the population they couldn't deal with! That's significant to why they were there. But really what can you do about it when you don't have women around to teach them how to get along. Here we can guide them along and do what their early socialization didn't do.

Over seven months of fieldwork I found that the nature and extent of homosexuality at Pleasanton is significantly less and nonpredatory than what I had read in research on one-sex prisons. This finding was also confirmed by cocrrectional Wardens and other Bureau administrators at the Corrections Conference held at FCI Terminal Island. They agreed that in cocrrections

(1) homosexuality, particularly violent homosexuality, among males seems to be virtually nonexistent; and (2) that homosexuality among females (thought to be mostly consensual even in all-female institutions) is significantly reduced (Cocorrections Conference Summary, 1977, p. 3).

The preponderance of inmate sexual activity at Pleasanton is heterosexually oriented. Within the limits of this

research some basic information about the nature and frequency of homosexual, heterosexual, and bisexual adaptations found at FCI Pleasanton are discussed along with social and psychological factors which influence the assumptions of particular homosexual, heterosexual, and bisexual roles, and the process and dynamics on the phenomenological level of the behavior and actions of the participants.

Commitment Source as a Critical Variable

The source of an inmate's commitment to FCI Pleasanton either from the federal courts or transfer from other federal same-sex correctional facilities is a factor that not only influences the inmate social system at Pleasanton including issues of sex and violence, but also staff's perceptions of inmates and the kinds of programs and prison controls they design. One unit manager described these differences from an organizational control perspective, noting that transfer inmates, having already tasted "what a real prison was like," better appreciate a place like Pleasanton.

Inmates who transfer in are easier to work with because they know what a Terminal Island or Lompoc is like. The stabbings, assaults and rapes here [at Pleasanton] don't happen to the same degree. They really appreciate a place like Pleasanton. Inmates who are committed here from court think this place is jelly. They think it's easy. They really don't appreciate it. I don't think it's really hit them that this is the BUREAU OF PRISONS.

When this place first opened it was with all transfers. My job was easier then. After six months I saw a difference with the pool tables and equipment. Transfer inmates took care of them. Inmates from the streets didn't appreciate them. . . . My biggest headache is working with court commitments.⁶

At the time of this study, 24% of the woman and 41% of the male inmates were transferred to FCI Pleasanton from other federal nonsexually integrated prisons. Almost 70% of the staff interviewed told me that the source of an inmate's commitment to Pleasanton is a critical factor in projecting the initial success of the inmate's adjustment. As in the interview with the Unit Manager above, staff report that transfer inmates are more likely to do better at Pleasanton upon arrival than court-committed inmates. The majority of all staff expressed value in an inmate's exposure to a traditional one-sex prison. "If they get a feel that this is what prison is like, then what's to deter them from coming back?" one staff person asked me. In his question is an underlying belief in the notion that incarceration should be a painful experience to deter criminal behavior. To some extent this attitude can be seen elsewhere in the institution. The hole, discussed earlier, was not perceived by inmates as a negative experience until structural modifications occurred which made the hole more like what a prison hole should look like: bare, secure, minimal, and austere. Part of what the

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staff believe about correctional reform at Pleasanton is rooted in the pleasure-pain principle. Until the threat of pain and prison deprivations overcomes the pleasure derived from criminal activity, inmates will continue to return to prison.

Transfer inmates were predominant among a small number of bisexual and homosexual prisoners. They carried in to Pleasanton experiences in dealing with a one-sex prison population to which they had already learned to respond and adapt. Their numbers will be discussed later in this chapter. The issues concerning us here, however, are the categories of sexual adaptation they have helped develop and sustain at Pleasanton. From their past experiences in one-sex institutions they have legitimized their homosexual activities as a sexual adaptation under forced prison circumstances and at Pleasanton they gather along the way court-committed inmates who, too, are inclined to engage in homosexual and bisexual activity.

The Nature and Extent of Homosexual,
Heterosexual, and Bisexual Inmate
Relations

Any attempt to describe the nature and extent of homosexual, heterosexual, and bisexual inmate relations is difficult. One problem is that the definition of these terms varies not only between staff and

inmates, but also among members of each of these groups. A second problem is that not only are all three forms of sexual behavior considered illegal behavior in prison, but it is private behavior, and most inmates try to conceal their activities from others.

FCI Pleasanton's policy statement on physical contact between inmates reads:

Hand holding and arm-in-arm contact is permitted between male and female inmates. All other physical contact between male and female inmates is not acceptable and will be the subject of disciplinary action (FCI Pleasanton, Policy Statement No. 7400.3B, Subject: Physical Contact Between Inmates, September 22, 1976).

As will be discussed, however, not all staff interpret and enforce the policy similarly. The latitude of discretion is wide, and hence inmate sexual activity is considerably more than official records might suggest.

Definitions

Differences between all subjective definitions of sexual behavior should be kept in mind in considering the estimates of the incidence of homosexuality, heterosexuality, and bisexuality made by inmates and staff. The issue at hand is the degree of tolerance for the varieties of sexual behavior and how inmates and staff categorize behavior on the basis of knowledge of any given act. What might be considered unacceptable sexual behavior in the outside community may become in

prison more or less acceptable. The distinction between the types and degrees of sexual involvement is as difficult to make for a prison community as it is in the outside community. For purposes of this study, homosexual behavior refers to sexual relations between members of the same sex; heterosexual behavior refers to sexual relations between women and men; and bisexual behavior refers to sexual relations with both women and men. One reason for the broadness of these behavioral definitions is that there exists at Pleasanton a greater degree of tolerance in deciding what is a violation of institutional rules. Becker has suggested that what is regarded as deviant depends on more than the behavior itself:

[Deviant behavior] is the product of a process which involves responses of other people to the behavior. The same behavior may be an infraction of the rules at one time and not at another; may be an infraction when committed by one person, but not when committed by another; some rules are broken with impunity, others are not. In short, whether a given act is deviant or not depends in part on the nature of the act (that is, whether or not it violates some rule) and in part on what people do about it (1963, p. 14).

Inmate definitions of what constitutes homosexuality, heterosexuality, and bisexuality at FCI Pleasanton vary considerably. Some inmates believe in heterosexual relationships to the exclusion of all else. "You're either straight or you're not!" they would tell me when I would ask how they felt about bisexuals. In

the most common response from inmates in describing what actually happens at Pleasanton there exists an assumption that condones homosexuality and under prison circumstances bisexuality.

We all know this place isn't real so we experiment. Try it all! I've made it with guys in my unit you'd never think would. But they did.

Most everybody here is in to coedding with the other sex. But still, there's so much time you're locked down together with your own sex something usually happens.

And in interviews with staff it is possible to see that behavior they might condemn on the outside becomes tolerable under prison circumstances.

Yea, they [2 female inmates] sit very close, kiss and embrace. But I wouldn't say they're homosexuals. Karen seems happily married with a boy and Laura coeds in here. I think the forced confinement draws them together. That's all. Nothing more. You can't get excited over that.

I can't tell them no, not when we put women and men in here together. It's crazy. This isn't normal it's bizarre! I can't condemn them for having sex. We have to expect it or we're fooling ourselves.

I don't know if they're bisexual, homosexual or whatever. It doesn't pay to know. Just do what the lieutenant says. Sometimes they're [the inmates] queers so you're told to write shots. Another lieutenant will tell you to come down on women with men. It just all depends, you know?

At issue is the interpretation and categorization of certain behavior by staff and inmates. At times there may be direct evidence of deviance, for example, finding a male in a female's room or two women lying in bed. But more commonly interpretation and categorization

arise over indirect evidence such as gossip, rumors, and stories about an individual, couple, or group. Such information then forms the basis for what Kitsuse (1962, pp. 250-53) calls "reprospective interpretation" of the behavior. Staff review and reinterpret the behavior of female and male inmates and find that hand holding and walking arm-in-arm, which is permitted by policy and did not arouse suspicions in the past, may now be viewed as evidence of a sexual relationship that has been going on all the while. Once overt display of affection is defined as meaning more than friendship, suspicious attention is drawn on the inmates and reference to particular inmates' sexual activity is common in staff conversation.

The Prevalence of Sexual Activity

Once having defined what is meant by homosexuality, heterosexuality, and bisexuality, it is still very difficult to determine accurately the amount of these behaviors at FCI Pleasanton. Sex, in general, is a private affair and even more private and concealing in prison, where it is illegal. Some inmates are fearful that staff will report their sexual activities to their families on the outside. Other inmates feel that staff knowledge of their sexual involvement will hurt chances for parole and draws extra staff surveillance. These concerns, as

discussed earlier, are not groundless, for the label of homosexual or being caught in a heterosexual situation has important consequences for the inmate. Female and male inmates learn that violation of Pleasanton's policy on sexual contact is grounds for transfer to a one-sex institution, a fate for the majority of inmates who have never been to prison before that conjurs up notions of cement walls, fights, sexual assaults, and "doing hard time."

To be designated "unable to handle a cocorrections environment" becomes a permanent part of the inmate's file. It may affect decisions about institution, security, psychological classification, housing, work and recreation, and as a violation of prison policy it calls for an appearance before the unit and institution disciplinary committees, who will likely order transfer. To be found guilty means punishment and labeled a rule violator. For these reasons, homosexuality, bisexuality, and heterosexuality take place, for the most part, behind closed doors in remote places with only the participants knowing what actually happens.

In my effort to judge the number of inmates who participate in homosexual, heterosexual and bisexual affairs at Pleasanton, I involved myself with a core of known homosexuals at Pleasanton. I learned their process of "getting it on" but more importantly, I became

familiar with female and male homosexuals on a one-to-one basis and knew the extent to which homosexuality was active at Pleasanton. Distinguishing between pre-prison and prison-turnout homosexuals, it appears that about less than 10% (N=about 25) of the inmates at FCI Pleasanton are pre-prison homosexuals who try to stay homosexually active during their imprisonment. Talking about his homosexual involvement at Pleasanton, one of the pre-prison homosexuals told me:

It's hard for us because the staff know we're gay. It's in our jacket. So it brings extra police on us at the slightest hint. But you know Gary [another inmate]. He's up front with it all and we get it on quite regularly.

The remaining 90% of the inmates are mostly heterosexually oriented, with about 10% staying bisexual in prison. Of this latter group, most are prison-turnout homosexuals who were transferred to Pleasanton from one-sex federal prisons. They carry into Pleasanton an already established response to the deprivation of heterosexual contact and most will continue with both homosexual and heterosexual activity.

As is being suggested, the most frequent sexual activity at Pleasanton is between women and men. The deprivation of heterosexual contact is missing at Pleasanton. Instead, however, a new deprivation develops--physical contact between the sexes is limited to arm-in-arm and hand holding. As inmates in same-sex

prisons respond to the deprivations of the other sex, inmates at Pleasanton respond and adapt to the policy limitations regulating sexual conduct between the sexes.

Inmate comments in this regard are revealing:

How in the hell can you put men and women in here together and expect nothing to happen?

This is like giving a kid a sucker and saying don't lick it.

This place is cruel. It's in violation of my constitutional rights. It's cruel and unjust punishment.

What do they expect you to do? I met my girl in here a few months ago and we're really in love. We plan to be together after release in spite of the parole board's rule against associating with other felons. But now, though, what do we really do? We have to sneak off like little kids and do it in some corner. All the time you wonder if you're going to get caught so we never really enjoy it. We're relieved after but emotionally still charged. You can't be up front here. You have to stay low. You can't give 'em [the staff] a hint at what you're doing or you'll get shipped. They put you in here and expect you to stay virgin. It's no different in here than out there, you know that. But they think they can make it different. Bull shit! All they can do is make this place more repressive by having us in here together. They put you in a situation to break the policy. So sure you'll get screwed. I've been down before [meaning to be in prison] and sure coed is better but shit they got to give and take or else they're making new places no better than old places.

Inmate and staff reaction is quite forceful in suggesting that cocorrections policy against sexual contact may be merely replacing the sexual deprivation in one-sex prisons with the myth that women and men can be confined together in an open institution believing they can

coexist apart from sexual involvement. There is no right or wrong to this issue per se, but rather varying perspectives on cocorrectional policy with the dominant perspective being that the total benefits to each female and male inmate include developing relationships apart from sexual ones that this population of inmates currently lacks the skills to do. As one staff suggested,

These kids can have sex anytime, anywhere, with anybody or with themselves. That's a very easy thing to get in this society today. It's a lot harder though to talk, to get along, to become empathetic, to take on social skills, to learn independence or to make it on your own. That's what I see us doing in here. I'm not trying to keep these kids from having sex. I'm trying to teach them to get along, to respect each other. I think controlling their sexual limits is only our way of letting them know that we too are working within a society that would frown on open sex in prison.

This staff person's attitude reflects one of the major cocorrections assumptions, namely, to teach inmates that other relationships besides physical and sexual ones do exist.

Techniques and Places for Prison Sex

Data gathered from observation and interviews with staff and inmates suggest that homosexual and heterosexual behavior at FCI Pleasanton is characterized by the need to employ a variety of sexual techniques, including simulation of intercourse, and breast and genital fondling. Although banned by policy, the

movements of intertwined legs can produce a climax in both partners (inmates claim). The salient score for inmates, then, is to figure out where and under what circumstances it is possible to engage in sex. Staff surveillance and negative sanctions are designed to discourage sexual activity. Opportunities for intimacy are learned and require the cooperation and silence of other inmates, characteristics not often found in a prison population of first-time youthful offenders. Still, however, sex abounds and all the staff surveillance and negative sanctions are less effective deterrents than casual observation suggests for several reasons. First, inmates outnumber staff. Second, ". . . we're [inmates] in here 24 hours a day thinking of ways to win. Staff are only here 8." Third, threat of punishment is less valued than the demonstration of affection. And fourth, inmates can always find "lookers," as they are sometimes called, who will help them and keep secret their friends' sexual meetings.

The most popular place for inmate sex at Pleasanton corresponds to the most popular place for sex in the outside community--on one's bed, in one's room. The single room design of Pleasanton, with each inmate having her/his own room key and staff's tolerance of covering the 4 by 12 inch glass panel in the wood doors from inside with a sign, material or something decorative,

adds to an inmate's perception of one's own room as private and the most frequent locale for sexual activity. It is especially convenient for homosexual activity for inmates residing in the same unit. To the outsider it may seem problematic for a woman or man wanting to rendezvous in the room of the other, where the partner is an obvious standout in an all-too-familiar group of same-sex residents. However, inmates learn to utilize a close friend to move the unit officer elsewhere in the unit while the other-sex partner is brought in. I learned of this practice in detail from one couple who were spending time in the hole for being caught in her room. "It's nothing new. It's just we're more careful about doing it than staff are about noticing it." I asked them about the frequency of their meetings and the male told me that for the past four months they have alternated weekly going to each other's rooms. "I think our batting average is high," he concluded, adding they plan to continue with their sexual rendezvous. I asked him how they got caught and he felt they had been snitched off by a jealous inmate.

Besides an inmate's room, heterosexual relations happen in the weight room and in various service and industries buildings and bathrooms such as education, vocational training, food services, chapel, and janitors' closets. There are also those inmates (so they claim)

who copulate in the dark evening a few hundred feet from the heavily trafficked compound walkways despite the efforts of staff to prevent them. Inmates know that there are not enough staff to supervise each inmate constantly, and with that in mind, lovers will risk sex when the demonstration of affection is socially more valued than the denial of it.

Social-Psychological Bases of Sexual Role Differentiation

In the foregoing pages I have reported from my observations and interviews that heterosexuality is the major sexual adaptation employed by women and men at FCI Pleasanton. Relative to its resemblance with the outside world, a sexually integrated prison is a better social environment. An examination of homosexuality in this setting contrasts sharply with the relative importance homosexuality assumes in a same-sex prison environment. None of the butch types, femmes, stud broads, and drags that arise in one-sex prison settings developed at Pleasanton. The few stud broads and male queens that were imprisoned at Pleasanton were transfers from single-sex prisons where they had either been assaulted or were in fear for being so.

Other issues like prostitution and pimping at Pleasanton are likely more rumor than fact. My most valued inmate sources found no basis for the existence

of regular inmate pimps or prostitutes operating at Pleasanton. I learned from staff about several female inmates with prostitution histories and I asked these women about the frequency of prostitution at Pleasanton. Three out of five I talked with claimed it doesn't exist and the remaining two described it happening only occasionally and with a payoff mostly for heroin. All of the five described the inmate population at Pleasanton as "just too immature. You don't sell it to kids. They tell their mommies," one woman told me. The same woman also admitted that she sold her sex to male inmates at Pleasanton only about three times in her five months there. "The first time it was just for marijuana. That was before I learned who had it. But for heroin though, that's a bigger cost and sex is a goin' price." She estimated three other women she knew who were prostitutes on the streets before their imprisonment at Pleasanton were probably no more sexually active than she. "Any others here who say they are are not up front with you at all," she said, evaluating the prostitution issue at Pleasanton. When I asked her about pimping she said emphatically "no." "There's nobody here who can handle me or anybody like me. We all just kind of do it alone," she added. A mix of factors like the youth of the inmates committed on drug charges, first offender types, the

availability of sex, and a majority of white, middle-class offenders makes regular pimping and prostitution unlikely.

The Dynamics of Prison Sex

By dynamics I refer to the analysis of influences involved in the movement and processes of sexual behavior over an interval of time. Until further research is conducted in cocorrections, the present talk is more a careful description than sophisticated analysis, although what is described is organized in terms of an analytical scheme, namely phenomenology.

Depending upon the source of commitment to FCI Pleasanton, inmates hear about Pleasanton's unique coed inmate population from either their judge and attorney or the grapevine at other federal correctional facilities.

New inmates to Pleasanton are told that the sexually integrated inmate population is an experiment in the Federal Bureau of Prisons system. "If too many of you get caught in compromising situations, then the experiment fails," inmates are generally told in orientation. Inmates themselves are outspoken with other inmates and assertive in lending advice and information to new commitments who might be candidates for a homosexual, heterosexual, or bisexual affair. On plenty of

occasions I watched one particular homosexual inmate carry some of his commissary items to new residents in his unit. On several of these occasions our eyes caught and as if the inter-subjective process of what he was doing was clear we would smile and nod as he passed. On other occasions he openly told me that before certain inmates left, he "planned to have them."

Most inmates arrive at Pleasanton with some exposure to the folklore of prison homosexuality. The majority of all inmates have served some jail time besides the one-third who have transferred in from other federal facilities. For the majority, however, notions of prison homosexuals and violent homosexual rapes make the prospect of imprisonment frightening. Some are fearful of homosexual pressure and associations. Others who hear homosexuals discuss the satisfactions of their sexual orientation become concerned over what their own reactions to homosexual advances might be.

The pains of imprisonment focus on anxieties about homosexuality and the loss of family and friends as first-time offenders arrive at Pleasanton. I made it a point to talk with as many new commitments to Pleasanton as possible about their losses and initial reactions to Pleasanton. They would tell me that their first few weeks at Pleasanton are characterized by a host of deprivations of which the most serious is loss of contact

with one's family and friends. The deprivations of goods and services, security, autonomy, and heterosexual contact, so typical and reported in the literature on large single-sex prisons, they reported as absent at Pleasanton. The loss of family and friends, however, for this age group is no less serious than the other deprivations are in traditional prison settings. The pressure to respond and adapt to this loss of family and friends starts almost immediately upon arrival. A number of critical incidents occur which put the new inmate in a position to rely on peers. Inmates find they need the information, advice, attention, and support of other inmates in their first few weeks at Pleasanton that many inmates are wanting to provide. For example, inmates learn the physical layout of the prison from each other and the identification of staff. As the first few weeks are orientation, inmates need other inmates for advice on where to go and whom to look for. Staff encourage this inmate network, if only by default for not making the introductions themselves. Inmates also learn from other inmates about places, times, and days for clothing issue, commissary sales, recreation, visiting, mailing procedures, and telephone calls. Soon they learn about the staff from inmates and whom they can and cannot befriend. And similarly, they learn about the availability of sex from other inmates. They learn who

coeds with whom. They develop a sense of the lastingness of coed partners. They recognize new faces or they hear about them in conversation. They find the process of dating comparable to that system operating in the outside community. A time for knowing each other and the exchange of personal goods and services is a broad, two-step process in the Pleasanton dating system. The use of material goods in the dating period includes the giving of services like laundry, ironing, and food preparation.

It is not clearly known whether the limitations on sexual contact are more clearly recognized as time served increases. But it can be said, however, that during the first few weeks at Pleasanton the frustrations of the limitation on sexual contact are only one of the many frustrations and it is during this time that the tendency for prison homosexuality is greatest while inmates learn the sub rosa system of carrying out heterosexual activity.

To test this out I quantified 10 interviews I conducted in November 1976 with court commitments to Pleasanton. Seven were male and three were female. All 10 admitted being frightened of Pleasanton and frustrated over the separation from family and friends. Two of the seven men freely talked about the potential threat of homosexual advances and three more men and one woman

admitted with more conversation that they too wondered if they would be approached by a homosexual and how they would respond, considering themselves heterosexually oriented. Two of the seven men later admitted being approached by a homosexual with food stuffs or offers of marijuana or direct homosexual request. One male further admitted he had wondered what homosexuals were like and would not see it going against his "manhood" if he tried it out. These comments not only point to the importance of quickly becoming adjusted to the flow of inmate activity at Pleasanton but it raises the issue discussed earlier that under prison circumstances the degree of tolerance for sexual experimentation increases.

Heterosexual affairs begin much in the same way. At first there are problems in reading and understanding cues that are offered by one or both inmates. Words, phrases, and actions are tested to see if they are favorably received, rejected, or modified. Meeting for meals, spending evenings together, and physical contact are the norms that inmates expect in a developing heterosexual relationship. One way to view the importance of these norms is to examine the deviant cases. Quite often I would hear women complain that the only reason a male was showing her affection was for sex. "I'm not going to do that [have sex]. Not now. I just won't jump into that. But that's expected here. If you don't do

that here you might not coed. So I won't coed. I won't be the only one." Similarly, not eating together in the dining room or not together in the evening was often an invitation to other inmates that a heterosexual relationship had broken up and both inmates are free.

Married Inmates

Before ending this chapter, it is necessary at least to identify the issues affecting the smaller, but no less important, group of married inmates who too are adapting and responding in a sexually integrated prison. The variable of marital status was not part of the institution's end of quarter or end of year reporting. Hence, there is no official summary statistic to use. The best possible statistic comes from data I collected on inmates in questionnaire form on their attitudes toward the social environment which is not part of this dissertation. With almost 70% return rate, one of the items on that form asked inmates to check their marital status. I found that approximately 28% of the inmates were married (including common law). Thirteen percent were women and 15% were men. Married inmates, in proportion to nonmarried inmates, were in the minority. They perceived special needs for themselves that a cocorrectional institution like Pleasanton was not designed to deal with.

When an inmate first arrives at Pleasanton she/he, assuming a heterosexual orientation, begins the first of two broad processes in the inmate coed system, namely, to get to know other inmates for the purpose of exchanging goods, services, and dating. Married inmates, like single inmates, have no way of identifying themselves as married (wedding rings I found lost in a handful of rings among married and nonmarried inmates or not worn at all) to another inmate's first advances. I'm told it doesn't come up in all conversations and to do so one married woman told me, would be personally defensive and offensive to the inquiring inmate. As a result married inmates feel caught in a bind of either using their marital status as a way of stopping a coed advance, or, should the advance continue, facing criticism from staff for coedding because they are married. Cathy, Rita, and J.J. are three women in point. Cathy and Rita are around 26 years old and J.J. is about 20. All three have children and a spouse they will return to on parole. Their spouses live too far away and are not regular visitors. Cathy began this particular two-hour session over the faults of a cocrrectional system for married inmates.

The men that come here not married, or how many come here married and say they're not [Rita and J.J. nod in agreement], think we should give them whatever they want. If my husband was here he'd kill these little bastards. They're so fresh.

They really think they're cute. "Oh, come on. Just once," that's common. "Or, they won't know," J.J. added. What is it with them? They're just kids. I've been through that. I don't want to deal with it anymore. Outside I wouldn't have to. We have our house and it's obvious we're married. Even when I was at TI I didn't have to deal with these kids. I'd rather be in prison with all women. The men here [howls by Rita and J.J. "men?"], well, if they're men, haven't left puberty and I'd rather not be around them. That should be my choice not the Bureau's. There's nothing we can do. The staff tell us, "Don't let it bother you. Help them out and teach them." Shit! I'm not their mother. I don't want anything to do with them. So here we sit. We play a lot of cards, talk, eat and exercise in the evening. You know we don't walk the compound like most of the broads here. That's what we're forced to do. When we go out in the evening it's for a short walk or to the pill line. That's about it.

While we talked we played cards. Until the 9 p.m. count time the three of them talked mostly about their spouses, their children, their parole plans, and avoiding the boys at Pleasanton.

Another common response to a sexually integrated prison was written down and given to me by a 27-year-old white married woman who asked me if we could sit and talk. After we did I asked her if she would be willing to write down some of her feelings for me. I guaranteed her anonymity and that the document would be used for no other purpose than research. She agreed, and a week later handed me three written pages.

10-22-76

Help! I Am Being Held Prisoner
in a Nursery School

. . . I came here from [FCI] Terminal Island against my will and, I am now in the process of transferring back . . . most of the "boys" here are very immature. It's just like being back in High School. They like to see who can be the "biggest" and "baddest." Constantly playing mind games. They try to win you over to their side and then talk about you like a "dog." I have been married for five years now and, I do not have any children of my own. Most of the time I feel like a mother image to other prisoner's. I am not ready to take on this type of relationship with people.

There is really nothing here to offer me as far as schooling or a vocation. I graduated from High School and, took business courses in both High School and Junior College.

It's really a heavy burden to carry when everyone comes to me looking for a solution to their problems when I am still search for answers to my problems.

These four women are expressing similar concerns and problem areas being in a cocorrectional institution. They have no way of keeping "boys" away. They find the male inmates childish and similar to their experiences with boys in high school, 10 years earlier.

A related issue that concerned me with married inmates is somewhat moral. What about a married inmate whose spouse (and children possibly) visit on visiting days and after the latter leave the inmate is observed coedding? What problems does it present to the inmate, her/his marital relationship, and the institution? I do not have answers to these critical questions. I will suggest their importance with some anecdotal

comments but leave the issue for research designed to investigate these phenomena more thoroughly.

Take Carlos, for instance, a Mexican male with a common attitude that "I won't coed in here because I'm married," upon admission to Pleasanton. It took only three months and Carlos was walking arm-in-arm, eating meals with, and spending his evenings with the same female inmate for the last three months of this field-work. On Sundays, Carlos' wife and two children would drive 20 miles from Oakland and spend the afternoon visiting. After they left, Carlos coedded. I knew of at least 10 married inmates who were coedding with an inmate over a period of several months. Whether their spouses actually know, I never asked. Indirect evidence, however, suggests they didn't. For instance, the visiting room officer suggested to me regarding one married inmate who had been coedding with the same female inmate for about two months that if his wife ever saw or caught wind of that relationship she'd tear the visiting room apart. "She already has accused him of playing around in here. She got so loud about it I had to ask her to be more quiet and she threatened to have me removed as the visiting room officer because I'm too strict." The same officer conjectured the inmate's wife would tear the other woman's hair out.

The issue is very delicate, to be sure. Any research strategy investigating it must be attuned to that. To place doubt in the minds of spouses on the outside by asking questions is not the job of researchers. Nor would it be fair to legislate morality to married inmates who coed. This research, however, does suggest that the issue itself is quite salient and warrants further investigation.

CHAPTER V

THE ROLE OF COCORRECTIONS IN REDUCING PRISON VIOLENCE

Definitions and Explanations

Almost without exception, every inmate and staff interviewed during this seven months of fieldwork commented on what to them was a lack of violent behavior at FCI Pleasanton. Again, there were no official records with which to make observation and interview comparisons on the frequency of official violent behavior. The estimates given here were based on collaboration with staff and inmates.

The definition of what is violent behavior is less confusing than definitions of sexual behavior. It seems to be a more agreed-upon issue because of its overt harmful and threatening display of behavior. One Associate Warden offered me this definition of violent behavior: "It is an attempt to do bodily harm with fists, knives, mugs, or throwing a blanket over and beating someone up." The element of "doing bodily harm" was central to how most staff and inmates defined violent behavior.

The amount of violent or assaultive behavior at FCI Pleasanton during this fieldwork was probably no more than 12 to 15 incidents. By comparison with one-sex prisons, the Associate Warden reported,

It's not all so significant here. The introduction of cocorrections makes you play cultural games not prison games. The game to play here is show off in front of the other sex. When that gets out of hand, and you know it sometimes does, you just step in and say excuse me and that settles it.

Other staff generally agreed with this description of the nature of the fights that broke out at Pleasanton. The majority of all the fights that I knew about were over dating. The majority of these were among male inmates. Talking about it with one unit officer and inmate, they agreed that

If this was an all male or female institution, we'd have assaults over everything. Those persons have emotional problems and should be moved. Here though we're all culturally attuned to mixed environments like Pleasanton. It's what we're used to. The atmosphere here lends itself to experiences we all have daily. In most places [one-sex prisons] there's a struggle to survive and dominate. In here it's just to show off over some broad.

This staff member and inmate agreed that the fights between male inmates at Pleasanton were mostly over women. The nature of other fights occurred over what they referred to as "petty incidents" like demanding an inmate to move in order to see TV better or cutting in line at Food Services. As far as my observations and interviews show, there was none of the racial violence

or homosexual assaults that are reported in one-sex prisons. I focused on this issue during my interviews with staff and in casual conversation with inmates. Some of the reasons for this, they told me, can be explained by population characteristics. The majority of inmates are nonviolent. Their offenses are crimes against property or drug related, not against persons.⁷ Their commitment to Pleasanton is their period of incarceration, excluding jail time. Their sentences are relatively short.

A second explanation is structural. The small physical plant at Pleasanton sets the tone for expected inmate behavior. Glass and redwood housing complexes require inmate upkeep, not inmate destruction. The availability of personal possessions, wearing one's own clothes, goods and services, and the other sex generate less tension and violent behavior.

A third reason is the staff complement at Pleasanton. During my interviews with department heads I asked them if a staff has an effect on inmate violence. The majority of their responses were affirmative, pointing out that a high staff-inmate ratio increases the availability of staff to inmate contact and reduces the potential for violence to erupt. (Pleasanton is about two inmates to each staff.) A second feature about the staff they suggested important for minimizing the potential of

inmate violence is the sexual composition of the staff. Pleasanton, with its 44 female and 99 male employees, is more able to provide a variety of care, custody, and control of a sexually integrated inmate population.

As a man I can recognize the groups men form and the language they use when women are around. I don't have that insight for women and probably only another woman is attuned to that. I think men could learn it but it's more natural for women, so why not employ them. I know how a man feels about sex. I've been involved with a few fights myself as a kid over a girl. So all that I can identify with and help cut down on those pressures in here before it becomes violent. I think women add the same stabilizing force.

Less agreed on features about the staff's potential for minimizing inmate violence included issues like education and years of Bureau experience. About half of the department heads suggested education exposes one to cultural variety which is needed in prison work. On the other hand, some complained that an educated prison staff is too inconsistent with policy interpretation. A similar feeling was explained with the variable "years of Bureau experience" as a potential for minimizing inmate violence.

If a person is here with over 2½ years of Bureau work, you know he's probably worked in a one sex prison. That alone generally conditions you to expecting some kind of assaults to happen. If you look around you'll see how these transfer staff try to make Pleasanton like every other Bureau place. They're the first ones with a list of "don'ts" for the inmates. These kids need more than staff saying "don't." That's written around here everywhere. If we say we are trying to have them build relationships they didn't have before

then our staff must begin to see Pleasanton as a very unique facility. As it is now you can transfer here with 17 years in at Atlanta and you'll not be given any kind of special training. I'm not so sure that a person's experience with the Bureau is all that critical in minimizing inmate assaults.

Other department heads were not so sure either way.

Most, however, agreed that Bureau experience gives the staff person the exposure needed to handle inmate violence. But the issue advanced here is not whether one can handle inmate violence, but also what can one do in communicating with inmates to minimize inmate violence. The issue of communication is discussed in the next chapter.

A fourth reason for the minimal number of inmate assaults at Pleasanton I considered one day while sitting and listening to a staff person from Case Management talk with new inmates about what was expected of them at Pleasanton and later I asked about it in my interviews. The staff person emphasized what seemed to me an assumption about the identity of an inmate's self that the cocorrections innovation was designed to help. This is not the same as pointing to inmate characteristics discussed earlier that seem to minimize the tendency for inmate violence, but rather it is the institution's attempt at designing programs and policies that reinforce that image of a nonviolent self.

You're at this particular institution because we believed you could handle a cocorrections environment. You already see the freedom you have here

but remember that this is still an experiment in the Federal Prison System. What you do here will either be to your advantage or not. We designed this place to get your cooperation. If you or it fails, it's reasonable to assume you'll go to a one sex institution.

These inmates are reminded that they are the kinds of persons who can make it in this setting and live up to house rules. Some staff could not comprehend my idea of how an institution generates assumptions about inmate identity or they had given it little thought. Those who did agree or those who challenged my explanations admitted not having considered the issue before. They felt, however, that the other explanations were more salient in considering why tension and violence were far less at Pleasanton.

The Development of the Underworld

Goffman tells us, "whenever worlds are laid on, underlives develop" (1961, p. 305). His point is this: In every kind of social organization, there are official expectations as to what the actor owes the organization. But the deeper we look in the organization, the more we find a counter to this theme. We find actors decline in some ways to accept the official organization's view of what they should be doing and getting out of the organization. For example, in most arrangements between formal and informal organizations where honesty is expected, there will be deception; where a cherished image of fair

mindedness, there will be some unbalanced presentation of opinions; where credulity, doubt; and where cooperation, some resistance. The former are primary or formal adjustments actors are expected to make in social situations. The latter are secondary or informal adjustments viewed on a continuum of tolerance by the actors to the formal setting. I agree that simply to argue that secondary or informal adjustments arise as makeshift means of satisfaction when individuals are confined in settings that deny certain needs is overly reductionistic. But that has been the sense of the literature that describes the inmate social system as a mere reaction to the pains of imprisonment, forgetting, like Goffman reminds us, this recalcitrance is an essential constituent of the self (1961, p. 319). As Goffman suggests, this mechanistic approach fails to explain the importance actors give to these undercover responses for preservation of the self.

What this chapter attempts is a description of the inmate underlife at FCI Pleasanton as they encounter and adapt to sources of tension and strain. Here inmates do not feel the kind of seclusion, degradation, nor lack the means of personal expression more commonly found in single-sex prisons. These conditions exist in our traditional prisons and in line with their existence the organization's actions tend to be in keeping with the individual who warrants these conditions. I am not

suggesting that FCI Pleasanton is the correctional utopia either. The variability in the degree of support staff give cocorrections and the organization's expectations and actions toward the kind of inmate who can benefit from this kind of cocorrectional setting are two of the closer influences that impact on inmates and make them wish to keep their distance and serve their time. That they don't see themselves as violent individuals is the important structure of the self that has consequences for the ways they handle what to them are tension, strain, and conditions for violence at Pleasanton.

The conceptual framework for this chapter is quite simple. Its simplicity is its biggest advantage. It follows the conceptual scaffold Goffman (1961) builds in studying the underlife of a mental hospital. It focuses on the sources of materials inmates employ in their informal prison adjustment and some of the places in which these activities of the underlife occur. I happened on this conceptual scaffold after considering these aspects myself in some grounded theory on the inmate social system. I now turn to the sources of adjustment inmates employ in prison.

Sources

In almost all social organizations individuals use the organization's resources in ways that the

resources were not originally intended for use. Some of these makeshift means of satisfaction are more destructive than others, some are more socially accepted, and so on. Examples come from mental institutions where, for example, patients used freestanding radiators to dry personal clothing they had washed or rolled up pieces of clothing patients would use between their necks and wooden benches when lying down (Goffman, 1961, p. 208). And from prisons we learn about carving weapons out of utensils or exploiting other inmates and staff. In some cases the resource may be reconstituted into a new form or in other cases it may just be an illegitimate use of the context.

I consider now a set of those inmate activities that imply more of an interaction with the formal world of the institution. Here we have an innovator who exploits the legitimate prison means-ends schema for private ends. Goffman refers to this as "working the system." Inmates at Pleasanton call this "playing the game." The means of playing the game profited usually only the individual. Any kind of collective means of playing the game at Pleasanton was not too common. Some staff claimed cocorrections as the influence that breaks down collective game playing. Others considered the phenomenon more of an individual enterprise. I suggest

that both are equally true, depending upon one's perspective.

Some of the most frequent ways inmates at Pleasanton played the game for personal gain included faking an illness and getting hospital clearance for a lay-in; stockpiling their private food supply with what they could take from the kitchen during their first 180-hour mandatory kitchen assignment; demanding and receiving food preparation kosher-style; getting "the pill" on the claim of menstrual irregularity; befriending the evening and morning unit correctional officer with a friendly chat, food stuffs, or a game of pool or cards which was illegal activity for the unit officer; the development of a sexual or romantic involvement with correctional officers; or easily convincing (inmates claimed) the psychiatrist of the need for psychiatric medication. In these cases inmates had what was necessary to play the game: knowledge and timing. For instance, hoping to get some "downers" or other psychiatric medication, the inmate knew that she/he would have to see her/his psychologist and demonstrate a need for medication past the usual counseling type of psychological help available. And, if the drugs were wanted soon, timing was important as the psychiatrist consulted at Pleasanton only one day a week. Another instance where timing and knowledge were important for females was in getting access to "the pill."

Approximately 50% of the female inmates at Pleasanton were on the pill. Legitimate medical authorization for the pill was to be for parole or furlough and to develop menstrual regularity. The latter, however, was frequently claimed (as female inmates admitted) as a prelude to engaging in prison sex and prevention of pregnancy.

Another interesting way inmates played the game had to do with their associations and contacts with community volunteers. It was likely that inmates could plead the prison routine to community volunteers and have the latter exhibit empathy. Inmates also considered community contact a way to forget the prison culture and temporarily disassociate themselves from their inmate status.

Goffman reports that the most important way mental hospital patients worked the system was by obtaining a workable assignment, ". . . some special work . . . that alone could make available certain secondary adjustments--and often a whole set of them" (1961, p. 219). Such assignments could be sought out with these personal gains in mind or develop after the assignment was obtained and then act as a reason to hold on to the assignment. In either case, having a work assignment was demanded of every inmate by the institution and choosing the one with most personal gain was important to the inmate. From other inmates, inmates learned what work

implies to the official prison world. Coupled with the fact that the institution demands inmates work, one learns to develop a sense of working within that system and finding work suitable to one's own motives. Unit management staff expect cooperation and a sincere effort on the part of inmates to work. Inmates talk about giving this appearance to the institution because it acts as a buffer between the inmate and the institution's expectations of the inmate. Accepting work assignments without quibbling about the nature and length of the work, especially for all new inmates who are assigned to a unit labor pool who are then used wherever their services are needed throughout the institution, begins the development of positive staff attitude to the inmate.

Let me elaborate on the point in this process that heightens inmates' acceptance of work assignments. If there is likely to be a product that they themselves can take advantage of in their work assignment, then the work is considered more or less favorable and builds on an inmate's status of herself/himself as playing the game and winning because personal rewards for the self are being gained, sometimes and oftentimes illegitimately. Take, for instance, food services. All inmates work 180 hours in food services. During this time they avail themselves to increasing their own food supplies in their rooms. Past the 180 mandatory hours, some

inmates request a permanent work assignment in food services. Some of the rewards are great: eating first, ample servings, second stashes of supreme food stashed in one's room, time to prepare one's favorite food, treating a friend to a specially prepared meal, or extras given out to friends in the line. Similarly, inmates who worked landscape found secondary adjustments in "being able to sit on my duff" (an inmate phrase meaning to sit back, take it slow, don't hurry, relax, etc.). Inclement weather was considered a personal victory, not having then to work. Enjoyment of the outdoors, getting a tan, keeping up on what's happening on the compound were still other secondary adjustments to landscape work assignments. Other examples could also be found in laundry and clothing issue, driving heavy machinery, working in the Business Office or working with Case Management, or making out the staff working schedule. In all these cases it seems that if the inmate worker is able to avail herself/himself of the fruit of her/his labor, especially if it is legitimately derived, then the structure of the self an inmate conveys to the staff implies congruence with the assumptions staff make about inmate behavior in a cocorrectional setting.

Pleasanton being a coed facility, as it might be expected, work assignments give inmates a chance for legitimate contact with the other sex, for some a

secondary-type adjustment gain relative to the expected heterosexual deprivation they thought they would encounter. Sometimes the work assignment would require the inmate to be in the living unit of the other sex. When this happened the inmate became the object of sexual advances, given small foodstuffs like crackers and cookies, became privy to secluded information on how the other sex was living or how one particular inmate appeared and, in general, became the object of much attention. These, then, are some of the sources of materials inmates at Pleasanton employed in their secondary adjustment to prison life in a cocorrectional institution. As was stated earlier, the character of adjustments in a place like FCI Pleasanton where life really is not too secluded away from family and friends; where inmates are not seen as a degraded class of citizens through the institution's assumptions of the kinds of inmate selves that are confined there; and where ownership of personal possessions for personal expression, heterosexual contact, security and the availability of goods and services are perceived high by inmates and assumed so by staff, then the need to rely on an inmate social system that rejects its rejectors and counters the pains of imprisonment by advancing the concept of inmate solidarity which in one-sex prisons is all too often built right in the institution's assumptions and identities about its inmates, affects the

character for individual rather than collective secondary adjustment. In turn, the acquisition and maintenance of this individual rather than collective structure of the self is an important notion to consider when understanding and comparing the nature and frequency of violent behavior between correctional institutions.

Places

Having discussed some of the elementary sources of material for secondary adjustment at Pleasanton, I now turn to an analysis of the setting, for if the development, acquisition, and maintenance of these activities of underlife are to occur, then they must occur in some place of the institution. The range of places inmates have control varies from free places to group territories to personal places. The first are areas inmates share with any other inmate in which the individual feels as safe as is possible in the setting. The second, group territories, are shared with a select few. And personal places are those private rights or claims to space that an inmate shares with a select few only by her/his invitation. Again, the point being investigated is the relationship between the character of the places of secondary adjustment and its relationship with tension and violence.

Goffman tells us that in many institutions, each inmate tends to find her/his world divided into three parts. These are spaces that are off limits (out of bounds), open surveillance space, and free places--areas where staff did not know of their existence, or knew but either stayed away or tacitly relinquished their authority when entering them (1961, pp. 227-30). Similar places or regions could be found at Pleasanton to varying degrees.

First, there was space at Pleasanton that was out of bounds. Here mere presence was the form of conduct that was actively prohibited and seen as cause for a disciplinary report, ". . . except when they are on official work details" (Pleasanton Policy Statement Number 20001.5, Subject: Inmate Boundaries). For example, as the second 12-foot cyclone fence was being erected in November-December 1976, rules were posted in the living units that made "construction areas out of bounds" unless inmates were part of an authorized work group. And similarly, policy to keep men and women away from each other's living units banned their presence not only behind the living units but clearly marking with a yellow painted line on the ground the point past which the other sex could not go, presumably as both security and custody and chastity measures. So, too, every unit was out of bounds for inmates not living there.

The second kind of general space in total institutions is surveillance space, the region inmates need no special excuse for being in, but where she/he is subject to staff supervision. This area included most of the facility at Pleasanton.

The third kind of total institution space Goffman identifies in total institutions is free space--areas ruled by less than usual staff authority. These are the spaces that inmates search out for secondary adjustment. Some are more successful than others in finding free space. The majority are constrained by the rigid out-of-bounds policy that foils the search for finding free space. The latter, by virtue of their incessant inmate preoccupation, will be discussed here. Often, free spaces are characterized by their marked reduction in inmate population density, contributing to features of peace and quiet.

Free places at Pleasanton were often employed for either partaking in specifically taboo activities or for no other purpose than getting away from it all. Thus, the chapel-multipurpose building provided such a place for inmates who finagle a staff person to unlock the door in order to practice their music, rehearse a number, audition, or practice some upcoming activity. During such times, the chapel area was perceived with inmate feelings of relaxation, solitude, and

self-importance, in contrast to the sense of the flurry of activity happening out on the compound. Like Goffman describes about similar free places patients employed in his study of a mental hospital, "Here [in free places] one could be one's own man" (1961, p. 231).

A few other free places inmates employed, though not as secluded as the chapel area, were the indoor recreation area and the visiting room during nonvisiting hours. The indoor recreation area, although enclosed by glass walls giving staff from the outside direct observation of activities within, the general absence of staff's presence inside provided inmates with a feeling of a free turf. Here inmates could not flagrantly partake in illegal activities for too long a time in fear of some staff stopping in or standing up close to look in, but the indoor recreation room did draw a large number of inmates and large numbers alone shielded illegal activities happening in the background. Mostly the illegal activities were kissing, fondling and sensual in nature for the participants. Still, it was behavior that couldn't be displayed with openness and relaxation elsewhere.

Another free place for some inmates was the visiting room in the administration building, which doubled as a staff cafeteria for brown-baggers and a routine place for staff conversation. Only inmates who worked in that

building or had a visitor were to be found there. However, inmates were quite willing to hang around this area to get some air-conditioning, to get out of the rain, to walk with a friend who was conducting business, or to chat with the control room officer who, if an inmate was lucky enough, would ask the inmate to purchase a cup of coffee from the vending machines inside and possibly earn a coffee or coke for himself/herself. Officially, inmates were not supposed to hang around these areas and were often reprimanded for doing so. However, a few inmates, well known to the staff, some having official business there and others not, frequented the area sometimes pressing their claim.

Some types of work assignments also provided inmates with free places. This was so with inmates whose work skills took them on building roofs where they could daily to stay away from it all below or engage in something illegal like smoking marijuana. Similarly, inmates who operated machinery outside the fence enjoyed free spaces that gave them the secondary adjustment of peace and quiet and the opportunity for engaging in illicit activity. Although the acquisition of a free space was incidental to the work assignment itself, it was apparently the main gain of some work assignments. One inmate recounted his work day in this regard to me:

You know what I did today [laughing]?

No. What?

First I went to town with my boss and got out of here a few hours. That's not so bad, huh?

No. It sounds good. What else?

By then we came back and it was almost lunch. So before lunch, I've been workin' on the roof above the women's unit, so I went back up there. I told my boss I was checking something out. He's okay. Then I got high up there. [Laughs.]

You're still high?

Yea. I didn't go to lunch. Didn't want to handle all those people so I came back here [in his unit], drank some tea and listened to some tunes. Not so bad in here if you know how to do it.

Clearly the above inmate was not only able to develop sources of secondary adjustment, but also had an array of available places in which to carry out his adjustment to Pleasanton. The character of this process is above all else individual. He claimed to me on other occasions that he shared the sources of his adjustment, primarily his marijuana, with his girlfriend.

Relative to our concern about tension and violence, Goffman offers this hypothesis, which I find equally true for Pleasanton: "It may be suggested that the more unpalatable the environment in which the individual must live, the more easily will places qualify as free ones" (1961, p. 238). To the extent that free places at Pleasanton were held by few inmates with some kind of status accorded them by staff, as the examples

just cited, suggests to this writer after much conversation with inmates that the Pleasanton environment, on the whole, is palatable and the need for free space outside one's personal territory is minimal. The deprivations experienced in traditional correctional settings conjure needs for the variety of space Goffman suggests. However, the environment at Pleasanton is claimed by staff and inmates to be more palatable.

Like in Asylums, group territories seemed very little developed in Pleasanton. When they did appear they are more appropriately described and explained as a group's extension of rights regarding use of a particular space that is legitimately accorded all inmates. The most obvious in this regard at Pleasanton was the ethnic differentiation between unit TV rooms. Here, black inmates illegally extended their rights to make one TV room in each unit a black inmate TV room, while white, Hispanic, and Indian inmates illegally extended their dominance and control to make the second TV room in each unit their territory. There were in this separateness no accounts of assaultive or racial violence. To be sure, inmates crossed these territorial boundaries; some were invited, some were not. In the case of the latter, sometimes a comment like "Your room is filled?" or "What you doin' here?" was made to the transgressing inmate with the aim of embarrassing her/him to leave, not necessarily

to result in verbal or physical confrontation. There were, in fact, strong sentiments against forcing anyone to leave either TV room. "I think we all know that if we bring the heat down on someone else, it'll come down on all of us. This place is just too small and too unsophisticated for that kind of action," one inmate related to me. His comment was supported with "Yeas" and affirmative head nods from a racially mixed group over lunch. One unit manager explained that the ethnic differentiation in the TV rooms is not something for the institution to destroy without a valid basis in knowing it's bad.

I see what happens in these TV rooms quite like what I see happen outside. Blacks have their bars, whites have their bars. Whites go to their dances, blacks go to their dances. They're separate yes. But they are equal. Hey, why should that be any different than our prisons on the whole being sexually separate but supposedly equal? And the same identification groupings are found among Indians, Mexicans and all ethnic groups. But our first reaction in prison when they develop is to extinguish them. No, that's wrong. If we're giving these kids an environment that's supposed to be different than at any other prison, then we need to carefully scrutinize those ethnically balanced TV rooms. I don't really see what goes on in them as similar to the racial tension that fosters prison riots. But a lot of us here are scared of that so we'll react from our guts. That's wrong. That's what the old-liners will want us to believe and before long they'll have everybody together in one big TV room and the sense of togetherness and privacy often associated with TV viewing will be gone and inmates will start to look for those emotions elsewhere rather than watch TV in an auditorium. That's just how our old prisons are run. This place is supposedly run different. So it's important we analyze those situations [pointing to the TV rooms] carefully. If you think I'm wrong,

just consider this: observe what programs blacks watch most often and note at the same time what the other TV room is watching.

That I was unable systematically to make these observations is unfortunate. That I walked between TV rooms and noted different shows more times than I noted the same show being watched, however, is hereby noted for future observation.

Why no racial violence in all this? The issue is complex but some of the more critical variables for FCI Pleasanton include the small number of inmates who share fewer characteristics with their own group, inmate demography including a propensity not to be a violent or assaultive kind of person to begin with, structural accommodations with fewer prison deprivations, a sexually integrated inmate and staff population, staff demography, and an organization that implies a nonviolent conception of the inmate and generates assumptions about inmate identity and inmate behavior in the development and implementation of programs and policies.

A final place to which inmates can retreat to develop some comforts, control, and reciprocity that they share with no other inmate except by invitation is their own rooms, what they feel to be their personal territory. Unlike other correctional institutions and mental facilities, the personal territory at Pleasanton is more private. There are no large wards or multi-inmate

cells. Terminology is different. At Pleasanton inmates are assigned to a room and given a key to the door. Once obtained, a room could be stocked with objects that lend personal satisfaction to an inmate's life. Pin-up photos from Playgirl and Playboy, radios, illegally made speakers, books, journals, other popular magazines, candy, teas, honey, brown sugar, avocados, warm pies, steaks, potato chips, cookies, crackers, reworked hanging space for clothes, photographs of family and friends, birthday and other occasion cards, makeshift room dividers, prison certificates, plants, macrame hangers, posters, Indian spreads adorning the walls or ceiling, humorous comic strips--these were some of the objects brought in by inmates, many of them illicit and subject to being considered nuisance contraband by some staff more than by others.

Some Final Notes on Violence at Pleasanton

The study of the prison underlife at Pleasanton cannot be studied with the same social system perspective developed in other prison studies. Not only are the institutions themselves radically different in architecture and design that affect the flow of that system, but the people in these contrasting scenarios seem different. Their youth, their criminal backgrounds, their shorter sentences, their self-images, and the structures

of their beings vary from the population characteristics that describe inmates in other prison settings. Ordinarily these conditions are taken for granted as part of one's involvement with the official prison world. Seeing them twisted, turned, and bent out of their relations with staff through "playing the game," we can see their importance anew.

Traditional prison problems of assaultive behavior, tension, and uneasiness that an experienced staff person can claim "to feel in the air" in a traditional prison setting are all but negligible at Pleasanton to that contrasting degree. There is instead an adjustment to prison life at Pleasanton that stresses individualism, being alone, and doing your own time.

The proper study of FCI Pleasanton falls midway between several correctional issues. The first is the old model of being alone, doing your own time, talking with no correctional guards. In this kind of system peddlers, merchants, and gorillas developed in male institutions. The second, a more recent development in corrections, can be seen in prisons with inmate unions. In these settings there is more talking with correctional guards in opposition to the old model. Solidarity exists but it is benign. You recognize that the people you are with are not really your sisters or brothers. Between these two, FCI Pleasanton stands midway, tugging and

pulling at both ends. Inmates at Pleasanton talk with staff. They are encouraged to do so, and the structure maintains that arrangement. However benign, though, there is no inmate collectivism. If anything, Pleasanton reinforces traditional individualistic patterns of doing your own time.

Furthermore, there appears to be in all these adjustment patterns undertakings to lose one's self, to escape temporarily the reality of being in prison. When staff complain that these kids don't realize this is the BUREAU OF PRISONS and when inmates describe and explain Pleasanton like a boarding school, or a vacation, I begin to agree that inmates here quite often find ways to escape the reality of their confinement. Systemic, individual, and implementational conditions in Pleasanton make more probable a reduction in the kind of assaultive behavior commonly found in single-sex prisons.

CHAPTER VI

INMATE-STAFF COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONS

Correctional administrators often find that abstract analyses of prison social organization present an obtuse view of relationships between staff and inmates. However, to develop principles that explain the varieties of human behavior in a complex organization we sometimes start with a broad theoretical base. Applying them to the everyday world, then, we learn how these abstractions must be qualified to fit the particular situation. Take, for instance, Erving Goffman's point when speaking collectively of prisons and mental hospitals; he is really addressing the binary character of total institutions in general.

In total institutions there is a basic split between the large managed group, conveniently called inmates, and the small supervisory staff. Inmates typically live in and have restricted contact with the outside world outside the walls; and are socially integrated with the outside world. Each grouping tends to conceive of the other in terms of narrow hostile stereotypes, staff often seeing inmates as bitter, secretive and untrustworthy, while inmates often see staff as condescending, high-handed and mean. Staff tends to feel superior and righteous; inmates tend, in some ways at least, to feel inferior, weak, blameworthy and guilty.

Socialized mobility between the two strata is grossly restricted; social distance is typically great and often formally prescribed. Even talk

across the boundaries may be conducted in a special tone of voice. . . . Although some communication is necessary between inmates and the staff guarding them, one of the guard's functions is the control of communication from inmates to higher staff levels. . . . Just as talk across the boundary is restricted, so, too, is the passage of information, especially information about the staff's plans for inmates.

All these restrictions of contact presumably help to maintain the antagonistic stereotypes. Two different social and cultural worlds develop, jogging alongside each other with points of official contact but little mutual penetration (1961, pp. 18-21).

The broad base is useful. Applying it to the Pleasanton facility, we can locate some of the same features of total institutions to which Goffman makes mention, while others seem absent. One of the features Pleasanton shares with other total institutions is reference to the large managed group as inmates and the smaller supervisory group as staff. Inmates live inside their fences and have restricted contact with the outside world. Pleasanton staff work eight-hour shifts and are socially integrated into the outside world. All aspects of inmates' lives are conducted in the same place and under the same authority. Inmates' day-to-day routines are carried on in the immediate company of 250 other inmates, most of whom are treated alike and are required to do similar activities together. Daily activities are scheduled around times of official counts. Where Pleasanton is less on the continuum of total institutions

may be observed to be in the arena of day-to-day staff-inmate contact. Talk across the staff-inmate boundary is not so restrictive. Inmates are generally included in making decisions about their fate. In fact, staff interpret the communication between themselves and inmates as a rather unique feature about Pleasanton. The organization of that system of communication concerns us here.

The Organizations of Staff-Inmate Communication

The literature on total institutions suggests there are three main ways in which communication between staff and inmates is organized. The first is by formal arrangements between staff and inmates; the second by inmate pressure; and the third by informal inmate-staff contacts. The focus here is to test these out at FCI Pleasanton.

Formal Arrangements

The major way in which communication between inmates and staff is organized is through formal arrangements deliberately created for conducting communication between staff and inmates. These arrangements are countless and are most meaningful to the prison career of inmates who are looking to parole. Some of these include casework interviewing, classification testing and

interviews, classification committee interviews, review committee interviews, counseling, staff-inmate council, unit disciplinary and institution disciplinary committees, as well as individual meetings often called by staff for an inmate. In these situations staff get information from inmates on which to base reports to guide others. These contacts are generally staff initiated, and inmate participation varies along a continuum of playing the game.

The human need to communicate, however, beyond the point of exchanging information with staff, is so well recognized and so often stated that it becomes trite to belabor the point. But this ordinariness, this fact of life that everybody so well knows, becomes significant when we note that what is so utterly taken for granted in society is conspicuous for its absence in prison. The ways in which it is organized at Pleasanton suggest that although the deprivation of communication is not altogether resolved here, attempts in this direction are made by some staff who recognize that real communication is composed only partly of the exchange of information in formal arrangements. It is more importantly a sharing of presence, moods, and feelings. But for most staff, the usual prison policies screen out these qualitative conditions and permit only the exchange of information. They complain of too much to do. They cite prison policy

that cautions staff against becoming involved with inmates. They hear supervisors express distaste for staff who share their personal lives with inmates. They perceive the formal arrangements as collecting sufficient data necessary for them to do their job. Once, in a correctional services monthly meeting, this issue was being discussed and the Captain warned the group sternly, "Any information you give inmates about yourself, well, just wait and see. They'll use it against you. I advise you keep your personal life out of your work and deal with inmates only in the way necessary to get your job done."

Inmate Pressure

A second major influence on the way inmate-staff communication has been organized is the development of the inmate society. A goal of inmates in traditional one-sex prisons was to achieve independence from official pressures and sanctions. In order for inmates to feel this relief, it was suggested that inmates enforce conformity to their own social system by imposing their own set of sanctions more severe than those used by officials. Describing this relationship in a prison where the administration was highly authoritarian in its approach to inmates, McCleery noted:

Defying formal premises of equality, contradicting official discriminations against recidivists, lacking familiar symbols of class in position or possessions, inmate society developed a power

hierarchy as sharply defined and immobile as that of the administration. The survival of that inmate hierarchy and the process by which it was sustained depended on a basic rule of the inmate code: Never talk to a screw.

By constant emphasis on the idea of a rat, and the use of isolation as a sanction, inmate society retained its maximal valuation of power and still restricted the most obvious recourse to power--the appeal to official sanctions by individuals in their own interest.

Leadership in the inmate society involved the ability to explain, predict, or control to some degree a situation in which others were uncertain and helpless. Other inmates gained protection and security by attaching themselves to the leaders and rendering them the petty tributes that conveyed status. This type of dominance depended on access to informal communications, whereas in a free society in which information is a free good, leadership normally depends on the functions that one performs in meeting the needs and problems of the group. . . . The problems of the prison society were not those of food, shelter or management but of uncertainty and ego threat in an environment of arbitrary power. Hence, leadership there meant having contacts with the "grapevine" and with official sources. Whether the leaders actually manipulated power or simply manipulated belief, they were expected to mediate between the official forces and their own followers, and were given license to talk with officials that were never extended to men of unproven dependability (1960, pp. 57-59).

The communication arrangement in this setting is confined to a few inmate elites. They occupy positions between the inmate system and the formal administration system, bridging them and binding them together. It is said they are not oriented toward revolt; rather, they espouse a conservative ideology, stressing maintenance of the status quo as they become upwardly mobile in these prison settings, suppressing behavior that might disturb these arrangements. This illustration of inmate patterns

of communication with staff is not so universal, particularly when we look at FCI Pleasanton. The cohesive kind of inmate social system that employs inmate pressure as one of the ways in which communication between inmates and staff is organized was not one of the ways or organizing communication between staff and inmates at Pleasanton. No doubt cliques developed and they sometimes appeared to carry much inmate support, hearing staff refer to the action as some kind of "code." For the most part, however, the prisoners at Pleasanton did not move together in the direction of solidarity. One of the few times during this fieldwork when inmates collectively reacted (a group of about 30 inmates) against administrative decision making by staging a 20-minute sit-in opposing an increase in inmate boundaries, inmates quickly withdrew themselves after the Associate Warden spoke with the group and explained that the gathering was against institution and Bureau policy. The threat of discipline reports, transfer to one-sex institutions, and the loss of good time promoted the inmates to break force and accept the new boundaries. Inmate solidarity at Pleasanton often broke at the threat of discipline. The inmate population at Pleasanton cannot be described with the same sense of cohesiveness that characterized other institutional settings. Neither is it the Hobbesian notion of "a war of all against all." Pleasanton inmates know of the "code"

from the media, the literature, and experiences at county jails and other facilities. But for themselves, however, the sense of "not being the kind of person who needs the code" comes through in conversation. They don't see themselves as the "hard core" type doing long time in an institution that requires this kind of self-survival. They admit to being a prisoner only because they got caught. Basically, though, they feel themselves as "okay" and not deserving of the hard prison time in one-sex prison settings. Their commitment to the Pleasanton facility they say is proof that they are not such bad people. That they can somehow rise to the level of their surroundings and be the kind of person Pleasanton wants them to be in prison is because they are those kinds of people to begin with and do not need or want the support of a group in which they do not believe. They also fear the threat of transfer to other Federal facilities if they are labeled as "putting pressure on other inmates." They do not value the code's maxim that proscribes "never talk to a screw." Quite the contrary, staff report that the majority of the inmates are "snitches." They have been talking with law enforcement, judicial, and correctional personnel and for some that is why they are at Pleasanton. They are, like the Warden described, inmates who could not survive in other correctional institutions. Inside Pleasanton they continue talking with staff.

Communication and relationships therefore do not develop merely between inmate leaders and staff. These exchanges happen between the majority of all inmates and all staff. Cocorrections is said to be a major influence in this regard. It would be more accurate to say that a mix of favorable interpretations like unit management, cocorrections, correctional counseling, architecture, inmate and staff demography, a relatively small inmate population, a high staff-inmate ratio, and a sexually integrated staff bring about this desired correctional effect. But at the same time it would not be fair to suggest that Pleasanton lacks something like a code. Recalling Goffman's lucid observation that "where worlds are laid on, underworlds develop," we find at Pleasanton, probably because of the inmates' young age, self-image, and criminal inexperience, an adaptation to prison that is fluid and ever-changing. I do not refer to that as a code, for that would conjur up notions of solidarity and rules of conduct. What we have instead is a prison that falls midway between the traditional "don't talk with the guards and do your time alone," and benign inmate collectivism and talking with the staff. At Pleasanton the norm is to talk with the staff and still do your own time.

Informal Inmate-Staff Contact

A third major impact on the organization of staff-inmate communication develops in the work situation and often acts to deter developing inmate pressures. Considerable staff-inmate communication on a personal level does develop at Pleasanton in spite of formal arrangements, especially where a supervisor is dependent upon the inmate's technical skill or responsibility or even when the goal is more staff self-centered, like proving to one's supervisor that one has the ability to manage inmates only showing an absence of trouble. The institution's responsibility in protecting society by giving its inmates a philosophy of deterrence, incapacitation, treatment, and punishment and providing for its own operation and maintenance fosters personal ties between staff and inmates despite the administration's warning to staff not to get involved with inmates. However distant staff try to stay from inmates, inmates become objects of feeling and even affection. There is always the danger of finding out that inmates are human. If hardships are inflicted on a favorite inmate, sympathetic staff will suffer vicariously alongside. And, if an inmate breaks a rule, and staff senses an injury to their own moral world, staff may feel affronted and disappointed that an inmate did not conduct herself/himself properly. Instances in this regard were many at Pleasanton. I

present one example from my fieldnotes where the sympathetic staff is a case manager serving about 50 to 60 inmates. It is the duty of the case manager to collect, verify, and analyze factual information in the preparation of inmate social histories and progress reports and also to assist inmates in utilizing the available resources within the institution and the community. They are not responsible for delivering direct counseling services to inmates. However, case managers can develop, like other staff, a liking, a sympathy, or empathy with inmates.

Leroy is really the best case manager here and we know it. He's been through a lot of what we've been through and when he comes down on you, you know it. You'll know you fucked up royally then. He doesn't put you on front street often but when it happens it's deserving. We're just all pretty close and disappointing him is like disappointing somebody in your own family.

The capacity of inmates to become objects of staff's sympathetic concern is linked with what Goffman (1961) calls the "involvement cycle" that is sometimes recorded in total institutions. I observed evidence of it at Pleasanton. Beginning at a point of social distance from inmates the staff person finds she/he has no reason to refrain from building up personal interests in some inmates. Sometimes shared interests in race/ethnicity, religion, children, and romantic or sexual involvement laid grounds for warm staff-inmate relations

to develop. Sometimes this involvement would bring the staff member in a sympathetic position to be hurt by what an inmate says and does as well as threaten the social distance taken by other staff members for themselves. In response, the staff member may feel "burnt out" and retreat from people-centered work to object-work like schedules and paper work. This feeling was very common, especially with correctional counselors who were responsible for delivering direct counseling to inmates. This deficit in their job satisfaction was detailed in a Bureau-wide study on correctional counseling.⁸ Once removed from the dangers of inmate contact, however, the staff member may gradually feel she/he has no reason to be wary and start anew the cycle of involvement and withdrawal. The following interview with one department head on "being burnt" and starting anew is illustrative.

What happened to Karen?

You know she was working for me for two months. I didn't care if she and Cathy were lesbians, I just didn't want her getting caught in here. She was up for parole consideration and now what will happen between her and her kids, I don't know. It's just as hard for me, you know. I know other staff feel the same way. We're supposed to be socializing them into acceptable roles, but the problem is someone forgot to tell them.

On the outside you'd befriend some of these people. You think of that in here and I guess it starts to develop. Now I'm angry with her and she knows it so she's not at work today. I know she's not sick. She's too embarrassed to see me, that's all. So I'll just do something else for awhile and it'll all blow over.

There are still other informal kinds of contacts between staff and inmates that impact on communication and relations. Sponsoring inmates on town trips, attending with them a play, a movie, a dinner, a concert, or together buying Christmas trees or caroling, or sponsoring inmate activities inside the institution, which may mean extra trips to the institution during one's off time, were still other ways to break down staff-inmate communication barriers that are rooted in antagonistic prison stereotypes between the two groups. When asked why they would involve themselves with inmates, staff would respond showing their feelings that inmates are human and worth affection. Their concern for individual inmates points to filling basic human needs that the minutiae of management and control denies or overlooks. However, this was not the attitude of most staff; probably not more than a third of the staff felt this way. Most wanted no informal contacts with inmates outside the formal arrangements designed by the institution. "I won't take inmates out on town trips. It's a matter of principle. Not on my own time," or "My attitude is bad. I mean bad, man. From the Warden to everybody. I take no shit from staff or convicts. No town trips, nothin'. Inside the walls though I'll work my ass off for them," were the kinds of responses staff often made when we talked about their feelings on sponsoring inmates in the community.

The ways just cited in which communication and relations between inmates and staff are organized at Pleasanton not only form a unique correctional environment inside the institution but are also carried out in a special cocrrectional climate. When we combine the fact that staff may come to view inmates as humans fitting for emotional involvement and affection with efforts to frustrate further deviancy, we must look to the rational perspectives of the institution within which staff meet inmates.

Impact of Institutional Goals and Perspectives

The goals of FCI Pleasanton are the same goals of the Federal Bureau of Prisons: to incarcerate, treat, punish, deter, and incapacitate sentenced criminals. The Bureau further recognizes that inmates cannot be coerced into participating in correctional programs. They know that correctional programs can only provide opportunities for change. Thereafter, it is up to the offender to take advantage of work opportunities, job training, education, and counseling. Not all staff, however, hold such a complacent view about how inmates should involve themselves in the organization. Some call for more or less inmate involvement, and depending upon the staff person's position to influence inmates in this regard, inmates feel subtly coerced. During an inmate's

orientation she/he is expected to consider Pleasanton's programs and begin to choose one or more for herself/himself. Meanwhile, the unit staff consider the inmate's needs and also begin to develop an appropriate program based on custody and the resources of the institution. Inmates are not told outright that they must avail themselves of Pleasanton's resources, but they indirectly learn from inmates and staff that programming is essential at Pleasanton, and that unless they make use of the educational or work opportunities at Pleasanton they will find themselves being transferred. After all, if they don't need the programs, why else would they be there? This prima facie evidence that one must be the kind of person the institution was set up to handle is not just trivia; it is central to the basic means of social control in the prison. For unless inmates accept the assumptions and identities offered by the staff, they are labeled a "classification transfer" and find themselves being transferred. The resulting dilemma for inmates is this: On one hand they are moved by the Bureau's attitude of allowing inmates personally to choose work, education, and counseling opportunities; but on the other hand they hear from staff and other inmates that the parole-granting board will want to see change in inmate behavior and attitudes and have relative assurance that inmates are leaving Pleasanton less criminally inclined

that they were when they entered. There is between the two a force that compels inmates "to do something." The something they learn to do can be simple or complex. It can be learning a trade for the first time, completing the high school GED, enrolling in college courses, becoming involved in counseling, or demonstrating sound work habits. This list is not exhaustive. It merely illustrates the fact that inmates at Pleasanton are compelled to do something in prison and the ways they organize their relationships with staff often manifest their desire to show staff they are doing something. They are, in this way, playing the game or working the system.

Living With Staff

Inmates at Pleasanton report that it is a daily struggle to retain their self-pride in their interactions with staff. Prison life is a "put down," even in cocorrections and even with staff who do not intend it to be so. The emotional impact of being in prison, whatever the inmate composition, restricts contact with the outside world. To the majority of Pleasanton inmates who have never "been down" before, prison life, with all its cocorrectional and architectural amenities, is still a put down, day after day. Cocorrections, the architecture, staff, and other inmate relations and prison programs help inmates deal with their incarceration and

give the staff fewer control problems. Even then, however, prison depresses the human spirit. When coercion becomes psychological instead of physical, when it is supplied by well-intentioned staff who do not mean to abuse, it is then even worse for it does not appear to other staff as evil and it seldom becomes the subject of investigation and ameliorative efforts. Staff may not be at all mean, but rather lack the sensitivity to the special features of the imprisoned person, and this has the effect sometimes of being more offensive than sheer malice might be. Brutal or sadistic staff at Pleasanton is not the problem for inmates. They complain about the staff's insensitivity to their feelings, sexual, racial or ethnic slurs, and nonverbal gestures of power and privilege between status nonequals⁹ that seem innocuous to the staff person who utters them but which are deeply galling to the inmates themselves. There may not be the slightest rancor with them, and the staff may be in a friendly, laughing mood. But for the inmates this is very little comfort. Over seven months of fieldwork I observed many staff joke with homosexuals, especially two male transvestites, about their homosexuality. The jokes were always funny to staff and other inmates and their jokes were expected to draw laughter. For one of the transvestites to show anger or somehow retaliate brought on staff power to forget it because it was only a joke.

The problems faced by these transvestites were never physical, but the mental pain they suffered is no less harmful. All inmates can do is swallow their pride and inwardly seethe. What inmates say and to whom they say it are well guarded. Most staff agreed to this in interviews, responding negatively to the statement, "Inmates can say what they want around here." If an inmate loses her/his temper in a setting where self-control is demanded, that behavior is quickly sanctioned so as not to invite a general loss of order for staff in running the institution.

Perhaps the put down that inmates feel most from staff is the staff's insistence on the correctness of their judgments and actions. Every day staff give orders, write disciplinary reports, and admonish inmates. Inmates feel helpless to protest because they fear the staff has the administration on their side. Even if an administrative remedy is favorable for the inmate, the inmate then worries about staff backlash. At one point about midway in this fieldwork, one top-level staff person was discussing with me the fact that BP-9's (inmate complaints against the institution or its staff) were fewer now because inmates were becoming more satisfied with the institution. My observations, however, made me ask about apathy and the backlash theory. I was told I believed too much in what inmates say. To be

sure, there are staff who are eager and professional in their desire to operate Pleasanton with fairness. However, they have admitted to me that although their fairness along with programs like cocorrections, unit management, correctional counseling, and a sexually integrated staff seem to reduce the put downs and insensitivities in prison, they recognize that a mix of other human factors prevents their elimination. The implication of this, one practitioner writes, ". . . speaks profoundly about the near futility of offering treatment in this context" (Keve, 1974, p. 52). All of their comments reinforce the view that prison defeats our most humane intentions.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY

Cocorrections

Prison for inmates under any circumstance is generally not an agreeable experience. The deprivations inmates experience in heterosexual contact, goods and services, autonomy, security, the loss of one's job, one's community, one's family and friends are difficult adjustments to make. From an inmate perspective, status dependency is created and institutional programs sustain that role. Much has already been written about that phenomenon.

In cocorrections, however, imprisonment is not so stark, austere, deplorable, or hard to manage from an inmate's outlook, and I have tried to show that it makes the staff's job of control easier also. It would be hard to deny that a cocorrectional environment is better than a one-sex prison environment. Cocorrections at least sustains a mixed population perspective within which the imprisonment imposed by the courts can be carried out and not contend with the abnormal environments of one-sex prisons with the homosexual and violence problems they so often create for inmates and staff. This

is not universally true, and it has been suggested here that cocorrections is questionable for some kinds of inmates, for example, married inmates. It may also be helpful only for certain kinds of offenders, perhaps first-time offenders or offenders with relatively short sentences to serve. These issues require more experimental research designs of the kind not employed here. For whatever the population, though, cocorrections as it existed at FCI Pleasanton during this fieldwork was a far superior correctional environment within which to control inmates without the added punishment and frustration of a nonsexually integrated prison. I make this summary statement on the grounds that sexual patterns of adaptation at Pleasanton in general parallel those in the free community and that the incidence of violence at Pleasanton was minimal. Some may balk at this and point to a population of youthful, white, middle-class offenders who probably would not become involved or caught in sexual or violent deviant behavior regardless if they were at Pleasanton or in any other prison. It is probably true in light of what I learned from staff that most of the inmates at Pleasanton were chosen for placement there because they were not the kinds of violent or sexually deviant inmates who need the control provided by more secure facilities, which are usually of the one-sex kind. Not being a classification specialist myself,

with the broad knowledge of all the offender types at Pleasanton, I cannot deny that assumption. However, the assumption is rooted in psychological perspectives that are not the real issue here. Rather, the focus here is on the social environment created at Pleasanton. If my critics claim that Pleasanton is only succeeding because of selective population characteristics, then I applaud the Bureau of Prisons' efforts in identifying this select group of inmates from the general pool of federal defendants as not needing the single-sex correctional environment as we have come to know it. If cocorrections is an experiment in the Bureau, it has succeeded, qualitatively speaking, in designing an environment in which the prison pains of sexual and violent deviance are mitigated for most prisoners. In their Final Report on Research conducted at the coed FCI Ft. Worth, Texas, Heffernan and Krippel (1975) draw findings about the social environment at the Ft. Worth facility similar to those made here. They report that cocorrections is favorably viewed by female and male staff and inmates. The nature of our data collections and analyses follows different methodological styles, but we agree that cocorrections seems to produce a more favorably balanced correctional environment within which the frustrations of sex and violence in prison are mitigated. Other impacts accrue that are equally important for staff. Both of our research

projects in cocorrections suggest that where threats and fights exist, they occur without the frequency and predatory nature often found in single-sex prisons. This means that correctional officers and other staff have fewer of the control problems found in desegregated correctional settings.

Our research differs in some respects, however. The inmate population at Ft. Worth was older and more criminally mature. More of them had families and had already completed their education. And more of that group had prior prison experience. I believe these facts are relevant in light of my interpretation of where our analyses differ. Heffernan and Krippel note that Ft. Worth inmates develop more collective than individualistic styles of adapting to Ft. Worth. I have been reporting that inmate adaptation at FCI Pleasanton falls midway between the completely isolated inmate who never talks with staff and does her/his own time and the more collective inmate group who talk frequently with staff. At FCI Pleasanton, inmates borrow from the latter group the openness to talk with staff and from the former group an orientation to prison to "do it alone."

Another part of the differences in our institutions, and hence in our findings, lies in the model of community integration that each of our institutions supported. Ft. Worth is characterized by an engagement

with the free world. This includes over 200 volunteers who come in to the institution and opportunities for inmates to enter in to the community with friends, and work and study release programs. Pleasanton, on the other hand, operated with limited contact with the outside community. School and study programs operating from within the institution that would allow inmates contact with the outside world were discontinued shortly after the beginning of this research. A mix of factors like peer pressure and contraband brought new policy that urged the placement of inmates in the community when they were eligible for these community-oriented programs. That did not solve the frustrations inmates experience in total institutions, but it did render the staff's job of controlling inmates easier.

Is It Normal?

The U.S. Bureau of Prisons advances cocorrections as being a more normal correctional environment. For years prior to this social intervention, prison literature continued to describe same-sex prisons as abnormal. It is only fitting, then, that the Bureau would call its first venture into cocorrections normal. Normalcy is being offered along a continuum of private living conditions, a sexually integrated staff as well as an inmate population, modern architecture, and a milieu that

stresses the acceptance of personal responsibility and positive interaction between staff and inmates. In addition to these key features, what makes a population normal is the level of communication carried on between its members. In most societies, what is normal is a qualitative condition of communication that is composed not only of the exchange of information but more importantly the sharing of moods, feelings, and nonverbal behavior like facial and emotional expression, touching, personal space, demeanor, and shared silence. It is this "togetherness of the spirit" that we as human beings hunger for in what we define for ourselves as normal. Communication is the real quality we seek out, whether or not substantive information is exchanged in the process. A more general thesis was stated earlier suggesting that impediments to this in prison are rooted in the nature of prison work. I believe there is truth in that regard, even in cocrrections. So is it normal? If we are ultimately concerned with human quality, the answer is no; but then, neither is any prison if the thesis is correct. Prisons only permit the exchange of information in prescribed ways.

Methodology

Now completed, this research faces questions about its reliability and validity. Let me address those issues here.

When we ask if this research is reliable, we are really wanting to know if we can replicate it. Can we take it and use it elsewhere and expect to find similar analyses? The response is, of course, it depends. It depends on who is doing the research, the nature of the research project, the groups under study, and other theoretical issues like entry, support, sponsorship, and acceptance. For practical reasons I doubt one could ever approximate those settings. Inherent in the methodology reliability is minimal. There are, I believe, an infinite number of ways to describe any given phenomenon. As Weber tells us, ". . . even the smallest slice of reality can never be exhaustive" (1964). Letting data analysis flow along with data collection may make the reliability test more problematic in some research projects.

The key to understanding, however, lies in validity, not reliability. It is this researcher's opinion that in all research validity is consensually based and is a minor form of inter-subjectivity as is anything given empirical significance. To ask if this study is valid could be to ask if it is reasonable. Is

it a reasonable description and explanation of events? It is not to be mistaken as the only explanation. There are an infinite number of other valid descriptions and explanations, as Weber suggests. Notions of validity here were checked against time, varying conditions, social distance, language familiarity, communication, and social consensus. Post-field work analysis kept close social consensus with field personnel who offered suggestions during the more intense analysis phase of this research. All of the measures employed in this research project to offer adequate interpretations suggest that this is how it was then.

A Final Note on the Analysis

I noted first thing in this research that some readers will probably feel I have been sharply critical of the correctional institution at Pleasanton. Others will protest I have been too charitable. Truly, my intent was never to be either. In the end, however, I see where I have been both. I have described FCI Pleasanton from an inmate perspective as a more agreeable prison environment than they would otherwise want to experience. I have noted the reduction of homosexuality and violence at Pleasanton and said nothing about the issues of sexism among inmate and staff or the feelings of power staff feel they hold over inmates. Some inmates and staff

would contend these issues are most important. I have singled out only three issues for discussion that I think are questions generally asked about cocorrections by educators, policy makers, and institution administrators. I have presented my analysis from an inmate perspective (some will call it a bias) because it is on this level that issues like a one-sex prison, violence, and communication become problems. Hence if the issues are not perceived as problems, part of the reason lies in the interpretation inmates give to the condition of their imprisonment. This is the perspective I have tried to develop here.

ENDNOTES

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¹I owe a special thanks to Jim Meko, Unit Management Coordinator with the BOP Central Office in Washington, D.C., for having set me straight on cocorrections history.

²As of January 28, 1977, two and one-half years after FCI Pleasanton opened as a cocorrectional institution, 16 pregnancies occurred inside the institution. Of these 10 women chose therapeutic abortions, 4 women carried the baby for a full delivery, and 2 women were yet undecided. Of the 16 women, 4 were married with spouses on the outside, and of these 4, 1 became pregnant twice, having abortions unknown to her spouse on the outside both times.

³The reader is directed to Jessie Bernard's article in the American Journal of Sociology (January 1973), who draws parallels between one's choice of research methodology and gender. "In sociology," she says, "a masculine bias has been embedded in the structure of inquiry. . . . The specific processes involved in agentic research are typically male preoccupations; agency is identified with a masculine principle. . . . The scientist using this approach creates his own controlled reality. He can manipulate it. He is master. He has power. He can add or subtract or combine variables. He can play with a simulated reality like an Olympian god. He can remain at a distance, safely invisible behind his shield, uninvolved. The communal approach is much humbler. It disavows control, for control spoils the results. Its value rests precisely on the absence of controls. . . . Carlson (1972) found corroboration of this observation comparing work by men and women psychologists: men preferred the agentic, women the communal approach" (pp. 767-72).

⁴Community reaction to a perceived changing FCI Pleasanton can be seen in newspaper articles. September 19, 1976, on page one headlines, The Oakland Tribune read: "Pleasanton Prison: Changes Cause Concern." The article focused on the second cyclone fence and third housing unit under construction, prisoners older than 26, and more inmates there committed with crimes against persons, for example, armed robbery. The Independent, a

local Pleasanton newspaper, printed a similar article four days prior on September 15, 1976, with this headline: "Youth Prison Turning Into Penitentiary?"

⁵This issue is the focus of Overpopulation in the Bureau of Prisons: Summer 1976, a U.S. Bureau of Prisons publication. The task force investigating overpopulation in BOP facilities reported that "Overpopulation in the Bureau of Prisons is reaching or has reached critical proportions in several institutions, and it is a serious problem throughout the system." The "critical point," as a factor in causing disturbances the report says, for FCI Pleasanton, is 115 females and 115 males. At the time of this study the numbers of both had increased only slightly and administrators there were not concerned with that slight overpopulation.

⁶In 1974, when FCI Pleasanton first opened, about 65% of the inmate population were transfers from other BOP facilities. Since then, this figure has steadily decreased. In 1975, about 38% of the inmates were transfer inmates and in 1976, about 31% of the inmates were transfers. The number of court commitments to FCI Pleasanton without prior BOP incarceration has been increasing annually.

⁷The data given in Chapter III show that in 1976 83% of the women and 53% of the men inmates at FCI Pleasanton were incarcerated for drug-related offenses or property crimes not involving force.

⁸See "The Final Report of the Task Force to Evaluate the Counseling Programs and Practices in the U.S. Federal Prison System," September 1976, a task force report which examines the role deficits of correctional counselors and suggests remedies for improvement.

⁹I am grateful to Dr. Barrie Thorne for having given me a summary sheet of Nancy Henley's "Women and Men: The Silent Power Struggle," a paper presented at the Seventh Annual Conference on Applied Linguistics, 1976. I analyzed one week's worth of field notes per month in terms of gestures of power and privilege between status nonequals (staff and inmates) on the dimensions of address, whether familiar or polite; general demeanor, whether informal or circumspect; eye contact, whether to stare or avert eyes; emotional expression, whether to hide or show; and self-disclosure, whether to disclose or not. In my summary percentages I found that anywhere between 50 and 67% of the time the patterns used by staff

with inmates in address were familiar; in demeanor, informal; in eye contact, to stare; in emotions, to hide; and not to self-disclose. Inmates with staff were more polite in address (Mr. or Mrs.); more circumspect in their demeanor; stared at staff less; and manifested more emotion and disclosure.

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