

PRISON MARRIAGE: A PILOT STUDY

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PREFACE

As a preliminary research inquiry, the purpose of this study is to provide basic information about prison marriage. The intent is neither to prove nor disprove the value of the marriages. There is no research basis to confirm or deny any hypothesis at the present time; in fact, no published study of prison marriage was located during the course of this research.

The present study attempts to substantiate possible motives of the marriage partners, as well as the pros and cons of the marriage. Thus far, the data indicate that prison marriage is not as rare as one might assume. The review of the literature and the survey responses of inmates, spouses, and chaplains, reveal some of the unique aspects of prison marriage. The data derived from this study are intended to assist subsequent researchers attempting broad scale investigations, in addition to providing interested readers with some intriguing discoveries.

I wish to express my gratitude to everyone who participated in the research, and to those who assisted me with the necessary arrangements to conduct the survey at the institutions in Oklahoma. I am very thankful to Dr. Bill Donovan, Administrator of Religious Programs for the Oklahoma Department of Corrections for his assistance and suggestions.

I have truly enjoyed the visits with the clients and staff of Oklahoma's correctional centers; they have contributed greatly to the acquisition of important research data.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Research

This paper represents an initial exploration into the phenomenon of prison marriage. The primary subjects of study are 18 male prisoners in Oklahoma, and 38 prison chaplains from 22 states. Three spouses of the above male inmates were also surveyed. The study investigated the experiences and view points of the marriage partners, and the perceptions of the chaplains. Other sources of data are articles on prison marriage, journal publications of studies on conjugal visiting, and sociological literature on concepts of exchange.

Unlike conventional marriages, where the couple assumes daily cohabitation and collaboration at the start, prison marriage entails physical separation, in addition to the rules and controls imposed upon the inmates. Notwithstanding the barriers to role fulfillment and intimacy, a substantial number of these marriages do take place in America. Each relationship is distinguishable from the others, as in all marriages. The most common features among prison marriages are the wedding ceremony and interaction/communication liberties that the couples are allowed. The specific

privileges will vary depending on the institution and its policies. For the most part, all of the marriages must endure without total freedom of both partners.

The Research Objective

The main purpose of this pilot study is to establish preliminary data. The results are intended to assist future researchers with devising reliable and valid standardized questionnaires, as well as developing meaningful hypotheses to be tested. The present paper will probably generate more questions than it answers. However, the purpose is to provide a basic profile of prison marriage from which to pursue a broader study using a larger sample.

This research investigates the following questions: What are some of the unique aspects of prison marriage? What are some of the motives and experiences of the partners? How do prison chaplains perceive the marriages? What are the typical policies and provisions regarding prison marriage? And finally, how might social theories of exchange be applied to an analysis of the relationships?

In order to substantiate possible attributes of the marriages, overviews of the inmates and their spouses are presented in case study style. The results of the chaplain survey are tabulated and summarized, thus rendering their opinions of and experiences with prison marriage. The literature review will present additional views of prison marriage, legal considerations regarding prisoners' right to

marry, and theories which may help to better understand the findings.

The research objectives of this study may be summarized as follows: to present an exploratory and descriptive synopsis of prison marriage; to assess qualitatively and theoretically, the motivations, costs, and rewards of the marriages; to quantitatively analyze the demographic and perceptual data of the sample, as well as the number of marriages each year at state institutions in relation to the security level and population size. Also, to discover whatever specific factors that might be predictive of post-¹release success or failure.

Generally, this thesis provides information for interested readers who would like to determine whether or not to pursue the subject further. Those individuals who might find the data useful are prison officials, chaplains, sociologists, and graduate students in the field of corrections. The survey responses from this study should assist future researchers with developing standardized questionnaires, and qualifying the variables to be measured. In addition, the findings will help to formulate hypotheses to be tested.

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Chaplains were asked to state their perception as to what factors contribute to post-release success/failure (success: either still married, or crime free after one year; and failure: either divorce/separation, or reconviction/parole revocation within one year).

Assumptions

Prison marriage is distinct from conventional marriage in various ways, most notably by the circumstance of one spouse being incarcerated at the time of matrimony. Thus, the relationship exists under the restraints and policies of the prison system. Any other distinct attributes of prison marriage will be based on each individual's particular situation.

Even with the inherent limitations of this type of marriage, the rewards and costs seem to be discernible. As with all social exchanges, the individuals meet their needs and wants according to their choices. Therefore, reciprocity probably takes on an differential meaning for each partner. For instance, an inmate may seek the rewards of a dedicated visitor who takes care of his needs, both emotional and material. The spouse, on the other hand, may feel rewarded by her altruistic behavior and the resulting autonomy of the relationship; in fact, if she has been abused by a former husband(s), the safety and mastery may be significant factors.

If the belief that con games and manipulations (which are characteristic of the prison community) are used on many women, then perhaps it is likely that a large portion of the marriages involve deceit or spurious intentions on the part of the inmate. Fantasy may also be a significant element in the marriages. This relates to unrealistic or naive expectations on the part of the spouse, and the idealism of the

inmate who must contend with a despondent environment.

Based on informal inquiries during the research, there are notions that a substantial number of the marriages occur under false assumptions, and are void of "true" or "sacred" love. While discussing prison marriage, one inmate stated that "only 10% are really in love with the woman." A case manager sitting in during this conversation strongly agreed, adding that it is not unusual for these inmates to boast about all of the "goodies" they get from their wives. Of the assumed 90% of those marriages that exist without "true" love, underlying reasons exist such as to enjoy the added benefits of drugs, money, food, favors, social status, and/or helping the inmate's position regarding parole eligibility. This is not to say that other inmates, single or already married, do not receive these supports; it simply seems characteristic of the motives for the inmates who have a substantial amount of time left in prison.

It does not seem probable that the degree of sincerity of the motives could be measured empirically; this is due to the stigmatization and negative connotations attached to statements that would lead to such conclusions. There are, of course, prison marriages that involve "true" love, trust and commitment. In fact, there are some indicators of a therapeutic effect for the inmate, and perhaps even for the spouse (e.g., in legitimizing a child, or confirming an existing common law marriage).

Significance of the Research

The many facets of corrections provide for endless inquiry about offenders, their families, and the various modes of treatment. Prison marriage seems to be one topic that has received little attention; at least in so far as research is concerned. This is not because it fails to interest sociologists, but perhaps because it has not been viewed as an important issue by decision makers.

The significance of this study is preliminary. The potential impact of this and subsequent studies on prison marriage is that it produces a better understanding of how prisoners make certain decisions. For instance, an inmate who expects to remain incarcerated for five years following the marriage has made a serious decision. At the same time, if the institution he is living in does not allow conjugal visits, nor furloughs home, it raises the question as to his reasons for not waiting to marry until release.

In the previous example, intimacy is not the only significant issue. The inmate will also be taking on the role of a husband, which he will not be able to fulfill as he wishes. This may compound his frustration over lack of control, and possibly even his degree of trust; his girlfriend is now his wife. Therefore, two important considerations come to mind. One is whether providing conjugal visits or some additional privilege to married inmates would be beneficial. Two, if this is not possible, then a policy might be established whereby an inmate's right

to marry is forfeited until just prior to his release.

The legal issues discussed in the following chapter bring some interesting contentions to light. The outcome of court of appeals cases affect the enforcement of prison policies, as well as the protection of prisoners' rights.

The above discussions simply exemplify some of the relevant issues involved; whereby, as officials better understand the people and situations they are dealing with, their decisions can be made more informatively. Those states which allow conjugal visits evidently recognized the benefits to both the prisoners and their families.

In certain respects, all members of society are affected by the impact of prisons, whether it be the use of many tax dollars to sustain them and their families who lose income from a potential wage earner, or the fact that prisons may fail to rehabilitate. As a pseudo environment, the prison facilitates a synthetic life style of marriage and the family. The significance of studies such as this one may provide a better understanding about inmates' and their loved ones' attempts to bring about normalcy and control in their lives.

The final section of Chapter I presents definitions of terms used throughout this paper. Most of the terms are familiar; yet, their applied meanings require clarification. When the quoted words such as "true" or "sacred" are used, it should be recognized as an emphasis on undefinable terms.

Definition of Terms

Conjugal visit - a private visit between a prisoner and his/her spouse in a designated area and for a specified period of time. Exchange Theory - the general principle of this theory is based on the idea that humans seek to minimize their costs and maximize their rewards from the choices that they make.

Free-world - denotes any person, place, or situation existing outside of the prison.

Marriage participant - an individual who is, has been, or expects to be a prison marriage partner.

Others - persons who are not marriage participants; usually individuals who have knowledge of prison marriage.

Parole eligibility - the time when a prisoner is reviewed by a parole board to determine his/her readiness for release to community supervision.

Policy - a general term used to denote administrative regulations of a prison, referring to the conditions and procedures to be followed when an inmate requests permission to marry.

Prisoner/inmate - the use of either term distinguishes the incarcerated spouse from the free-world spouse.

Prison Marriage - a marriage between a prisoner and a free-world individual of the opposite sex. Exception: those instances where two inmates marry each other; yet, typically they will not be residents of the same institution at the time of the wedding. Also, other than furloughed

inmates, weddings occur in the confines of the prison according to the visiting policy (specific to each state).

Reciprocity - this term is used in association with the theory of exchange; it relates to the interchange between the marriage partners.

Spouse - the free-world husband or wife.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Prison Marriage

It appears that, although the prediction that almost half of all marriages end in divorce, the institution of marriage remains quite popular. Hereto, a substantial number of those who get divorced will remarry. Also, the myths of widespread marital disintegration, which are often construed from divorce statistics, have little valid support. As Scanzoni explains:

In considering the future of marriage, it makes considerable difference if, on the one hand, we accept the notion that there is a vast headlong rush to the divorce courts, that large numbers of persons can hardly wait to divorce their present mate and marry the next, and that this shows that the present system is so bad that something radically different must be taking its place; or if, on the other hand, one questions the misuse of divorce data and holds that current divorce behavior signals not so much a rejection of the marriage system per se, but instead an unwillingness to tolerate unsatisfactory experiences within the system. Those who hold the first view might predict rather convulsive changes in marriage within the foreseeable future. Those who hold the second might predict, for the vast bulk of the population, continuation of the long-term evolution in marital structure that has been in motion for almost two hundred years. The second is the position taken here. It seems clear that while genuine change in marital structure is in the offing, it is not cataclysmic, but instead will gradually grow out of present marital patterns (1982: 6).

Still yet, an estimated 85% of prison marriages break up

within one year after release (cf. Duning, 1985c).

There are many factors to consider for a discussion on the dissolution or stability patterns of marriage. Because the individuals involved with prison marriage exist in conjunction with the larger society, and their socialization experiences are not foreign, there is no reason to doubt that prison marriages apply to Scanzonis' position. That is, a prison marriage should initially be assumed to have the same intentions as any other marriage (e.g., to live happily ever after). The variation in dissolution rates can then be measured according to specific criteria . . . "every married couple is not equally exposed to the same chances of experiencing dissolution" (Scanzoni, 1982: 16). Below are ¹ three letters to Ann Landers relevant to this discussion.

Dear Ann Landers: I strongly object to your response to "Cupid's Special Delivery," who has fallen in love with a prison inmate through correspondence.

Why throw cold water on the couple's hope for happiness? The inmate is being released soon and plans to start a new life. Once he gets out, they have plenty of time to get to know each other better and find out if they are truly in love.

God bless them and may they find true happiness. There is certainly precious little to be had in this life. Wish them luck, they are going to need it. — An Incurable Romantic in Trenton

Dear Incurable: They'll need more than luck. Read on:

Dear Ann Landers: Your caveat to the woman who had fallen in love with a prisoner through the mails and was considering marriage was not strong enough.

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Two surveyed chaplains sent photo copies of Ann Landers' column to this researcher; neither enclosure had reference data printed on it. Ann Landers was unable to provide the appropriate reference due to her records being filed by the name and date of the publication.

Six years ago, crazy fool that I was, I thought I could straighten out an ex-con with whom I had corresponded for two years. His letters were sheer magic. They could transform the dreariest day into the brightest sunshine of my life. I was like a lovesick schoolgirl.

I went to visit him several times. He kept saying our love was like a miracle--that God had arranged for us to meet.

On the day my dream man was released I was at the prison gate to drive him to my home where I had a room and woodshop set up for him. I introduced him to my parents (they were skeptical) and we were married that weekend.

Within 60 days I learned (a) Mr. Terrific was an alcoholic who had a fondness for cocaine; (b) he didn't want to work at a regular job; (c) he had been married twice before (never mentioned this) and had three children he had forgotten to tell me about; (d) he made passes at my sister's baby-sitter (age 16), the supermarket checkout girl and the young kid (male) who pumped gas in our neighborhood.

I threw him out, tried to have our marriage annulled and discovered he was still married to a woman in Oklahoma. I hope every woman who is so desperate for a man that she has to look for one in a prison will clip this letter and learn something. I wish I had seen one like it. Fool Of The Century In Santa Rosa

Dear Rosa: Read on. You have plenty of company.

Dear Ann: The second worst place to look for a sweetheart--or a husband--is in a bar. The worst place is in a prison. Those lonesome convicts who want a pen pal can be highly questionable characters. I had a disastrous experience that I won't go into here. But I do have some advice for your readers who believe they are going to beat the odds.

First, don't write to Ann Landers. Write to the convict's correction officer and find out if the man is married, what he is in for, what his behavior in prison has been like and if his plans for rehabilitation include YOU. You can get all this information by writing to the head of the penal institution and explaining that you have started to correspond with Mr. 8997656 and would like the facts.

I learned my lesson the hard way. I am giving it to you for nothing. Sadder But Wiser In Mississippi

Dear Miss: I am wiser too. Thanks for the fill-in.

These three letters represent realistic attitudes and perceptions of marriage to an inmate, from two different standpoints. The first respondent may or may not have

married or developed a romantic relationship with an inmate. Nevertheless, the writer revealed an optimistic attitude of "God bless them and may they find true happiness." The point made here is that most marriages exist with this intention. The second and third respondents exemplify experienced dissolution, and warning labels. Yet, the initial hopes of these women were probably quite ordinary.

Apparently, prison marriages and romantic links have the propensity toward dissolution, or simply disappointment. If it is assumed that all or most of the free-world partners are genuinely devoted, then one may predict that the outcome depends on the inmate. This brings to mind the two sayings: "actions speak louder than words" and "the ball is in your court."

Statements based on direct experience with prisoners reveal some discouraging conclusions. Dennis Roberts' interview quotes of Bobby Novak, an ex-prisoner now directing Prison Ministries, Inc., are similar to those mentioned in the Assumptions' section of Chapter I.

Since his release, he (Novak) has ministered to men and women trapped in prison marriages or engagements. He has observed a pattern that he believes is nearly universal in these relationships.

"From what I've seen, with very rare exception, the outcome is always the same--broken hearts, broken homes, and broken lives."

"In the case of non-Christians, women may be attracted to the mystique of the hard-core con. A key word in these relationships, both for the inmate and the woman, is 'fantasy'."

From his own experience, Bobby says the inmate may be motivated by loneliness or social status. The convict who has a woman to provide him with a conjugal relationship and money on a regular basis is envied by those who don't (1982: 29, 30).

Due to their isolation from the outside world, in addition to personal reasons, inmates begin friendships with women through correspondence (e.g., an inmate places an ad in many periodicals requesting responses from compassionate or Christian women).

A convict may cultivate "meaningful" relationships with a number of women. Letters begin on a platonic level, but the content soon becomes loving and, eventually, lustful. The inmate carefully adapts his approach to individual personalities. He may copy poems from prison library books and tell each woman he wrote them "just for her."

He tries to portray himself as a worldly-wise, but sensitive man who has seen it all. He convinces the woman he can make all her fantasies of love and security come true. Letter-writing is a prison art, Bobby explains, and sexual prose is a specialty (Roberts, 1982: 30).

Once the inmate establishes rapport, he exchanges photos with the woman (to find out if she is good-looking enough for a romantic involvement); then "determines the slant his letters should take--sex, money, drugs, or just an outside contact" (Roberts, 1982: 30). Prisoners also help each other out by encouraging their women to get a friend to write to a fellow inmate.

According to Roberts, there are differential motives in Christian and non-Christian relationships.

Most non-Christian prison relationships are out of balance. The woman is perhaps not very attractive, has a large number of children to support, or lives with some form of social handicap, lessening her chances of finding a man on the outside. The fact that her man is in jail serves as an emotional "plus," because she knows where he is at all times and feels his great need for her.

But that's not always the case; often the women are attractive (Roberts, 1982: 30).

On the other hand . . .

In Christian prison relationships, motivations are usually purer.

"The relationships may begin when a co-ed Christian group ministers at the prison," he (Novak) explains. Or the convict may write to Christian periodicals requesting pen pals. Many respondents will be women.

Mystique and fantasy may even innocently compel the Christian woman, Novak believes.

"He oozes with all kinds of needs," Bobby adds. "This may be the thing that attracts a Christian woman."

The inmate always seems on top spiritually and commends the religious activity alive in prison. The woman might wish she could share this ecstatic Christian experience (Roberts, 1982: 30).

The distinctions between the two types of motives seem to be interpretable as spiritual or non-spiritual in nature. This could be understood to mean that even Christian women might fit into the portrayal of non-Christian prison relationships; whereby, acceptance of Christ and involvement in spiritual programs may simply not be a major concern.

Roberts' article concludes with forewarnings and recommendations:

A wedding only complicates matters, however. The prisoner feels more responsible for his bride and becomes emotionally and spiritually frustrated. He begins to hide spiritual deterioration, but his new wife still sees him as a giant among Christians. Both anticipate his parole date, which may provide a rude awakening.

A woman faces many revelations concerning her newly-freed husband. He may have lied about his imprisonment. Instead of burglary, it could have been for child molesting, rape, or attempted murder. He might have had a homosexual lifestyle in prison or perhaps a serious drug problem.

It isn't sufficient either to wait a few days after his release to marry him. A man needs time to prove himself. If he presents a false image to the woman, it may take a while for that to surface.

"When he has adapted to reality on the outside and the woman can see who he really is, then, I think the marriage has a chance for success" (1982: 30-32).

Further inquiry into the literature imparts some very similar arguments as noted above by Roberts, along with some additional data on prison marriages . . .

. . . an unscientific query into marriages of inmates at the prison here discloses that in Tennessee there have been several in recent years. Many of them involved prisoners serving life sentences. Among them: Tim Kirk, whose escape and romance with Knoxville lawyer Mary Evans was steamy grist for a television movie (both have since married others); and James Earl Ray, Martin Luther King's assassin.

The men's motives seem apparent. A wife on the outside gives them someone they can count on to help gain parole, for visits, money, food, sometimes sex or contraband, and love and compassion in the brutal, all-male prison environment.

Again, no comprehensive studies exist, but in interviews with several women who have married men serving long sentences at the penitentiary, similarities emerge.

For the most part, the women previously have had poor marriages or bad relationships. Some were physically abused and many were emotionally neglected. The wives describe their current marriages in relative terms--better than the "free world" relationships they had before.

Indeed, there is no neat formula or reliable stereotype for wives of prison inmates. The types of women who marry prisoners vary widely--in age, race, education, religious beliefs and even looks (Duning, 1985b).

Accordingly, there is no consensus on this subject and the views as to why women choose to spend their married life with a prisoner. Mike Miller, a Vanderbilt sociologist, studied twenty prison marriages.² He believes that the women do not necessarily have a problem attracting other men. "The marriages, Miller maintains, are nothing more than an extension of the user relationship" (Duning, 1985c).

2

Dr. Miller was contacted for acquisition of his data; he stated that his study has not been published and that the material is not organized enough to assist in this research.

Miller sees the wives as "masochists," women who become a man's "mule, his gopher." He agrees with the notion of the prisoners being manipulators, adding that "the women basically fall under the convicts' sinister spell" (Duning, 1985c).

Diverging from Miller's contention that "it's totally a sham," Reverend Jeff Blum regards prison marriages as "no different than their free world counterparts . . . like any marriages, they meet the couple's need in some way" (Duning, 1985c).

Dr. Les Hutchinson, a clinical psychologist and former director of psychological services at the Tennessee State Penitentiary, developed three categories in which women who do marry prisoners may fall into:

1. Women who have had poor relationships in the past. Some may have been physically abused, for example, and see marriage to a prisoner as "safe"--a way to be married but avoid the stress and demands of having a husband at home.
2. Women who are idealistic. These wives see their marriage to a condemned or sentenced man as heroic in some way. They find themselves fighting against the "system" on behalf of their spouse, the "underdog." In addition, the marriage may make the wives feel more important by "latching onto somebody else's fame or notoriety," says Hutchinson.
3. Women who are in it for the money. Wives of prison inmates have access to their husbands' financial resources, be they government benefits or wages from prison jobs (Duning, 1985c).

Dr. Naomi Goldstein, a forensic psychiatrist in New York, characterizes the spouse as "'heroic and self-effacing.' But, she adds, they are also very naive in their determination that their husbands can win release with their help" (1985c).

At this point, it is evident that the literature on prison marriage focuses primarily on male prisoners and their female mates. The reason for this imbalance is because prison marriage to female inmates is an infrequent phenomenon. Reverend Kaki Friscis-Warren, who has performed a number of prison marriages, says "'It's just sexism; a woman is much more likely to stick by a man in prison,' than vice versa" (Duning, 1985c).

Among the literature on prison marriage, estimates of the number of marriages each year nationally are contradictory. Roberts (1982) states that one thousand weddings occur yearly in California. Whereas, Duning (1985c) maintains that:

Although there are no official statistics, one estimate says that roughly 1,000 of the 2.4 million women in this country who marry each year will choose a prison inmate as their groom.

Because no other data was located during the course of research for this study to verify an exact number of marriages, nationally or by state, the estimate of one thousand prison marriages in California alone indicates a much larger number nationally.

Accordingly,

. . . Hollywood romances about women who love outlaws may seem implausible. But real life love affairs between "free world" women and imprisoned men are hardly unusual.

In fact, they are "pretty common," according to Mccurdy Lipsey, criminology professor at Tennessee State University.

"I've observed women who visit the prison and lose their objectivity--even professional women who get involved with inmates," Lipsey says (Duning, 1985c).

Legal Considerations

This section, discusses some of the issues involved with prisoner appellant cases of the recent past. It is evident that, as a last resort, an inmate's voice will be heard and his case given an objective consideration in the court of law. The cases that are reviewed in this section contain two major considerations: the prisoner's rights, and the prison's needs (i.e., in order that the institution can accomplish its security and rehabilitative goals).

Arguments for or against a prisoner's right to marry must be both rational and reasonable.

In sum, Supreme Court precedent suggests a two-part standard for evaluating prison regulations regarding inmate marriages. First, the prison regulation must further a substantial governmental interest. A regulation will be taken to further such an interest if it is rationally related to it. Second, a regulation's restriction on marriage must be no greater than necessary to protect the governmental interest involved. This two-part standard should be applied with a wide-ranging deference to the expert judgment of prison administrators.¹

The ambiguities found in appellant cases on prison marriage stem from the various ways in which the two criteria above are capable of being interpreted. At the same time, a prisoner's constitutional rights must be retained. Hereto, "expert judgments" of correction officials and a prison's regulations are subject to careful scrutiny by the courts when a prisoner's rights are violated unjustifiably.

1

Cf. Madyun v. Franzen, 704 F.2nd 954, 959 (7th Cir. 1983); Bradbury v. Wainwright 718 F.2nd 1538. 1540 (11th Cir.1983).

Prior to 1983, there was not a standard policy for permitting or disallowing an inmate to marry. Consequently, there were vague precedents substantiating a prison administrator's power to deny permission by virtue of the existing state statutes.

In the case of *Bradbury v. Wainwright*,² the U.S. Court of Appeals reversed and remanded a District Court decision, which had previously entered summary judgment in favor of a regulation with severely restricting categories of inmates permitted to marry. Bradbury argued that the regulation (Rule 33.3-13) deprived him of his rights guaranteed by the First and the Fourteenth Amendments. The following excerpt represents the nature of a typical inmate's appeal to marry.

Bradbury, according to his attorney, is willing to forego any claim to the usual incidents of marriage--cohabitation, sexual intercourse, procreation, and childrearing. All Bradbury seeks is permission to marry Vivian Sapp in a simple ceremony officiated by a notary public. Thus, Bradbury relies upon "the fundamental character of the right to marry."³ "[A]n individual's 'freedom of personal choice in matters of marriage and family life' is 'central' among due process liberties.⁴

The disputed regulation (Rule 33.3-13) prohibited a death row or life sentenced (minimum of 25 years required) inmate from marrying, as well as marriage between prisoners.

2

718 F.2d 1538, 1540 (11th Cir.1983).

3

Zablocki v. Redhail, 434 U.S. 374, 386, 98 S.Ct. 673, 681, 54 L.Ed.2nd 618 (1978).

4

City of Akron v. Akron Center for Reproductive Health, Inc., ___ U.S. ___, ___, 103 S.Ct. 2481, 2490, 76 L.ED.2nd 687 (1983).

The Rule did allow an inmate to marry if one of the following conditions existed: the inmate's release date is certain to be within one year and he participates in the community release and furlough program; the inmate is the expected parent of a child; or to legitimize an existing child.

Even though imprisonment causes many privileges to be limited or withdrawn, "prisoners do not forfeit all constitutional protections by reason of their conviction and confinement in prison."⁵ In Bradbury's case, the court found no rational relationship between the regulation and the two state interests of security and rehabilitation. In fact, Wainwright admitted that the Department did not consider what effect the regulation might have on Bradbury's rehabilitation. Instead, the department based its rules on the perceived effects of the marriage on rehabilitation. The Department claimed that prison marriage produced adverse effects such as frustration and increased suspicion of the spouse's fidelity.

As is evident in the case of *Bradbury v. Wainwright*, with careful consideration of the facts and the rationale for precedents, the regulations showed the willingness to assume security risk and inhibition of rehabilitation in a limited number of cases. In addition, the court made it clear that a specific standard of review for prison regulations governing inmate marriages had not been devised.

⁵

Bell v. Wolfish, 441 U.S. 520, 545, 99 S.Ct. 1861, 1877, 60 L.Ed.2d 447 (1979).

One other case to be discussed is *Safley v. Turner*. This case proceeds from a new marriage regulation ("the 1983 rule") enacted within a month following Bradbury's case. Heretofore, even with the court's decision based on Wainwright's insufficient evidence to sustain the initial judgment against the inmate, the new marriage rule seems to have as much room for improvement as "the old rule." The shortcomings of the 1983 rule were described as "far more restrictive than is either reasonable or essential for the protection of the state interests in security and rehabilitation."⁶

Appellant Superintendent Turner contended that the initial ruling contained erroneous findings of fact. The U.S. Court of Appeals, however, found the contention to be without merit and presented the following issues:

Both Johnson and Wool, *supra*, determined that a restriction on a prisoner's right to go through the formal ceremony of marriage does not amount to an infringement on a fundamental right because those aspects of a marriage which make it a basic civil right are already precluded by the fact of incarceration. This argument ignores the elements of emotional support and public acknowledgement and commitment which are central to the marital relationship.

With respect to rehabilitation, efforts such as counseling, teaching of job skills to promote independence, or development of outside interests to increase the inmate's self-image and self-respect would certainly be permissible ways to help an inmate avoid detrimental relationships without impinging on the right to exchange letters with another or the right to marry.⁷

⁶

Safley v. Turner, 777 F.2d, 1307 (8th Cir. 1985).

⁷

Ibid.

The court's use of strict scrutiny in the two cases presented in this section shows the necessity in determining the constitutionality of regulations. A prisoner must sacrifice only those rights that interfere with the attainment of legitimate penological needs. Regulations lose their power when they fail to protect inmates' guaranteed constitutional rights.

The arguments presented by the prison superintendents in the above mentioned appeals cases seemed ironic when considered along side the stated objectives of their department. Furthering state interests may be viewed from various perspectives. The inmates in the above court of appeals cases were able to present sufficient evidence in favor of their right to marry. They did not depend fully on the constitutionality of the right to marry. The inmates presented references supporting the notion that marriage assists in the rehabilitation of inmates, and they stressed the point that several states allow prisoners to marry.

The significance of court of appeals cases is the reality of issues that inmates must contend with when they desire to marry. Hereto, as Sandhu states, "the treatment of inmates is bound intricately into the structure and social processes of the prison community" (1974: 112). Outside of the prison community, however, are the rule making officials who may not fully understand the most therapeutic conditions that will enhance their rehabilitative pursuits.

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U.S. v. Lilly, 576 F.2d 1240, 1244 (5th Cir.1978).

Theoretical Perspectives

Of all possible forms of starvation, surely none is more demoralizing than sexual deprivation.... [This is the secret quintessence of human misery.... [Prisoners have] a hunger not only for sexual intercourse, but... for the voice, the touch, the laugh, the tears of Woman; a hunger for Woman Herself (Victor Nelson, 1933).

Although specific theories on prison marriage are not documented, literature on conjugal association, and the Exchange theory can provide valuable insight to the functions of prison marriage. It is evident at this point that broad generalizations cannot be made easily. This narrowed scope is due to the fact that diverse views exist concerning each partner, and there is a wide variation in the period in which a marriage will be maintained while one spouse is incarcerated.

From the painful deprivations experienced by prisoners, grief, damaged self-esteem and vitality, debilitated personal control, uneasiness, and frustration (both mental and physical) flourish. Sexual deprivation, simply the lack of close contact with the opposite sex, can be most devastating to the inmates. Consequently, inmates adapt to these conditions within the limits of their confinement. In most prison communities, homosexuality prevails as a result of the circumstances (i.e., deprivation of heterosexual activity), and at times it is not voluntary, but brutally forced upon vulnerable inmates. In fact, legal cases exist which relate the absence of conjugal visits to "cruel and unusual punishment" (for both the inmate and the spouse).

Furthermore,

For married men, the prolonged separation from any intimate contact with their wives has led to rates of divorce far exceeding the national average, and consequent family breakdowns of considerable magnitude (Burstein, 1976: 1).

Studies of conjugal association find clear evidence in its worthwhile benefits and practicality (cf. Goetting, 1982; Burstein, 1976; Haggerty, 1975; and Hopper, 1969).

Goetting's extensive research in this area shows that:

Conjugal association in prison is recommended as having the practical consequences of reducing tension and hostility among inmates, providing an incentive for conformity, promoting a more normal life style in preparation for the transition back into free society, increasing the likelihood of postrelease success, and fostering marital stability (1982a: 63).

Only two states formally allow conjugal visitation: California and Mississippi. Other states, such as South Carolina, New York, Minnesota, Connecticut, and Washington have family visiting programs which allow privacy for sexual activity. "Typically, a visit is allowed every two to three months, though demand and availability of space are influential determinants of visiting frequency" (Goetting, 1982b: 144). Participation eligibility varies among the states, "but a minimum period of institutional residency (commonly six months or a year), good behavior, and ineligibility for home furloughs are three common requirements" (Goetting, 1982b: 145). These programs have demonstrated beneficial results as noted above, in addition to maintaining family ties and fostering successful parole outcomes. Because there are such positive features of conjugal

association, one may question why every state does not implement the necessary provisions.

Arguments opposing conjugal visits are believed to be well supported by "security and operational problems" (Goetting, 1982a: 71). The moral issue perspectives are concerned with the inequitable favoring of married persons, the degradation of the spouses, and institutional corruption. Legal contentions relate the possible risks of fatalities or property loss to visitors who are not closely monitored. The practical perspectives look at the problems of economic limitation, custody and security, resulting pregnancies, and societal approval.

In one of Gallup's surveys, attitudes toward allowing conjugal visiting privileges were examined in the form of three options: good idea, poor idea, and no opinion. The findings showed that greater than fifty percent of both genders favored "permitting wives to visit imprisoned husbands for weekends in prison guest houses." By the other demographic characteristics, those who thought it was a good idea outnumbered those who thought it was not in a typical 2/3 to 1/3 ratio (see Gallup, 1984: 267).

It appears that conjugal association programs are easily implemented where social structures are simple and social values permit provision of a sexual outlet for prisoners. Conjugal association in prison is not built into the structure as a manifestation of natural living. Where it exists, it must necessarily result from bureaucratic debate and decisions weighing moral, practical, and legal considerations (Goetting, 1982a: 70).

Among the literature on couple relationships, some of

the concepts of Social Exchange theory are applicable to a discussion of the possible rationale and cost/reward features of the marriages. Nye, 1982 devotes the entire content of his book to the theory and its application. His initial assumptions are explored here as they are seen to relate to the behavior and motives of prison marriage participants. Nye uses the idea of generalized reciprocity in contrast with mutual reciprocity to help explain forms of generalized exchange between two persons.

The theory indicates that individuals compare their situations with identifiable outcomes, and make decisions based on known alternatives -- not necessarily the level of outcomes.

Whenever an individual or group has better alternatives (as they perceive them), the theory predicts they will leave their present relationship, position, or milieu for the alternative that offers the better reward-cost outcome. If an alternative is perceived as more profitable than the present relationship, the theory predicts the person will leave his/her present one and accept the alternative.

Of course, in stating that generalization, it is necessary to assume that the new relationship is enough better to more than compensate for all costs involved in moving out of the old and into the new relationship.

In deciding whether the alternative offers a better outcome, its effect on future outcomes must be taken into account. Humans can endure relationships, positions, or occupations that have poor present outcomes if they provide a basis for a profitable future. Similarly, choices that promise great immediate rewards may be forgone because they endanger relationships and positions likely to be profitable over a period of years (Nye, 1982: 16, 17).

Accordingly, people are members of groups; they make decisions based on how the potential outcomes will affect other group members. Therefore, in applying the above

ideas, a person may forgo certain rewards if the required activity involves great losses to other group members. Correspondingly, "if one increases the costs of other members of a group, they will increase the costs or decrease the rewards they supply to him/her" (Nye, 1982: 17).

How might inmates and their spouses be understood in relation to available alternatives? The inmate's options and environment are quite limited compared to the spouse's. It seems obvious that the consequences of marriage to a free-world individual are quite rewarding to an inmate, at least in the short run. Also, if the inmate does not sincerely expect to remain married "till death do them part," he may realize the divorce option.

The spouse, however, must somehow receive (or at least perceive) a more rewarding outcome to the prison marriage than a free-world marriage. It may be that the spouse expects a more rewarding relationship in the long run; this idea relates specifically to the existence of high hopes for the earliest possible release of the inmate. Otherwise, immediate rewards could be found among the number of assumed motives such as: feeling needed, loved, and heroic; securing a safe and autonomous position; obtaining increased income, either by receipt of the inmate's assets or added welfare benefits; legitimatizing a child; and/or simply fulfilling a previous desire to marry the person and substantiate an existing rewarding relationship. All but the last two reasons noted above seem more characteristic of

the spouses who meet the inmate while he/she is in prison, as opposed to having had an already existing serious relationship.

Although not mentioned as a conscious motive on the part of the inmate, two positive outcomes to the marriage might be (1) better attitudes and behavior patterns so as to earn the earliest release possible to be with and support a new family; and (2) improved self-esteem and the feeling of belonging/importance to a new family.

Of the twelve theoretical propositions included in Nye's book, four appear to be directly related to the perceived rationales of the marriage partners. They are:

- (1) Costs and other rewards being equal, individuals will choose statuses and relationships that provide the most autonomy.
- (2) Other rewards and costs equal, they choose to associate with, marry, and form other relationships with those whose values and opinions generally are in agreement with their own and reject and avoid those with whom they chronically disagree.
- (3) Other rewards and costs equal, they are more likely to associate with, marry, and form other relationships with their equals than with those above or below them. (Equality is here viewed as the sum of abilities, performances, characteristics, and statuses that determine one's desirability in the social marketplace.)
- (4) In industrial societies, other costs and rewards equal, individuals will choose alternatives that promise the greatest financial gains and the least financial expenditures (1982: 21).

The first proposition can be viewed in light of the existing autonomy both partners have while one spouse is imprisoned; neither have to answer to the other in so far as personal decisions are concerned. Having the outside connection allows the inmate to feel more a part of the free world; while the spouse is in control of the extent to which

the free world exists for the inmate (at least partially) and his/her own affairs.

The second proposition brings to mind the fact that inmates learn what the "women" want to hear; therefore, she may perceive a strong mutuality, and even reciprocate the sharing of ideas and objectives. Otherwise, there may truly be compatibility; once discovered, it motivates the couple to continue the relationship in a devoted manner.

The applicability of the third proposition may be seen in both spouse's realization that "someone" sees them as a worthwhile person - as an equal - which then gives the couple an opportunity discover more about one another. The findings of the present study indicate existing similarities in the characteristics of the spouses.

The fourth proposition may apply to either spouse, yet in different ways. The inmate may find greater rewards in increased support from the spouse, and the spouse may find fewer expenditures in supporting an inmate compared to a free-world husband/wife who is unwilling to do their part.

These interpretations of how the Exchange theory relates to prison marriages are no doubt suggestive. They are intended to aid in the understanding of a unique type of marriage. Still yet, "no theory of two-person interaction will explain any major part of human behavior" (Nye, 1982: 25).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The Sample

Included in the sample are eighteen male Oklahoma inmates, three of the inmate's spouses, and thirty-eight prison chaplains from 22 states. All but four of the inmate sample were incarcerated in medium security facilities. There were two inmates each in maximum and minimum facilities. The ages of the inmates ranged from nineteen to forty-six years. The ages of 14 of their spouses (reported by the inmates) ranged from twenty-two to thirty-nine years of age. Demographic characteristics of the prison marriage participants are shown in Table II, Chapter IV. The offense record of the inmates and a few personal characteristics of the chaplain sample are also presented in Chapter IV.

Research Design and Procedures

A specific research design was not followed in this study. Because this is a pilot study, the design is pre-experimental, and it most closely resembles the One-Shot Case Study. The value in this type of study is the richness of detail and insight gained by the responses (of the research sample) to open-ended questions. The questions

ensued from an intuitive estimate of the relevant factors of prison marriage. Each group of data generates ideas, and possible correlations of measurement variables. The lack of a control group, however, limits the validity and generalizability of the findings. Heretofore, since each sample is small, and nonrepresentative of the population they were chosen from, the conclusions of this study can only be suggestive. The subjectivity of the researcher, and the variability of the subject's perceptions (including what influenced their responses), reduce the reliability of the findings significantly.

All of the survey participants answered open-ended questions; the inmates were interviewed, and the spouses and chaplains completed self-administered questionnaires (see Appendixes A, B, C, and D for review of the questionnaires). Following the interviews, fourteen of the inmates were asked to give a comparable questionnaire to their spouse the next time they visited, or mail it to her. Two stamped envelopes were provided for the convenience of each spouse. Only three women responded.

The actual sampling process was self-selective. It was based more on convenience than on any particular method. Nonprobability sampling was used, since the population size was unknown. At the beginning phase of the survey process, two chaplains were interviewed to help determine what questions would be most relevant. The questionnaire was then modified and mailed to seventy three chaplains (which

included all but two individuals who participated in the National Institute on the Administration of Religious Programs in Corrections held at Oklahoma State University, May 12-17, 1985). No questionnaires were returned by mail (as undeliverable). Twenty-five days after the original mailing, thirty-nine follow-up letters were sent to those chaplains who had not responded.

The inmates were selected by either a chaplain or a case manager. The chaplain would give a security booth official a list of inmates names (from his/her record of prison marriages). The security guard would then attempt to locate the inmates and instruct them to go to the building used for the interview (either the chapel or visiting room). Four private interviews were arranged by the two chaplains who assisted in the research. As for those interviews that were arranged by case managers, the selection process was unsystematic. In most cases, a case manager would ask around (other officials, inmates, or the chaplain) to see who had been married while incarcerated. The case manager would attempt to locate the inmate and have him sent to the office building. A case manager was present during these interviews. In all cases, the inmates were informed of the nature of the study, either by the prison official or the interviewer. They were made aware of the voluntary nature and confidentiality of their participation in the study. It is felt that a positive rapport was established by the interviewer with each inmate.

Qualitative Analysis: Sources of Data

The initial research efforts of searching for existing data did not prove very successful, in so far as locating literature specifically on the subject of prison marriage. The closest topic was on conjugal association. A National Institute of Justice (NIJ/NCJRS) data base computer search was most helpful. All other data bases that were contacted were unable to provide information or reference material on the subject, namely: American Correctional Association, National Institute of Corrections, National Criminal Justice Association, National Information Center, and Bureau of Prisons Public Information Office. The one exception was the National Prison Project of the American Civil Liberties Union, who mailed back a short list of legal cases.

The three articles and the Ann Landers column excerpt used in the review of the literature on prison marriage were provided by individuals during the survey phase of the research; the references were not found documented anywhere. In addition to the existing data and research participants, informal discussions with correction officials and some professionals in the field contributed helpful information to the study.

The case summaries of the prison marriage participants were developed from the inmate/spouse survey findings. The data is presented in case study style because the sample is small, and most of the responses cannot easily be combined for a meaningful quantitative analysis.

Quantitative Analysis: Sources of Data

A quantitative analysis of the research data seemed questionable due to the size of the sample and the use of open-ended questionnaires. In fact, no meaningful results were obtained to establish a correlation of the number of marriages based on the provisions and specific visiting privileges of the inmates. This is because the chaplain questionnaire failed to specify what was meant by visitation rights and provisions.

The number of prison marriages per year, at certain state institutions, are shown in a table listing the state, security level of the prison, gender of the inmates, number of inmates, and number of marriages per year (based on the last five years). The data was collected from the chaplain survey. Some of the chaplain perspectives are presented in tabular form (based on the frequency of each response). The quantitative analyses of their responses are intended to point out the various perspectives and show the level of viewpoint consensus among the surveyed chaplains.

A few groups of data from the inmate/spouse survey are quantitatively analyzed. Certain features of the marriage participant's relationships are extracted from the case summaries and presented in a table. Findings, such as how the couple first met, how long they have known each other, who proposed the marriage, and how long the marriage expected to be a "prison marriage," are presented

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Results of Qualitative Analysis

This section provides an overview of actual prison marriages very similar to the case presentations of the sampled inmates. The material is derived from analyses of two newspaper articles and a magazine article focusing on the life styles and personal attributes of the partners.

A Synopsis of Existing Data

One fall day, behind the walls of San Quentin Prison, eleven out of eighteen scheduled weddings took place.

Eleven brides, some dressed in peau de soie or white silk, some with veils and others carrying formal bouquets, lined up at the reception center, waiting to be checked through security.

On the other side of the gun towers and high fences were the bridegrooms, dressed in the institutional blue denim garb of the California State Department of Corrections ("Couples marry at San Quentin," 1983).

One may ask, how did these couples meet in the first place? Actually, the circumstances vary as do other initial meetings that take place among free-world couples. Yet, to get an idea of those features which have been discovered among prison marriage couples, the following scenarios are presented.

Marilee Daniels, age forty and the mother of four teen-age children met Gregg, age 29 through an Easy Rider magazine advertisement reading "Thirty-year-old tattoo artist looking for an honest, no game-playing, real lady to share my life with." After about seven months of writing each other every day, Marilee came to visit him; shortly thereafter they decided to marry.

Miss Daniels has moved from Jackson, Michigan, leaving her four teen-age children in the care of her former husband, and is living in a motel close to the prison working part time in a Burger King restaurant. Her friends, she said, thought she was crazy ("Couples marry at San Quentin," 1983).

The above reference makes brief statements about some of the other women that were interviewed regarding their marriage:

Nancy Morales defied the strong opposition of her parents to come up from Los Angeles to marry Darryl A. Bacca, who is serving 17 years to life.

"I've spent my last \$100 on a ring for him," said 19-year-old Kim Patterson, fingering a gold wedding band encrusted with two tiny diamonds. She was about to marry a man she identified as Jesse, who must spend the next six years at San Quentin.

Ed Asbury, serving a sentence ranging from 29 years to life and who married his wife, Jane, eight months ago, said his relationship with her had changed his whole life. "When I'm with Jane the bars disappear," he said, sitting in the visitors' room with his arms around his wife. "The marriage is not only for companionship, but it helps me get through the trying times and helps me build some solid ground so that I've got at least something established."

Eve Waller, who was married 18 years ago to a man who will spend the next 15 years in San Quentin on a second-degree murder conviction, said her husband has improved 100 percent since he has been behind bars. "Before, he was taking me for granted," she said. "But now he writes or calls all the time."

Still, her life now is "just a different way of doing time," she said, sobbing. "You have to learn to live in two different worlds" ("Couples marry at San Quentin," 1983).

Carol Clurman Duning, staff writer of The Tennessean, conducted thorough interviews with four couples married at Tennessee State Penitentiary. Two of the relationships will be discussed here. The first couple has been married for two of the four years in which Tim has been confined to death row for robbing and bludgeoning a stained-glass artist to death (this was not his first murder conviction). Forty-two year old Zel, mother of two and now married for the third time, met Tim six years ago while working as a cocktail waitress. Tim, who states that he is forty-one years old (the prison records show him as thirty-one) has been in and out of prison for the past seventeen years, and was wanted by Georgia officials for parole revocation at the time. They were best of friends for the greater part of their first year together. Yet after only two weeks of cohabiting, Tim was placed in jail for a year prior to the trial of his current conviction.

Zel cherishes small intimacies with Tim; they are allowed only two one-hour visits per week. They can hold hands and lean their heads together. Guards keep constant watch over the death row visitor's room where sex is prohibited. "I have a sex drive and my husband does, too," says Zel. "But to have sex once and get caught is not worth it. It's the end of your visiting privileges -- and they can be terminated for however long prison officials want" (Duning, 1985a: 12A).

With possible death looming close, Zel centers her life on hope. She spends most of her waking hours

working in some way to help Tim and his fellow inmates. Five days a week she works as an assistant to the director of the Southern Coalition for Jails and Prisons, a prison reform organization. She is an active member of Tennesseans Against the Death Penalty. On Tuesday nights, she heads a support group for prisoners' families. On Saturday afternoons she visits inmates at the Women's Prison (Duning, 1985: 12A).

Margaret is a fifty-five year old grandmother with one previous marriage of twenty-three years and is working as a stenographer in Oak Ridge. Johnny is thirty-nine and has served fifteen years of a life sentence for robbing and murdering a Nashville gas station attendant. They met at Christmas time during prison mass when Margaret came to visit with her church group. They were engaged less than four months later, and have been married for nine years.

"It's my driving force," she says of the weekly visits. "I have problems and he listens, in a touching, loving way." Margaret says Johnny gives her the kind of attention - physically and emotionally - she never received in her first marriage.

Margaret says the marriage has settled Johnny, made him less tempermental, less volatile. For her part, she says, it has exposed an intimate part of herself that for many years was ignored (1985b: 3B).

These scenarios depict real life situations and descriptive characteristics of the couples. In fact, this section's depictions contribute attributes of prison marriage that are not tapped by the inmate/spouse questionnaires. Therefore, they should qualitatively add to the dimensions of possible qualifiers sought out by future researchers.

The findings do not necessarily yield specific conclusions. They do, however, substantiate the existence

of qualitative variations among prison marriages. There are also significant differences between the viewpoints of the marriage partners and "others." The review of the literature section revealed a number of contrasting viewpoints that were expressed by individuals who have worked with inmates. The hopes and dreams that keep the existing marriages alive are seen in a more negative light by outsiders looking in.

Prison Marriage Policies

Each state has its own specific policy governing the marriage of inmates. Alabama and Arkansas are the only states for which policy stipulations were acquired. The policies of these two states are very similar. The only real difference exists in the final approval of a marriage. In Alabama, the commissioner must submit written authorization for an inmate to marry. In Arkansas, the Warden/Center Supervisor/Administrator must submit written approval. The section on legal considerations presented basic regulations found in a number of state policies.

Based on the chaplains' responses, it appears that most institutions honor the inmate's "right to marry" initially; making special reviews of the inmate, by the case manager or a committee, a necessary prerequisite to the final approval. The conditions, that are required for an inmate to marry, most often discovered throughout the research are discussed below.

The intended spouse must be on the inmate's visiting list. Inmates previously married must submit a divorce decree. They must receive some form of pre-marital counseling; in some cases, counseling is strongly recommended, but not required. The intended spouse cannot be a staff member or another inmate of the department. The inmate must comply with all of the requirements of the state laws governing marriage. The inmate has to have made a satisfactory institutional adjustment. The marriage must not present a risk to security or the orderly operation of the institution.

Case Summaries

The findings of the inmate/spouse survey are presented here in case study style. As mentioned earlier, the richness of detail is important to this pilot study. The summaries provide meaningful insight into the lives and perceptions of prison marriage participants (or in some cases intended participants for those who are engaged).

The first three cases each contain combined survey results of an inmate and his spouse. The remaining case summaries discuss the interview responses of the the other 15 inmates. Appendixes A, B, and C are examples of the questionnaires used in the survey. A similar format is used throughout the presentation of the data.

Cases 15, 16, 17, and 18 render data from an original questionnaire (which did not include demographic data for

the spouse of those inmates surveyed). Names used for the sample are pseudonyms in order that the confidentiality of the subjects may be honored.

Case 1. Roy expects to serve two more years of his 10 year sentence. He has served at least five years thus far for two counts of grand larceny, and twelve years total for all convictions as an adult (which include two burglary offenses).

Roy is 35 years old, a sheet metal worker by trade, the father of one, and married for the second time. Sue is 32 years old, a housewife, the mother of two (one of which is also Roy's 5 week old boy), and married for the second time. Roy proposed to Sue by mail. They have been married one year-eight months and have known each other for at least four years. They met through a magazine ad; writing to each other for the first two years.

Roy was very happy with their pre-marriage relationship. He said, "We wrote to each other seven to ten times a week." They had each previously been divorced for eleven years. Sue describes their pre-marriage relationship as characterized by "friendship, trust, faith, believing, understanding; love, care once we got it all together."

Roy's reasons for marrying were "because we're in love, we were friends for a long time first." His motivations for getting married while in prison were to lessen the discomforts of being in prison (25%), and to confirm his love and commitment (75%). Sue's reasons were "love, companionship,

friendship, and understanding." Roy claims that the marriage "helps me realize a lot of responsibility in myself; it gives me something to look forward to when I get out; showed me how much more precious life is."

Roy describes their marriage relationship as:

Very happy, we're very good friends; she's my biggest buddy. Strong, caring, a lot of understanding and communication. We talk over everything in depth and come to a conclusion on problems. Loneliness, because of the situation; I have a very strong and serious role as a husband and father.

Sue describes their marriage relationship as "happy, contented, trusting, faith, talking with each other and being able to come to an understanding on a problem."

Relating to the post-release effect of the marriage, Roy thinks:

It will make me a better person, because I'll be able to do something useful and productive in life, taking care of my family and making sure they get a good education; something I've never been able to do. It'll definitely help me from returning. Convict talk says that these marriages do better than free-world.

Sue believes the marriage "Will settle him down. He's very contented and happy looking forward to getting out and making me and our kids a home and take care of us."

Each month, Roy and Sue visit approximately sixteen times in the visiting room, and write to each other approximately ten times a month. They both feel that the marriage has fulfilled their expectations, agreeing that they found the person always hoped for. To Sue, he is the one "who could love me and make me happy, who I can walk down life's path with."

The only discrepancy between this couple's responses was that Sue stated they were engaged for two years, and Roy said three.

Case 2. Bob expects to serve four more months of his 20 year sentence. He has served two years-eight months thus far for possession of drugs with intent to distribute. He was on probation twice in the past for the same offense.

Bob is 25 years old, a carpenter by trade, and married for the second time. Joan is 26 years old, a secretary, and married for the first time. Bob proposed to Joan in person. They have been married one year-six months and have known each other for four years.

They met at a club owned by Bob's mom. Regarding their pre-marriage relationship, Bob said, "We really trusted and depended on each other; we were close friends." Joan gave a bit more detail:

Very hectic! We were on the run for 2 years before ever going to the penitentiary and it was pure hell. But, it gave us the chance to really get to know each other, and I'm glad for that because he made a big adjustment in that time and got his head on straight and we became really close and realized if we could make it through all that, we could make it through anything! We've got something very special. The kind of love most people dream about. We aren't just lovers or man & wife; we're best friends too! I feel like god brought us together and put us through the ultimate test. So far we're passing with an 'A'.

Joan stated that they had always intended to get married, but it was not possible since they were on the run. Her main reason for getting married was "to give him a better sense of security about me staying with him while he's in." Bob's reasons were that he was "very much in

love. We were very close and had a real open relationship ever since we met." He said, "I felt like she was really for me (100%)."

To Joan, their marriage relationship is "terrific." "We are very open, honest, and trusting of each other. We have a partnership, not ownership." Bob's response agrees. He adds, however,

"I just can't share things with her. Her life should not have to change because I'm in here. I give her a lot of freedom. I've got the highest amount of respect for her, and depend on her for a lot of things. I am proud that she married me.

Joan sees the effect of the marriage on Bob as very ameliorative.

I'm sure the 'marriage' gives him security but our relationship gives him the incentive to 'be good.' Because I am so understanding and I do love him so much, he can discuss any problems with me and I'll do all I can to help him without making him feel like 'less of a man.' I'm a very positive influence on him and he looks up to me because no one has ever cared enough to stop and listen to why he did the things he did and try to help instead of condemn him. For the first time in 21 years he finally found someone to love him for him and that's all he ever wanted. That's what he needed to make him see the error of his ways! Now he's proud of the person he's become.

Bob's response is very similar, yet again he shares some of the pain: "It hurts because I can't be out there, and I have responsibilities I can't uphold to." As for the post-release effect of the marriage, "It's gotta be positive," Bob said. "It will make me more appreciative of our relationship.

Each month, Bob and Joan visit each other approximately 17 times in person, three by mail, and five by phone. They

both feel that the marriage has fulfilled their expectations in a very positive way. Bob said, "It's given me a lot of insight on life, and brought out things in me that no one else has ever taken time to deal with." To Joan, "Bob is the most understanding, caring, generous man that ever was. He thinks he's got a queen and treats me that way. I'm his queen and he is my king."

Case 3. Les expects to serve eight more years of his 25 year sentence. He has served five years thus far for robbery, and 22 years for all convictions as an adult (which include an uttering a forged instrument offense).

Les is 46 years old, a welder by trade, the father of nine, and married for the fifth time. Betty is 27 years old, a computer programmer and law student, the mother of one, and married for the fourth time. Les proposed to Betty in person. They have been married for two and one-half months. According to Les, they have known each other for four years; Betty states two years-six months.

Les and Betty met through a fellow inmate's wife. They wrote to each other and spoke on the phone for about two months before meeting each other face to face. Betty states, "We had a very good 'courtship.' A very loving one. Our relationship was and still is a very close one. I think because of 'our situation,' we think more of each other's feelings and wants." To Les, the pre-marriage relationship was "fantastic."

The reasons that Betty married Les were the "Same

reasons as most couples. The love for one another. Moral support of each other. My husband is a 'family' man and is a very good father to our daughter." ² Les's response is mutual in addition to the following motivations: to lessen the discomforts of being in prison (30%), to increase the chance of parole eligibility (20%), and to confirm his love and commitment (50%).

The marriage relationship is seen in a very positive light by both partners. Betty states:

Les and I have a very sound relationship and partnership. We discuss things until any disagreements are settled. We depend alot on each other. Our emotional needs are well taken care of. We have a great marriage.

To Les, the saying "a marriage made in heaven" describes the marriage. He adds, "We talk a lot about our hopes and dreams; it is a fantastic relationship."

The effect of the marriage on Les, is described by Betty as follows:

I think my husband feels very loved and wanted. On the other hand, I also feel it makes his time harder.

He now has us waiting home for him. And before we met, he had no one to care or no one to come home to. I feel 'coming home' is a new phrase with an all together new meaning for him.

Relating to the post-release effect of the marriage, Les said, "I won't be back - guaranteed. My wife makes me realize that there is more to life than being in prison."

Each month, Les and Betty visit each other 10 times in

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The daughter mentioned here is not one of Les's nine naturally fathered children.

person, anywhere from 20 to 60 times by mail, and about four times by phone. They each feel that the marriage has fulfilled their expectations more than satisfactorily.

A discrepancy noted between Les's and Betty's response regarding the expected amount of time until release (at the time of marriage) was stated as eight years by Les, and four by Betty.

Betty wrote a letter to this researcher (enclosed with her questionnaire). Below are some noteworthy statements of the letter.

As far as Les's job goes, we have already found him one. So upon his release, he'll not have to worry on that score.

The most difficult one, seems to be mine. Although I have been at this job for some time, it seems my husband's record is brought out in all job interviews. I am now considered to be a security risk.

Before Les and I were married, I was working at a police department as a dispatcher. At the time, I didn't hear too many 'grunts.' After our marriage, and while putting in applications nearer home, I ran into one stumbling block after another.

Although I have an I.Q. of 122, and every test given at any police department I have answered with 100% accuracy, my husband's prison record is foremost in their minds. Although I have not been faced with a housing problem myself, I have met a few wives that have.

I truly believe that we the spouses are truly discriminated against.

And of course, almost every inmate's wife is labeled 'easy pickings.' Even guards have tried the ole come ons.

I have come to the point where I don't discuss my husband's whereabouts with anyone besides family, or with friends who are already familiar with our marriage.

The cases discussed below are based on individual responses of the inmate sample. Therefore, only one pseudonym (for the inmate) will be used. Keep in mind that

the next eleven inmate's spouses did not respond to the request for their participation in the survey. It is unknown whether or not the inmates even honored the researcher's request to give the questionnaire to their spouse. No assumptions regarding the reasons for nonparticipation will be made. It is evident, however, that the three spouses who did respond showed a significant optimism for their marriage.

Case 4. Kurt expects to serve six more months of his 30 year sentence. He has served four years thus far for kidnapping and armed robbery. He is 22 years old, a construction worker by trade, and engaged to be married for the first time. Kurt's fiancée is 22 years old, a business manager, the mother of two, and planning to marry for the second time. Kurt said that she proposed the marriage to him in person. They have known each other for eight months (two of which they have been engaged).

They met first by mail. At the time they decided to marry, Kurt recalled, "I was depressed; lack of love and solidarity were experienced. I loved her in all aspects."

Kurt believes the marriage will be "a basis for starting a new life. She's like an inspiration to me; she has desirable values." His motivations are identified as follows: to lessen the discomforts of being in prison (45%), to increase the chance of parole eligibility (15%), and to confirm his love and commitment (40%).

In describing the present relationship, Kurt said: "I

feel needed. She is a very strong lady because she is taking a chance in life with someone who has fell. I love her for the chance she's giving me. I love her two kids and want to play a respectable role." The negative aspects of the relationship experienced by Kurt are "the mental strain and discomforts when she has to leave are greater." Yet, he feels that it is worth it.

To Kurt, "A man is not complete until he has a wife." He believes that it will be a greater challenge to be married, because he wants to fulfill his role as a husband and provider. Kurt feels that he must "maintain a certain mental level and not be frustrated by it." He predicts that the marriage will have a stabilizing affect on him after release.

I'll have to accept responsibilities, especially ones that I would not have if I were still single. It will have a good affect...a driving force to do things the right way, to stay straight. A basis for a new beginning.

The relationship is built on trust and understanding. It is stronger than if we were both outside, because there is no physical attachment, no sexual interaction.

Each month, Kurt and his fiancée visit each other eight times in person, 20 by mail, and a few times by phone.

Relating to his expectations of the marriage, Kurt said:

I hope it gives me some initiative to better myself, and a speedy release; it gets hard for a person. She's like an external force continually working for me. Now I'll have someone to keep me out of trouble...she's a 'trouble block.' Also, it will hurt her too if I mess up. We have a bind between us, she'll do all she can to get me out of here, and I'll do all I can to get me out. It will keep my confidence up.

Case 5. Greg expects to serve two more years of his life sentence. He has served four years thus far second degree murder.

He is 23 years old, an oil field roughneck by trade, and married for the second time. Greg's wife is 26 years old, a waitress, the mother of three, and married for the second time. Greg proposed in person. They have been married for one year-three months. They met in their home town six years ago.

Greg's feelings toward his spouse during the courtship are described as "good." His reasons for getting married are "love, and she was willing to wait." Of the selected motivations, Greg responded as follows: to lessen the discomforts of being in prison (5%), to increase the chance of parole eligibility (10%), and to confirm his love and commitment (85%).

Greg's feelings toward his spouse, since he has been married, are that "she's a good woman, she tries hard. I love her." The present affect of the marriage is that it "helps keep me out of trouble," said Greg. The post-release affect of the marriage is expected to be "good."

Each month, Greg and his wife visit each other 12 times in person and 8 by phone. His expectation of the marriage was to "have someone to love," which he feels has been satisfied.

Case 6. Mark expects to serve nine more years of his life sentence. He has served six years-six months thus far

for murder.

Mark is 30 years old, a plumber by trade, the father of one, and married for the second time. Mark's spouse is 35 years old, an executive secretary for the vice president of a bank, the mother of one, and married for the second time. Mark's spouse proposed to him in person. They have been married for one week. They met through the mail, and have known each other for eight months.

Mark described his pre-marriage feelings toward his spouse as "nice." His reasons for marrying were that it helps him and his daughter (who lives with his wife), as well as his wife's son (who never knew his natural father); thus making a family unit. Of his motivations, the following apply: to lessen the discomforts of being in prison (10%), to increase the chance of parole eligibility (20%), to confirm his love and commitment (40%), and for support (30%).

Mark's feelings toward his spouse are "great." The marriage has relieved some of the tensions in his life, especially regarding a home for his daughter. He believes that the affect of the marriage on his post-release life will be a significant improvement on his judgements and attitude.

Each month, Mark and his wife visit each other eight times in person, 30 times by mail, and 30 times by phone. Mark is satisfied with how his expectations have been met. He said: "It's nice to know somebody cares for you. I have

a home life for my little girl, and that means a lot."

Case 7. Dave expects to serve 15 more years of his life sentence. He has served six years thus far for first degree murder and the offense of assault and battery with a deadly weapon.

Dave is 39 years old, a plumber by trade, and married for the fourth time. His spouse is 39 years old, a saleswoman, the mother of one, and married for the second time. He proposed to her by mail. They have been married for four months. They met through the mail, and have known each other for two and one-half years.

Regarding Dave's feelings toward his spouse during courtship, he said, "I knew I would marry her when we met. It was a transference process." He described her as a "nurse/friend" due to the fact that she was a big help in pulling him through his divorce at the time. "It was a very good relationship," he said.

Dave's main motivation for getting married was to lessen the discomforts of being in prison (80%). His rationale was also to increase the chance of parole eligibility (5%), and because he needs her (15%). "She's the only family that I've got," Dave said.

Dave's current feeling toward his wife is described as "apprehensive." He believes that the post-release affect of the marriage will be "very good, if it holds together." He hopes that it will not get any worse than it is now. Stability is mentioned by Dave as a positive outcome.

Each month, Dave and his wife visit each other four times in person and one to two times by mail. He said that, prior to his divorce from his last wife, they wrote and phoned each other almost every day. Dave's expectations had more to do with psychological support than anything else.

Case 8. Paul expects to serve six more years of his 30 year sentence. He has served two years-six months thus far for burglary, grand larceny, and forgery. He has served five years total for previous convictions of the same offenses.

Paul is 25 years old, a plumber by trade, and married for the first time. His spouse is 23 years old, a night manager of a service station, and married for the first time. Paul proposed to her in person. They have been married for one month. They met five years ago through the arrangement of a fellow inmate.

The couple's pre-marriage relationship is characterized by Paul as having been a "close friendship." Although they met while he was incarcerated, they spent "free-world" time together for three months. But Paul went ended up back in prison.

Paul discussed his reasons for getting married:

Being in prison with a 30 year sentence, it helps if you have somebody who cares for you. After a certain age, your parents - they still care for you - but it's good to have someone of the opposite sex who cares. And, it helps for parole.

His motivations are identified as follows: to lessen the discomforts of being in prison (40%), to increase the chance

of parole eligibility (20%), and to confirm his love and commitment (40%).

Paul describes the marriage relationship as "a good one. Being married in here, there is a lot more trust to it, than out on the street. You rely on each other."

Relating to the post-release affect of the

I'm hoping it will settle me down. It will be a responsibility that I didn't have before. Anymore trouble I would get in would put my wife and family members through problems, and I can't see doing that.

Each month, Paul and his wife visit each other two times in person, nine by mail, and four by phone. It was vague as to whether or not his expectations have been fulfilled. He simply said, "She and I know what to expect. We've known each other a while, and she accepted the situation."

Case 9. Ted expects to serve three more years of his 17 year sentence. He has served four years thus far for armed robbery, and five years total for all convictions as an adult (which include a forged prescriptions offense).

Ted is 33 years old, a carpenter by trade, and married for the second time. His spouse is 29 years old, a hair stylist, and married for the first time. The couple has a six month old daughter. Ted proposed by mail. They have been married for two years. They met six years ago at a hometown football game.

Ted describes the pre-marriage relationship as "good." His reasons for getting married are discussed below.

I thought it would help her. She was madly in love

with me. I wanted to get married too, I guess. Her brother and his wife got robbed and murdered, followed by the death of her grandfather. My emotions got the best of me and I proposed.

Ted's motivations are identified as follows: to lessen the discomforts of being in prison (20%), to increase the chance of parole eligibility (50%), and to confirm his love and commitment (30%).

When asked to describe his marriage relationship, Ted said: "Right now it's great. I don't know how it will be next week. It's like a merry-go-round." Relating to the affect that the marriage has had while in prison, Ted remarked:

It's not what I thought it would be for either of us; it's not fair. This is America. California has conjugal visits; this is a backward state. I don't see how any marriage survives in here. It takes a hell of a couple to survive. When I came in, I didn't have anything. Now I feel I've found everything I've been looking for [a wife and a new baby]. The harder you try to get out, the harder they make it on you.

As for Ted's perception of the post-release affect of the marriage, he simply wants to get out and take care of his family as soon as possible. Ted feels that the marriage and baby have turned his whole life around. Though he stressed that he would not advise anyone to have a prison marriage.

Each month, Ted and his wife visit each other 12 times in person, 12 by mail, and about four times by phone. When asked if his expectations have been fulfilled, he responded affirmatively, with the emphasis: "Especially since my daughter was born."

Case 10. Guy is divorced from his prison marriage wife.

The data in this case will ^{be} treated similarly to the other case summaries, and will relate his situation at the time of the marriage.

Guy expected to serve one and one-half years of his five year sentence. He had served that same amount of time prior to his marriage, for first degree burglary and possession of drugs with intent to distribute offenses. He had several other convictions for which he has served five years.

At the time of marriage, Guy was 19 years old, a construction worker by trade, the father of two, and married for the second time. His spouse was 39 years old, an accountant, and married for the third time. Guy proposed to her in person. They were married for two years. They met at a work release center where Guy was a resident, his spouse a staff member. They had known each other for four months prior to the marriage.

Around the time of their engagement, they worked closely together while Guy went through a drug treatment program at the center. His spouse was a big motivation in the recovery process. In addition, she gave him new clothes and supported him "real good."

Guy stated that his reasons for getting married were: "For the security and love; she had everything I wanted. I didn't have to start over from ground one." Guy claimed that his motivations were to lessen the discomforts of being in prison (25%), and to confirm his love and commitment

(75%).

In describing the marriage relationship, Guy said: "It was very nice, but I wasn't really ready. I didn't want to lose what I had. She made me feel real good about myself because she was sophisticated."

Guy and his spouse were able to spend weekends together when he got a pass. She wrote and sent "Hallmark" cards to him about 15 times per month, and they visited by phone, if they did not see each other, every day.

Case 11. Don expects to serve ten more months of his life sentence. He has served nine years thus far for second degree murder; including convictions for robbery, two counts of burglary, and escape from prison.

Don is 29 years old, a paralegal worker by trade, and plans to be married for the first time. His fiancée is 31 years old, a bank bookkeeper, and will marry for the second time. Don proposed to her in person. They initially met as pen pals through Don's mother six months ago. They met in person four months ago and plan to marry four months from now.

Regarding the situation at the time they decided to marry, Don's fiancée was in the process of her divorce. "Yesterday was the last day she wore a rib belt from her husband beating her up," said Don. He assisted her with all of the legal work for the divorce to save attorney fees. Their relationship is described by Don as a "world wind romance. From the time we met, everything seemed to click.

I've never felt this comfortable with a person. I've always been the kind of person that avoided marriage at all cost."

Don's motivations for getting married are to lessen the discomforts of being in prison (2%), and to confirm his love and commitment (98%). Regarding what affect he thinks the marriage will have on him while in prison, Don said:

She's had a hell of an affect on me already. Before we met, I wanted out. I have found a hell of a breach in the security. I've got a reason now to legalize my way out. It's changed my way of thinking. I don't want to jeopardize anything. All of my thoughts include her, and she's including me in her life and plans.

As for the post-release affect of the marriage, Don believes it will be a stabilizing force. He used to be very wild. Yet now he is looking forward to settling down to a "normal" life. "I think time will help. She's already talking about 'ours' in everything she says," Don proclaimed.

Each month, Don and his future wife visit each other five to eight times in person, and 14 times by mail. Don said "All of my beliefs about prison marriage - which were negative - left when I met her. It requires a lot of work and understanding."

Case 12. Phil expects to serve one more month of his 40 year sentence. He has served two years-nine months thus far for armed robbery. He is currently filing for a divorce.

Phil is 26 years old, a paralegal worker by trade, and married for the first time. His spouse is 28 years old, and married for the second time. Phil does not know what her occupation is. He proposed to her in person. They have

been married for one year-six months. They met two years ago at an inmate assessment center. Phil was an inmate doing intake work, his spouse was in for an assessment.

When asked to describe the pre-marriage relationship, Phil responded: "nothing." During the first five months, they were able to visit for two to three hours a day. Then she was transferred to another prison, so they were only able to write to each other.

Phil admits that he got married for all of the wrong reasons. He was told by correction officials that he would not be able to marry the woman; so he had to prove that he could do it (90%). To lessen the discomforts of being in prison (10%) was also a motivation for Phil. He claimed that the only way he could write to his mate (or to even visit after release) was to be married to her.

Phil believes that they really never had a marriage relationship. There was "no" affect of the marriage on Phil. He said: "It's stupid, because you're still in here and you can't have any kind of relationship, and that's the whole point of getting married."

Case 13. Jed expects to serve five more years of his 15 year sentence. He has served one year-six months thus far for second degree burglary, and 12 years total for all convictions as an adult (the above offense is the one reported).

Jed is 27 years old, a forklift operator by trade, and plans to marry for the third time. His fiancée is 22 years

old, a social work assistant, the mother of one, and plans to marry for the second time. Jed proposed in person one year ago. They met each other two and one-half years ago at the fair.

Jed reports that they "get along pretty good. She can't handle it because I'm in here; there is a lot of strain on her and me." He states that his reasons for getting married are "because I'm in love with her. I think a lot of her, and I think it would work." His motivations are to lessen the discomforts of being in prison (40%), to increase the chance of parole eligibility (10%), and to confirm his love and commitment (50%).

Relating to the affect that Jed believes the marriage will have on him, he said: "It will be hard on the both of us; especially her out there trying to handle everything (bills, etc.)." He predicts that there will be no real affect on his life after release. "It will take time to get used to being outside. Life will probably be a whole lot better than it has been," he said.

Each month, Jed and his future wife visit each other four times in person, and 10 to 15 times by mail.

Case 14. Alex expects to serve at least four more years of his 20 year sentence. He has served two years thus far for armed robbery.

Alex is 24 years old, a plumber by trade, and married for the first time. His spouse is 24 years old, a home-maker, married for the first time, and the mother of her

and Alex's seven year old child. She proposed to Alex in person. They have been married for two days. They met at an arcade ten years ago.

Alex and his wife cohabitated for six years of their pre-marriage relationship. Alex described the pre-marriage years as "a normal relationship as far as it could be. It is very hard in here on both of us; probably harder on her. You've got to have total honesty and be content with what you have."

Alex's reasons for marrying were for the moral support he and his spouse each needed, and "to be legal." His main motivation was to confirm his love and commitment (101%). In discussing his marriage relationship, Alex states: "Now, she is more resenting to me. Before, it was 50/50. But now she knows her hold on me and it's like 60/40 her way." He believes that the marriage will strengthen their post-release relationship.

Each month, Alex and his wife visit each other nine times in person (37 hours), and 24 times by phone. When asked if the marriage has fulfilled his expectations, Alex said: "It's harder than in a conventional marriage. No, because I'm incarcerated and can't do the things I want and need to do. There are a lot of compromises."

Case 15. Ken expects to serve 15 more years of his life sentence. He has served 13 years thus far for murder, and over 15 years total for all convictions as an adult (which include a bogus check offense).

Ken is 45 years old, a mechanic and barber by trade, the father of three, and married for the fourth time. His spouse also has three children. Ken proposed in person. They have been married for three years, and have known each other for 32 years. They were raised in the same community.

Ken recalled that the first time they met, they knew they wanted to be together for the rest of their lives. In describing their situation, Ken said: "No matter what I say, she'll do it. She is in financial stress due to her retarded 25 year old daughter." When asked what inspired him most about his wife, he said: "She's just a magnet; we are drawn together. I think it was God meant."

Ken's purpose and motivation for getting married was discussed as follows:

There's no use living your life alone, and especially if you love someone. It's better to have a permanent commitment, even though we're not together. She feels the same way. It hasn't caused no hardship or no problems. I may or may not go up for parole, and she knows it. We just do the best while we're here.

Ken and his wife write to each other more often than any other form of communication, because she cannot visit every weekend. She cannot afford to call either since she does not work (due to her daughter's caretaking needs).

In relating how his expectations and needs have been fulfilled by the marital relationship, Ken explains: "I'm not lonely anymore. I've got someone to share my problems with, no matter whether they're good or bad; she does also." Ken feels that he now has a goal to work for, whereas he did not in the past. "I didn't care one way or the other until

we got together. I will work and make a home," he said. Ken expressed a very positive opinion of his wife.

Case 16. Steve expects to serve four more years of his 40 year sentence. He has served three years thus far for grand larceny, and nine years total for all convictions as an adult.

Steve is 41 years old, a waiter by trade, the father of six, and married for the third time. His spouse has two children of her own. She proposed by phone or mail (inmate was not sure which one). They have been married one year, and have known each other for 23 years. They met in their home town while in high school.

Their situation at the time they decided to marry is described by Steve as "in good condition." He had been single for 14 years prior to this marriage. He was inspired most about his wife's straightforwardness and genuiness. They had meant to get married a long time ago. Steve's motivation was to have someone there when he is released. He said: "I need her; we care about each other."

The most common form of communication is by mail and phone. Steve receives personal visits from his wife only a couple of times a year (she lives in the state of Washington).

He discussed how his expectations and needs have been fulfilled as follows:

She was interested in me before getting married. As far as my needs go - they can't be met here. We care for each other, and are both aware of this. I have something to look forward to, and I will keep out of trouble. I am satisfied.

When asked if he feels that being married will increase his incentives to stay straight, once released, Steve responded: "There is a possibility."

Case 17. Jack expects to serve two more years of his 40 year sentence. He has served eight months thus far for four counts of intent to distribute and the sale of drugs.

Jack is 32 years old, a brick layer by trade, the father of four (who are also his wife's natural children), and married for the first time. He proposed by phone. They have been married for four months. They met in their home town community 13 years ago.

Jack decided to marry his spouse because she was very supportive. "Someone to go back to, and with my four children who I care for very much." Jack's wife was always ready to marry him. He claims to be more religious than ever before and is "finding" himself. The characteristics of his spouse which inspired him most were described by Jack as: "A faithful, honest lady I can trust and look forward to spending the rest of my life with."

Jack's purpose and motivation for getting married was "to settle down, start on the right road, keep a commitment; I was free of things holding me back ." He expressed that he now knows she is what he wants.

He feels that the marriage will be a big incentive to stay straight after release; especially because of the children. "I take life more seriously. I will get a job and build a future for my family; whereas before it wasn't

30.

Jack and his wife visit each other in person usually two to three times a month. Otherwise, they visit by phone most often, and write once in a while.

Case 18. Sam expects to serve one year-two months more of his eight year sentence. He has served three years-seven months thus far for manslaughter.

Sam is 26 years old, a mechanic by trade, the father of one, and married for the first time. He proposed in person. Sam and his spouse have been married for one year-four months. They met seven years ago at a restaurant.

Sam claims that they had intended on getting married nine months prior to his prison sentence. He was inspired most by his wife's personality. His main motivation for getting married was "love."

According to Sam, his wife has a very positive attitude. She is the best candidate for raising his children, in his opinion. He expressed a high confidence in her. He believes that the marriage provides an incentive to do better once he is released. He plans to get custody of his daughter at that time.

Sam feels that the marriage "makes a big difference" in his life. On a scale of one to five, he feels that his needs and expectations have been met at 4.5. Sam and his wife visit each other three times a month in person, and write or phone on occasions.

As evidenced by the foregoing summaries of eighteen

cases of prison marriage, there are several possibilities of relationship combinations. Each subject's experiences and perceptions are most meaningful when they are considered within the context of his/her particular marriage. Nonetheless, there are some correlative findings among the marriage participant's responses (from both the survey and existing data analyses). In addition, there are correlative features between the participant's and chaplain's responses.

Qualitative findings presented in this chapter are based on two modes of exploratory research. The first of these, which is termed analysis of existing data, takes a review of published material focusing on prison marriage (none of which is based on empirical research). The style of presentation of these data closely resemble the case summaries. The case summaries are the result of the second mode of research: a survey which takes as its units of analysis eighteen male Oklahoma inmates and three of their spouses. The following section is devoted to a qualitative analysis of the foregoing research findings.

Analysis of Existing Data and Case Summaries

This section is based upon the writer's discovery of the most common features of prison marriage, derived by the combination of existing data and survey findings. Although there are numerous details among all of the couple relationships (presented in previous sections), common features emerge. Before discussing the commonalities, it should be

noted that the chaplain survey also revealed perspectives which are comparable to the findings presented here. A correlative analysis of the those findings is presented in the Summary of Findings section; in order that the chaplain survey results may be reviewed in advance.

The term case(s) in this section refers to both the survey and existing data on marriage participants. The focus is on the participants' viewpoints (as opposed to those of chaplains and others). Due to the large amount of detail in the findings, only the most prominent responses and marital characteristics will be discussed here.

Two forms of premarital relationships were found. One is where the couple dated prior to the inmate's imprisonment. Hereto, the length of time the partners knew each other varies widely. The second form of premarital relationship is referred to as post-imprisonment. This is where the couple's first meeting took place after the inmate began serving time. Again, there are diverse modes of first contact situations. For instance, one set of partners are introduced in person (in the prison visiting room) by an inmate's relative, or arranged by a fellow inmate. Another couple may have met through the process of a woman who responded to an inmate's advertisement requesting a pen pal.

A significant correlation between the length or form of the courtship and the success of the marriage cannot be determined by the present data. In those cases where a

post-imprisonment relationship existed, a few of the marriages were noted as unsuccessful (meaning that they were considered failures by the inmate respondent). Whereas, no pre-imprisonment relationships were noted as having an unsuccessful marriage.

No post-release prison marriages were investigated in this research. Ten out of fifteen married couples (rather than engaged) had been married less than one and one-half years. The other five had been married less than three years. Thus, the findings reflect short-term based views and experiences. With regard to all of the participants' self-reports, the influence of socially desirable responses may exist in the findings. This likelihood, of course, is not substantiated by any means.

The Exchange theory's "reward" and "cost" concepts (see pp. 27-30) are most applicable to the following discussion. The above terms will be used to distinguish the positive and negative affects of prison marriage on each partner. Descriptive statements which are indicative of the rewards and costs (of the prison marriages that were analyzed) are delineated below. They are based on a combination of the participant's reports of their perceived personal, or their wife's/husband's rationales. For instance, an inmate reported that his wife is now more secure, so security is included in the rewards of the spouse.

For the spouse, the most prominent rewards of the

marriage are seen in statements such as "Before, he was taking me for granted, but now he writes or calls all the time." Many spouses receive more attention than ever before according to the findings. They are less lonely, have a better sense of security, and feel very important to their husband. A spouse may in fact be in a "safer" relationship because of previously harmful or unsettled ones. Altruistic rewards are also received by spouses.

For the inmate, the marriage can represent an ideal situation. It enhances the quality of life for the inmate. "The marriage is not only for companionship, but it helps me get through the trying times and helps me build some solid ground so that I've got something established," said one inmate. "When I'm with Jane the bars disappear," said another. The marriage serves as a comforter, confidence builder, and stabilizer. It provides a forthcoming foundation from which to build on, in addition to an anticipated opportunity to fulfill the desired role(s). The idea that there is a "future" to look forward to after release is indicated quite often by the inmates.

The motivations that were identified in the survey questionnaire can also be considered rewards: to lessen the discomforts of being in prison, to increase the chance of parole eligibility, and to confirm the love and commitment. The spouse may deal with the inmate's concerns unlike anyone has ever done. She may inspire desirable values, and/or enhance his feelings of masculinity.

The rewards that are equally applicable to both marriage partners are emotional and moral support, as well as feeling cared for and loved. Very close friendships develop and are seen as "better" than conventional marriages due to the absence of physical attachments. Hereto, prison marriages entail tribulations and challenges to overcome, thereby making the partners aware of their triumphs.

The costs of prison marriage were seldom reported by the prison marriage participants. As for the survey responses, the questionnaire failed to specifically inquire about the costs; they were simply noted when they were mentioned. The analysis of existing data also showed only a few costs perceived by participants.

For the spouses, the costs include inconveniences and deprivations. "Life now is just a different way of doing time. You have to learn to live in two different worlds," said one spouse. Another stated: "I've spent my last \$100 on a ring for him." As mentioned in a letter from one of the spouse subjects, discrimination in housing and jobs may occur, in addition to being approached by chauvinistic "come ons" of other men.

For the inmate, the inability to fulfill the responsibilities perceivably demanded of the new role is an eminent cost (e.g., to provide for his family or participate in the childrearing activities). The inmate must suffer the pains of desertion or despair when the spouse has to leave. For instance, she may bring a number of things to discuss (both

good and bad), yet he cannot go with her to take care of them.

The costs which seem equally applicable to both partners are the inability to consummate the marriage and have an ongoing intimate relationship. It requires substantial compromises and tolerances. "Hard time" is done by the partners; interpreted to mean that the despondent affects of incarceration, and counting the days that are left are evident in each of their life, perhaps daily. Also, frustration is experienced by both partners.

Honesty, trust, understanding, perseverance, and a high tolerance for the stressors that are endured, characterize special qualities, as well as necessities, for the maintenance of a happy prison marriage. This concludes the qualitative analysis of existing data and case summaries. In the next section, additional findings of the participant survey are quantitatively analyzed along with the chaplain survey results.

Quantitative Analysis: The Data

Quantitative analyses of the inmate survey findings and the chaplain survey findings are presented in this section. Upon review of the research findings, the writer noted thirty-one pages of summarized data on marriage participants (excluding chaplain's and others' perspectives). The chaplain survey also yielded a substantial amount of data. So, due to the lack of a programmed statistical analysis of

the results, only certain factors are quantitatively analyzed.

The surveyed chaplains provided information on the number of marriages each year (average of five years) at their institution. Table I shows the number of marriages at each institution (identified by state) in relation to the prison's security level, gender of the inmates, and current population size.

An analysis of Table I reveals a low correlation between the number of marriages and the characteristics of the state's institutions. Consequently, the number of marriages at an institution cannot be predicted by simply knowing the security level, gender of the inmate population, and/or the number of inmates at a prison. The analysis did show a noteworthy relationship of small, all male prisons to the largest number of prison marriages (per 100 inmates).

Based on the quantitative analysis of Table I, the largest number of marriages per 100 inmates are in Oklahoma (8%), Oregon (6%), Michigan (6%), and Canada (6%) prisons. Oklahoma was overrepresented in the sample. This may lead one to conclude that the probability would be significantly higher for an Oklahoma prison to show up with a larger percentage of marriages than for the other states' prisons. However, each of the Oklahoma institutions (N=11) have at least two inmate marriages per 100 inmates. Whereas, sixteen of the other states have one percent or less.

Arkansas was the second most highly represented state

(N=5), yet all but one of its institutions have below one percent of prison marriages. The Arkansas female prison has two percent of prison marriages. The other states which have at least two percent are California, Kansas, and New Jersey. Of these states, California may rank high on the list because the state allows conjugal visits beginning with the "honeymoon."

TABLE I
NUMBER OF INMATE MARRIAGES AT CERTAIN STATE INSTITUTIONS

State of Prison	Security Level	Inmate Gender	Number of Inmates	Number of Marriages/year
Alabama	Not given	Male	250	2
Alaska	Min.& Max.	Both	2100	10-15
Arkansas	Mixed	Both	4600	0
Arkansas	Max.	Male	1850	1
Arkansas	Max.& Med.	Female	214	4
Arkansas	Med.	Male	500	0
Arkansas	Max.	Male	800	0
Calif.	Med.	Male	2400	48
Canada	Max.	Male	101	6
Colorado	Max.	Female	400	1
Idaho	Mixed	Male	1300	12
Kansas	Mixed	Male	1450	25
Kansas	Mixed	Male	2400	25
Louisiana	Mixed	Male	4700	20-24

TABLE I (Continued)

Maine	Med.	Both	325	0
Maryland	No information (new institution)			
Mass.	Max. & Med.	Male	1800	10
Michigan	Med.	Male	450	25
Michigan	Max.	Male	411	10
Minnesota	Mixed	Male	1100	no records
Missouri	Medium	Male	1750	20
New Jersey	Max.	Male	1500	25
New Mexico	Med.	Male	480	6
New York	Med.	Both	500	2
Oklahoma	Min.	Male	400	30
Oklahoma	Med.	Male	750	25
Oklahoma	Min.	Male	400	6
Oklahoma	Min.	Male	380	20
Oklahoma	Med.	Male	700	12-24
Oklahoma	Min.	Male	300	15
Oklahoma	Max.	Male	700	15
Oklahoma	Min.	Male	343	6-10
Oklahoma	Min.	Male	370	4-5
Oklahoma	Mixed	Both	960	36
Oklahoma	Med.	Male	571	21
Oregon	Max.	Male	2550	150
Tennessee	Mixed	Male	580	5
Tennessee	Med.	Male	640	3-4

Very little is known about each state regarding its policies and provisions. Therefore, the number of marriages cannot meaningfully be related to any causal variables of the prison system. The data as discussed above should give some insight to the possible ways in which the number of prison marriages could be measured and analyzed.

A quantitative analysis of all of the survey findings (participant and chaplain) was not attempted. The necessity for selective analysis is due to the diversity of the couple's situations and the conditional nature of the participant's responses. For instance, the number of years each couple expects to be separated during the marriage varies widely. In addition, the partners may not have known each other prior to the inmate's imprisonment. Therefore, the partner's knowledge of each other will be quite limited.

A correlation of the the two types of couples (pre-imprisonment and post-imprisonment) would not yield meaningful results. Rather, it seems appropriate to discuss the pre and post-imprisonment relationships separately. The following section presents a quantitative analysis of the participant survey findings, succeeded by an analysis of prison chaplain's perspectives.

Analysis of Prison Marriage Participants

The data in this section is based on a quantitative analysis of the inmate/spouse survey findings. Table II shows the demographic characteristics of the sample.

TABLE II
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PRISON MARRIAGE PARTICIPANTS

Characteristics	Male Inmates N=18	Female Spouses N=14
Race		
White	11	
Black	3	
Indian	3	
Mexican/American	1	
Age		
19-24	4	4
25-30	7	5
31-36	3	3
37-46	4	2
Education (years completed)		
06-09	4	0
10-12	9	8
13-15	3	2
16 (+)	2	1
Occupation		
Technical trade	10	1
General labor	5	0
Paraprofessional	2	1
Service work	1	1
Sales	0	1
Homemaker	0	2
Number of Times Married		
One	7	7
Two	5	5
Three	3	2
Four (+)	3	0
Number of children		
None	8	6
One	5	6
Two	1	3
Three (+)	4	3

The original questionnaire, used for the four initial inmate interviews (see Appendix B) did not request personal data about the spouse; except for the number of children.

A percentage for each frequency is not included in Table II because the sample is quite small. As the table shows, most of the inmate sample is white, aged 25 to 30 years old, married for the first time (closely ranked to second time marriages), and have no children. Most of the inmate's have completed 10 to 12 years of school, and are skilled in a technical trade.

Most of the 14 spouses are under 29 years of age and married for the first time (closely ranked to second time marriages). There is an equally high percentage of women with one child as there are with none. The majority of the spouses have completed 10 to 12 years of school, and work in the business or accounting field.

Of the six offenses reported by the inmates regarding their current sentence, murder convictions were represented in the largest number of cases (N=5). Robbery was second in line (N=4), followed by grand larceny, burglary, possession of drugs with intent to distribute, manslaughter, and armed robbery with kidnapping.

With regard to the number of convictions incurred by the inmates, there were 30% each - one, two, and three(+) time convicted felons. Most inmates had from three to five years left of their expected prison term at the time of marriage.

Four couple relationship factors were quantitatively analyzed: when the partners first met each other; how long the partners knew each other prior to the marriage; which

partner proposed and how; and how long the marriage is expected to endure while the inmate is incarcerated.

An equal number of the couple relationships (50% each) began prior to imprisonment, as those which developed afterwards. The couples who had pre-imprisonment relations met from two and one-half to thirty-two years prior to their marriage. The post-imprisonment relationships consisted of partners who knew each other from four months to five years prior to the marriage. The majority of all partners knew each other for at least two years prior to marriage.

In 65% of the cases, the inmate proposed the marriage (50% in person in the visiting room, 10% by mail, and 5% by phone). In 15% percent of the cases, the proposal was considered a mutual agreement by the inmate. The remaining 20%, where the spouse proposed, the request was done in person most of the time.

Most of the inmates (N=8) expected to be incarcerated for two to four years of their marriage. The next largest group (N=4) expected to be in for five to six years. There were two inmates each who expected eight to nine, fifteen, and less than one year(s) of incarceration at the time of marriage.

With regard to all of the findings presented in this section, the three spouses gave mutual responses to the same questions asked of their husbands. A significant exception (see Case 3 pp. 46 and 48) is that a spouse stated that they had known each other for two and one-half years, and her

husband expected to serve four of the married years in prison. The inmate of this spouse said that they had known each other for four years, and expected to serve eight of the married years in prison.

It is possible that a larger sample of both partners would yield discrepancies for the "who proposed and how" question also. Now this does not assume deceit on the part of the inmate, it simply implies that perceptions may differ as to who performed a function that is traditionally seen as a male behavior.

Analysis of Prison Chaplains' Perspectives

The chaplains were requested to provide only three personal characteristics of themselves: gender, educational level, and religious affiliation. Of the chaplain sample (N=38) only four were female. Their level of education ranged from 15 to 20 years (each year inbetween was represented). Twenty religious affiliations were accounted for. The Baptist religion was represented the most at 37%. Catholics and Episcopalians were represented at 11% each. All other affiliations were represented at less than 8%.

A substantial number of the chaplain perspectives are noticeably comparable to one another, as well as to others' opinions expressed in the literature review. Most of the chaplain's responses were given in essay form. The mutual responses were combined and ascribed percentages based on their frequency of occurrence.

The question, asking "what percentage of the marriages last until the inmate is released," was apparently difficult for the chaplains to answer because most inmates move to lower security facilities as they near community release. The other questions that did not prove to be significant were: "What percentage of the weddings are performed by you?" "What were the reasons for someone else performing the ceremony?" "Is there any post release contact between your office and the inmate?" And, "Are you aware of any attitude or behavior changes in an inmate after he/she is married?" This latter question is regarded as insignificant here because the responses to what is most beneficial and detrimental about prison marriages seem to reveal comparable information.

The majority of chaplains did not believe that religious beliefs or participation in spiritual programs are a significant factor in prison marriages. Religious beliefs are believed to occur in some cases for 18% of the inmates and 24% of the spouses.

Tables III and IV show what the chaplains perceived to be the rewards and costs of prison marriage for the inmate, spouse, institution, and other inmates. The terms beneficial and detrimental were used in the survey questionnaire; they are denoted as rewards and costs here. Some chaplains reported more than one reward or cost. Thus, the percentages represent the portion of chaplains that included the identified rewards/costs in their responses.

TABLE III

CHAPLAINS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE REWARDS OF PRISON MARRIAGE FOR
THE INMATE, SPOUSE, INSTITUTION, AND OTHER INMATES

	Rewards	Response % of the Sample (N=38)
<u>Inmate:</u>	Provides a sense of stability Feeling loved and secure Being related to someone meaningful	45
	Provides a sense of purpose Status gain; parole advantage	29
	None or unknown	16
	Provides positive connections from outside the prison	11
	Legitimizes a child	5
<u>Spouse:</u>	Provides a sense of being needed Feeling cared for Being related to someone meaningful	40
	None or unknown	27
	Provides the promise of love, security, and protection Certainty of husbands whereabouts	24
	Provides stability and support	11
	Legitimizes a child	5
<u>Institution:</u>	None or Unknown	52
	Stabilizes the married inmate and makes him more responsible Eases tension; a security benefit	34
	Improves attitudes and self-esteem of the married inmates Demonstrates respect for inmates' rights and their ability to make decisions and commitments	5
	Prevents legal action or grievances	5

TABLE III (Continued)

<u>Other inmates:</u>	None or unknown	63
	Serves as a stabilizer	
	May discourage homosexual activity	
	Eases tension	16
	Provides signs of normalcy in an abnormal environment	8
	The spouse introduces family and/or friends to them	8

The most often reported rewards for the inmate are that prison marriage provides a sense of stability, feeling loved and secure, and/or being related to someone meaningful. It provides a sense of purpose, status, and/or a parole advantage according to one-third of the chaplains. Sixteen percent of the chaplains either found no rewards, or did not know of any for the inmate.

For the spouse, most chaplains perceived the feeling of being needed and related to someone meaningful as rewards. 24% of the chaplains saw the promise of love and security, protection, or perhaps knowing where "her" mate is as rewards. Whereas, 27% did not know or see any rewards.

With regard to the institution and other inmates, the majority of chaplains did not either know or see any rewards. The stabilizing affect of the marriage on an inmate makes him easier to deal with and more responsible; easing tension and possibly reducing homosexual activity, which benefit both the institution and other inmates.

TABLE IV
 CHAPLAINS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE COSTS OF PRISON MARRIAGE
 FOR THE INMATE, SPOUSE, INSTITUTION, AND OTHER INMATES

	Costs	Response % of the Sample (N=38)
<u>Inmate:</u>	Increases frustration, anxiety, and despair	53
	Puts added pressure and responsibility on inmate	21
	Encourages manipulation and advantage taking of spouse	16
	Promotes possessiveness and distrust	13
	None or unknown	13
<u>Spouse:</u>	Increases frustration pressures, and despair	39
	Being hurt and used	24
	Separation from partner Predisposes unfaithfulness	21
	None or unknown	16
	Acquiring negative attitude of inmate Renders false hopes/promises	5
<u>Institution:</u>	None or unknown	63
	Expense in time and money	18
	Encourages abuse of the system	11
	Pressures of the marriage make the inmate difficult to deal with	5
	Legal and/or moral obligations to to the spouse of failed marriages	5

TABLE IV (Continued)

<u>Other Inmates:</u>	None or unknown	68
	Deteriorates confidence in the institution of marriage	
	Encourages additional manipulations	13
	Increases unrest and despair due to own marriage failure	8
	Pressures of the marriage make the inmate difficult to get along with	5
	Takes time away from staff dealing with their concerns	3

The majority of chaplains perceived increased anxiety, frustration, and despair as costs for the inmate. These costs are due to the lack of opportunity for intimacy, role fulfillment, or a "normal" relationship; in addition to the false realization of hopes. According to 21% of the chaplain sample, the marriage puts added pressure and responsibility on the inmate (e.g., dealing with the spouse's problems). The third largest number of chaplains (16%) believed it encourages taking advantage of the new spouse; in most cases he does not know anything about the spouse, and it promotes his manipulative tendencies.

Many chaplains perceived frustration and added pressure due to the lack of opportunity for intimacy or a "normal" relationship; despair, lost hopes, and/or doing "hard time" as costs to the spouse. 24% of the chaplains indicated that the spouse is frequently "used" and "hurt"; the inmate's

"traits" surface after release.

With regard to the institution and other inmates, the majority of chaplains did not see or know of any costs. For the institution, the expense in time and money was regarded as a cost to 18% of the chaplains. For the other inmates, the deterioration in their confidence of the institution of marriage, and the setting up of other inmates to look for a "sucker" through correspondence are costs according to 13% of the chaplains.

The inmates' and spouses' reasons or motivations for marriage are outlined in Table V. As mentioned previously, the chaplains may have included more than one of the statements in their responses. So, the percentages represent the portion of chaplains who gave the identified rationale.

The rationales of inmates (for marriage) are more often exploitative, than "conventional" in nature according to 79% of the chaplain sample. These respondents mentioned at least one indicator of self-concerned motivations on the part of the inmate. There were nearly as many chaplains (63%) who perceived "conventional" rationales; such as love, emotional support and wanting to legitimize a child or a common law marriage.

The rationales of spouses were most often described in terms of meeting some need, either personal or the inmate's. Otherwise, the "conventional" motivations are seen by the chaplain's as evident.

TABLE V
 CHAPLAINS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE RATIONALES OF
 PRISON MARRIAGE PARTICIPANTS

	Rationales	Response % of the Sample (N=38)
<u>Inmate:</u>	Increase chance for parole eligibility; money, drugs	34
	Visits, companionship, and the maintenance of an outside link	29
	Love and devotion	21
	Legitimatize a child	16
	Psychological and emotional support	13
	Previous intentions to marry Previous cohabitation	13
	Establish a "normal" life	11
	Status gain	8
	Lessen insecurity about the relationship	8
<u>Spouse:</u>	Love and devotion	27
	A psychological dysfunction exists Fill or meet some need	27
	Desperate for a husband Absence of competition	21
	Legitimatize a child	18
	Desire for married status	13
	Unknown	13
	Altruistic or heroic act	5

An analysis of the chaplains' perceptions of what other inmates think of those who marry while in prison reveal that 50% believe that it varies - some are supportive, while others do not see the rationale. 18% of the chaplains indicated that the other inmates are "well aware of the reasons for marrying and are not impressed by them." They see it as "illogical," "weird," and feel that the inmate is setting himself up for "hard time." 13% indicated that there is a general acceptance; "the inmate has managed to formalize a relationship to that extent while in prison." Also, other inmates consider them "lucky" because of their family, visits, furloughs, etc.

With regard to the chaplain's perceptions of what factors contribute to post-release failure (where the marriage dissolves, and/or the inmate recidivates within one year) 34% reported the adjustments he/she must make. The anticipation is greater than the realization, and the inmate's unrealistic approaches to responsibilities, as well as sexual dysfunctions are factors. Practically every chaplain believed that resorting back to previous behavior patterns, such as self-centeredness, irresponsibility, drug abuse, etc., are main factors contributing to post release failure. 16% indicated that not having known each other under normal circumstances, and not prepared to make changes in their own life in order to hold the marriage together are factors. Also, sometimes pressures of marriage lead to parole violations.

Factors that contribute to post-release success according to the chaplains are most often described as sound release plans, responsible behavior, family support, the maturity of the partners, and aging. 34% believed that being integrated into a spiritual home or community; and having experienced "togetherness" beforehand are important factors. Having had a long term relationship prior to incarceration is essential to 9% of the chaplain sample.

Summary of Chaplains' Personal Perspectives

Among the personal perspectives about prison marriage in general, the most frequently occurring response was that it is very difficult to support prison marriage. In too many cases it is "a vain attempt by people who are struggling to bring order and purpose into their life." Other popular opinions are that there is no advantages to prison marriage because it is very difficult to get to know each other and become involved in each other's lives while separated. "I make all necessary arrangements because I have to - no premarital counseling is offered or asked for since it's interpreted as an effort to discourage marriage," said one chaplain. Weekend relationships are extremely difficult for wives, and often children are neglected or spend their weekends in prison visiting rooms.

In those instances where the couple met while one is incarcerated, there is no opportunity for a healthy courtship, nor a "normal" relationship. "Most don't marry for

the best reasons and they don't last." Even if an inmate is married when he comes in, and stays more than one year, "90% of them don't last."

Still other views expressed by the chaplains are that conjugal visits are both good and bad. Some say, "It helps the inmate (especially) to blow off some steam and to get reacquainted with his family." Others indicate, "Conjugal visits will accomplish very little and raise more problems than they solve." An interesting note here is that the chaplains from institutions that allow conjugal visiting see it as beneficial and recognize the rewards; yet, most of those who do not have it at their facility are more pessimistic.

Practically all surveyed chaplains said that they try to discourage the couple from marrying. Chaplains also stress the importance of requisite pre and post-marital counseling.

When asked if inmates should marry, it did not appear very easy for all chaplains to answer "yes" or "no" without qualifying their answer. Among the "yes" responses, reasons existed such as "It is their God given right to become a family." "It is their constitutional right." They need the care and concern in their life. "It eases loneliness and provides significant other contact." "Both are presumably adults and as such can marry on the streets with little or no preparation/counseling, so at least a carefully planned set of interviews and pre/post counseling creates aware-

ness."

According to some chaplains, inmates should marry in some situations. For instance, when a previous close-knit relationship existed, if there is a child involved, and/or if the likelihood for "success" is evident. Also, most would agree that "The inmate should not be allowed to 'find' one to marry."

Those chaplains who said that inmates should not marry, expressed the following concerns: "I question the wisdom of marrying while an inmate." "90% should not until release." The marriages are too "unreal" or "unreasonable" and the spouse is not "objective." "Marriage is sacred and ordained by God, it is not to be entered into lightly." "A man and a woman cannot get to know one another under the conditions imposed upon them in a prison visiting room." "They have too many problems to contend with in prison before they are in a position to take on the added responsibilities of a marriage and family." Fifty percent of the chaplains fit into each of these yes/no conditional response categories.

Below are additional comments offered by the chaplains.

I have seen too many women used; people being married for the wrong reasons. We have no control over the marriages. Fortunately, the order on marriage excludes the chaplains as officiants.

Sometimes the spouse seems to be deeply religious and may even see the prisoner as a "missionary" project...they are going to be loving and helpful and healthy and love this prisoner back to wholeness and a straight life. Under pressure from the wife, the prisoner might get minimally involved in religious programming.

Hate to be cynical, but I am not sure I see them (the

benefits for the spouse)...Someone to love, someone to love them...many prisoners can do a good job at whispering sweet nothings.

I have spoken mostly about weddings - you have asked about marriages...perhaps I do not really think that some of the relationships that result in a wedding being performed and the relationship that follows that wedding are really "marriage" relationships... They are many things: few of them are real marriages relation-ships in terms of mutual rewards and mutual responsibilities. Few give any evidence of the kind of relationship that will continue after release. Sorry for the cynicism.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Research Design and Objectives

This project can best be described as exploratory research. A specific methodological design was not utilized in this pilot study. The design is pre-experimental, and it most closely resembles the One-Shot Case Study objective. Thus, the results of this study are rich in detail. They provide substantial insight to understanding prison marriage.

Included in the sample are eighteen male Oklahoma inmates, three of their spouses, and thirty-eight prison chaplains from 22 states. Data were analyzed qualitatively (based on the inmate/spouse survey results and analysis of existing data) and quantitatively (based upon the inmate survey and chaplain survey results). The chaplains' personal perspectives are also qualitatively summarized following the quantitative analysis of chaplain survey findings.

Specific objectives of this research, as stated earlier (pp. 2-4), are given below:

This research investigates the following questions:
What are some of the unique aspects of prison marriage?
What are some of the motives and experiences of the

partners? How do prison chaplains perceive the marriages? What are the typical policies and provisions regarding prison marriage? And finally, how might social theories of exchange be applied to an analysis of the relationships?

The research objectives of this study may be summarized as follows: to present an exploratory and descriptive synopsis of prison marriage; to assess qualitatively and theoretically, the motivations, costs, and rewards of the marriages; to quantitatively analyze the demographic and perceptual data of the sample, as well as the number of marriages each year at state institutions in relation to the security level and population size. Also, to discover whatever specific factors that might be predictive of post-release success or failure.¹

Summary of Findings

What makes prison marriage unique? Most prominently, it appears to be both the wedding ceremony and the lifestyle of the couple. One individual lives in an institution, while the spouse lives in the free world. Their living arrangements do not change after the wedding which is short and plain. If allowed, a reception might consist of cake and canned soda pop, along with a "regular" visit.

The couple lives by the weeks and months with the hope of someday uniting "totally." The partners must endure their situation with patience, honesty, rationality, and compassion if the marriage is to survive with minimal frustration.

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Chaplains were asked to state their perception as to what factors contribute to post-release success/failure (success: either still married, or crime free after one year; and failure: either divorce/separation, or reconviction/parole revocation within one year).

The findings of this research paper are based on a fairly small sample, and the questions were open-ended. Consequently, the data were not neatly consolidated into a statistically interpretable format for brief summary explanations.

Some of unique aspects of prison marriage were discovered in this study. There are various unalterable restraints on the couple's interpersonal relations, role fulfillment, and need satisfaction. A prison marriage requires significant compromise and trust according to many participants.

Before exploring the significant findings, it should be noted that there are a few differences in the two forms of pre-marital relationships (heretofore referred to as pre-imprisonment and post-imprisonment). The two groups were equally accounted in the participant survey findings.

In the post-imprisonment relationship a couple meets for the first time after the inmate is incarcerated. In these relationships, limited opportunities for exchange and courtship are highly evident. In a few of the cases, unsuccessful marriages were noted (based on a participant's report that the marriage dissolved). Whereas, none of the pre-imprisonment relationships were noted as such.

The length of time the partners knew each other varies widely. The couples who had pre-imprisonment relations met from two and one-half to thirty-two years prior to their marriage. The post-imprisonment relationships consisted of

partners who knew each other from four months to five years prior to marriage. The majority of all partners knew each other for at least two years prior to marriage.

There are diverse modes of first meetings. For instance, one set of partners are introduced by the inmate's mother. Another couple may have met through a magazine advertisement. Still yet, a couple may have been high school sweethearts.

In 65% of the cases, the inmate proposed the marriage. Most of the inmates expected to be incarcerated for two to four years of their marriage. A child may be involved with either pre or post-imprisonment couples. Heretofore, the findings revealed two children born since the couple was married in prison.

Some important notes to keep in mind are: no post-release prison marriages were investigated. In most cases, the married couples (as opposed to engaged) had been married less than one and one-half years. Therefore, the findings reflect short-term experiences and viewpoints of the participants. In addition, keep in mind: "No doubt there is a tendency for persons at any status level to tend to give the 'socially desirable' response to any sensitive questions that an interviewer might put to him" ("Scanzoni, 1982: 26).

The results show a variety of attributes, motivations, and experiences among prison marriages. The questions were purposefully developed to find the most relevant and unique aspects of the marriages, so as to facilitate in the

creation of standardized questions and hypotheses.

What, then, can be said about prison marriages that would make a research paper on the subject worth reading? The participants' views are both comparable and contrastable to "others'" perceptions. Accordingly, the positive and negative aspects of prison marriage (heretofore regarded as rewards and costs) are discussed below based on a comparative analysis of the findings for both groups.

Among the rewards of prison marriage that were reported by both participants and chaplains are discussed below. The discussion will be succeeded by contrastable findings of both groups. With regard to the inmate, enhanced feelings of masculinity (discussed as the reduction of homosexual activity and the spouse's attempts to keep him from feeling "like less of a man) are rewards of prison marriage. Parole advantage, visits, and comfort are also considered rewards. The marriage serves as a stabilizer, as well as an established post-release foundation. Love and commitment and normalcy in an abnormal environment are indicative of the rewards of prison marriage for the inmate.

With regard to the spouse, comparably perceived rewards exist such as improved sense of security, feeling needed and important, as well as cared for and loved. The spouse is less lonely, and receives attention not found in previous relationships. Altruistic or heroic rewards are also indicated in the findings for the spouse. The rewards that are applicable to both inmates and spouses are emotional and

moral support.

Only a few of the perceived costs of prison marriage are reported by participants. The questionnaire failed to specifically inquire about the costs in the inmate/spouse survey. Some of the participants did, however, volunteer their negative experiences. The comparable costs as viewed by chaplains and participants (applicable to either partner) are increased pressures and frustration (both mental and physical). A substantial number of all views noted in the findings indicated that it is very difficult to maintain the marital relationship under the restraints of imprisonment. Both partners must do "hard time" and sustain their existence in "two different worlds." The term "hard time" is interpreted to mean the hardships of trying to maintain the relationship under dejected conditions.

The inability to consummate the marriage and experience intimate freedom are indicative of the costs of prison marriage according to a vast majority of respondents. Separation anxiety and despair are also correlative costs.

One spouse reported that wives of inmates are subject to the "ole come ons" by other (prison guards included).¹ This fact is substantiated by Dr. Murton, who stated that it was not uncommon for prison officials to impel "favors" by the wives of inmates. The women might be promised that their husbands would, in turn, be given extra privileges, or

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Dr. Murton, of Oklahoma State University, shared his personal experience with inmates during a personal interview held during the research in May 1986.

additional visits would be arranged.

The cost for the inmates that were not included in the participant's responses are that prison marriage promotes possessiveness and distrust, in addition to encouraging manipulation and advantage taking of the spouse. For the spouse, the costs include being hurt and used, and/or acquiring negative attitudes of the inmate.

The rewards of prison marriage for the inmate that only chaplains reported are improved status and the provision of outside connections. For the spouse, the certainty of the husband's whereabouts was considered a reward by chaplains. The rewards mentioned only by the participants for the spouse are the feeling of no longer being taken advantage of by her mate. This reward was discovered through the close assessment of cases where the couple had cohabitated and/or had children, yet were not married until the partner was imprisoned.

A variety of positive factors were mentioned by the participants regarding the expected post-release affect of their marriage. Most of the inmates felt that the marriage would keep them "straight" and serve as a stabilizer. They conveyed the feeling of being inspired and strengthened psychologically by their spouse. The marriage was seen in an optimistic light by all but one inmate (see Case 16). Only a few inmates mentioned their concern about their wife's deprivations or sacrifices. Those who did conveyed a high respect for their wives and stressed the importance of

her freedom.

As for the chaplains' and others' views, responses are based on some form of direct experience with inmates, or studies of them. Dr. Tom Murton (1986), a previous warden of various prisons explains: "All the time, you are dealing with inmates who are getting divorces...you have more information on each inmate than on the average person." Hereto, Murton states that he would be "very suspicious of pen pal marriages," and would prohibit obvious exploitative relationships from earning the privilege to marry. For those whose marriage would legitimatize a child, or establish matrimony for a couple previously intending to marry, it would definitely be allowed; "if it gives the guy hope, maybe it would put meaning in his life," says Murton.

Descriptive terms relating to prison marriage that were derived by an analysis of the chaplain's and other's views (which are not included in participant's responses) are as follows: fantasy, unrealistic expectations of both partners. As for the spouse, irrational behavior (e.g., resulting from unobjective decision making), uncommon motives (e.g., altruistic or feeling important), and the attraction to the mystique of the inmate exist; As for the inmate, manipulative tendencies, and exploitative motives. There are a number of additional chaplain's perspectives included in the previous chapter (see pp. 89-92).

Participants used such terms as - strong, close, happy, caring, fantastic, good, very open, and honest - to describe

their marriage relationships. Most of them agree that it takes considerable understanding, trust, tolerance, and perseverance to keep the marriage going.

The effects of "prisonization" account for considerable impact on an inmate's incentive to focus on successful reintegration. Sandhu (1974) discusses the findings of research by Garabedian to illustrate the influences. Numbers (5) and (6) below relate significantly to the potential benefits of established marriages/families.

(1) there is a differential impact of prison culture on its participants in different phases of their confinement; (2) prisonization-resocialization are linked with the process of involvement-isolation on the part of inmates; (3) there is some empirical support for the "problem-solving" nature of the inmate culture; (4) the solidary opposition of the inmates melts as they approach the terminal period of confinement; (5) the process of anticipatory socialization may be strong enough to "undo" or "override" the prisonization effects; and (6) during the period of anticipatory socialization, prisoners should be helped to develop only realistic expectations, and they should be prepared to face some unexpected frustrations (p. 145).

The surveyed chaplain's views as to the factors contributing to post-release failure/success are presented in the previous chapter (see pp. 88-89).

The findings of this research show that there are both significant rewards, as well as costs, to prison marriage. The data substantiate the fact that each marriage's success or failure is contingent on several factors. Therefore, until a thorough study is completed on this subject, it is not possible to predict or generalize about the outcome of the marriages that take place.

Limitations of the Study

The most fundamental problems encountered in this research were found in the attempts to present meaningful data that was in fact not generalizable. Since not even demographic data was acquired for the populations of the samples (inmate/spouse and chaplain), the quantitative results must be interpreted in relation to the samples only. Furthermore, the prison marriage participant sample (18 inmates and 3 spouses) is very small, so only possibilities exist regarding the findings. The chaplain sample is nonrepresentative of this country's prison chaplain population.

The lack of standardized data sources prevented the research efforts from obtaining extensive data from a large sample. This study represents an initial inquiry into the phenomenon of prison marriage with hopes to contribute relevant data for the above mentioned purpose.

The main limitations of these research data are the low validity and reliability of the findings. Each interview situation was somewhat different. As for the chaplains, a self-selected sample, as well as their self-selected responses, reduce the probability of unbiased results tremendously.

One final, yet certainly not exhaustive, note on the limitations of this research is that the costs and rewards of prison marriage should have been clearly identified in the questions (especially in the participant's survey)

Suggestions for Future Research

There are many variables included in these findings that should assist future researchers with developing a standardized questionnaire for an inmate, spouse, and a chaplain survey. It would be helpful to first find out the demographic data of the population of each sample, so that a clear knowledge of the selection possibilities can be established. Then, *obtain* the regulation memorandum regarding inmate marriages from each institution that is sampled. This will help to understand the policy standards and provisions in order to make sense out of the number of inmate marriages at a prison.

Some questions to be answered by subsequent research projects that are suggested by this writer are as follows: To what extent do the hindrances (i.e., situational conditions) of prison marriage affect the outcome of the marriage? To what degree are pre-imprisonment relationships more successful than post-imprisonment relationships? What is the divorce rate of prison marriages, and how does it compare with that of free-world marriages? How do prisons which allow conjugal association differ from those which do not, with regard to prison marriage?

Suggested hypotheses to be tested by future researchers are as follows:

- (1) Motivations for prison marriage are considered no different than other marriages by the marriage participants.

- (2) Non-participants, such as chaplains or prison psychologists have little faith in prison marriage.
- (3) Prison marriage is therapeutic for both participants.
- (4) Prison marriages are the most difficult form of marriage to maintain.
- (5) More post-imprisonment marriage relationships fail than their counterparts.
- (6) There are as many prison marriage inmates who are sentenced to life in prison as there are those sentenced to a numerically specified number of years.
- (7) Prison marriages are likely to involve very close friendship relations between the spouses that are very rare among conventional marriages.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

INMATE QUESTIONNAIRE

For Cases 1 through 14

Personal History

Gender: M F

Age: _____

Race: _____

Education: _____ years GED: _____

Skill/Occupation: _____

Marital status: _____

Number of previous marriages: _____

Length of each and how it ended: (1) _____ (2) _____ (3) _____

Number of children you have: _____ your spouse has: _____

Client data

1. Correctional facility: _____ Custody grade: _____

2. How many times have you been convicted as an adult: _____

What were the offences: _____

3. How much prison and jail time have you done for your

current sentence: _____ In total: _____

4. For what offense are you now serving time: _____

5. What is the length of your current sentence: _____

6. How much time to parole eligibility or release: _____
... at the time of marriage: _____

7. What was the length of time from when you decided to marry to when you were married:

Relationship Data

1. What is your spouse's age:_____ education:_____ occupation:_____ No. of times married:_____ how far away does s(he) live from you:_____
2. How long have you been married?
3. Where did you first meet?
4. How long have you known each other?
5. Was there anything different happening in either of your lives at the time you decided to marry (e.g. change in prison status, job, living area)?
6. Who proposed? how?(e.g.,by mail,in person)?
7. Describe your pre-marriage relationship.
8. What are the reasons for getting married?
9. What affect has marriage had upon you while in prison?
10. What effect do you think this marriage will have on our life after release?
11. Did you have any pre-marriage counseling? ...
...Was it helpful?
12. How do your family and friends feel about your marriage?
13. Do you have any contact with your inlaws? Describe.
...does your spouse?
14. How many times per month do you have contact with your spouse through visits: mail: phone: other:
15. Describe your marriage relationship.
16. Has your marriage fulfilled your expectations? How?

17. To describe your motivation or reasoning for getting married while in prison, what percentage would you give to the following statements?
- a. to lessen the discomforts of being in prison _____
 - b. to increase the chance of parole eligibility _____
 - c. to confirm my love and commitment _____
 - d. other _____

APPENDIX B

INMATE QUESTIONNAIRE

For Cases 15 through 18

Personal History

Gender:

Age:

Race:

Education:

Skill/Occupation:

Marital Status:

Number of times married:

Number of children... yours: spouse:

Offender Data

1. Correctional facility:

2. Record of convictions:

3. Record of incarceration:

4. Type of offense for which you are currently serving time:

5. Current sentence:

6. Period of incarceration prior to engagement:

7. Period of engagement:

8. Remaining period of incarceration at time of marriage:

Relationship Data

1. How, where and when did you first meet your spouse?
2. Describe your situation at the time of engagement.
3. Who proposed? How? (e.g., mail, in person)
4. What was the purpose and motivation for getting married?
5. What inspired you most about this person?
6. Describe how your expectations and needs have been fulfilled by the marital relationship.
7. Describe your pre-marriage counseling experience.
8. What type of encouragement has been received by significant others? (e.g., your family, friends and other inmates)
9. Describe the amount and most common form of communication that has occurred with this person.
10. What is your opinion of your spouse? How does it differ from when you decided to marry?

APPENDIX C

SPOUSE QUESTIONNAIRE

For Cases 1, 2, and 3

Personal Data

Gender: M F

Age:

Race: _____

Education: _____ years GED: yes no

Skill/Occupation: _____

Number of previous marriages: _____

Length of each previous marriage: (1) _____ (2) _____ (3) _____

Number of children: _____

Spouse Data

Age: _____

Race: _____

Education: _____ years GED: yes no

Skill/Occupation: _____

Number of previous marriages: _____

Number of children: _____

How far away does your spouse live from you? _____ miles(s)

At the time of marriage, how much time did your spouse expect to have to parole eligibility or release?

For what offense is s(he) serving time?

Relationship Data

The following questions relate to your presnet marriage.

1. Where did you first meet, and how? (e.g., at a party, thru a friend)
2. How long have you known each other?
3. Describe your pre-marriage relationship.
4. Who proposed? how? (e.g., in person, by mail, phone)
5. What was the length of time from when you decided to marry to when you married (engagement)?
6. How long have you been married?
7. Was there anything new or different happening in either of your lives at the time you decided to marry?
8. What are the reasons for getting married?
9. Did you have any pre-marriage counseling?...Was it helpful?
10. How do your family and friends feel about your marriage?
11. How many times per month do you have contact with your spouse through visits: mail: phone: other:
12. Do you have any contact with your inlaws?
Please describe your relationship with them briefly.
13. Does your spouse have any contact with your family?
Please describe their relationship briefly.
14. Describe your marriage relationship.
15. Has your marriage fulfilled your expectations? How?
16. What affect do you think this marriage has on your spouse while s(he) is incarcerated?

Any additional comments are welcomed. Thank you.

APPENDIX D

CHAPLAIN QUESTIONNAIRE

Name _____

Gender: M F

Education: _____ years

Religious institute you attended: _____

Your religious affiliation: _____

General Information

1. At what institution do you work?
2. What is the security level there?
3. How long have you been a prison chaplain?
...at this institution?
4. Approximately how many prison marriages take place per year at your institution (recall the last five years)?
5. Based on all of your experience, what percentage of the marriages last until the inmate is released from prison?
6. Approximately what percentage of the weddings at your institution are performed by you?
7. What are the most typical reasons for someone else performing the ceremony?
8. What are the conditions and procedures to be followed in order for a couple to get married?
9. What are the inmates' visitation rights and provisions at your institution?

Chaplain's Perspective

10. What are the reasons or motivations for marriage on the part of the inmate?
...the spouse?
11. Are the religious beliefs or participation in spiritual programs a significant factor in prison marriages on the part of the of the inmate?
...the spouse?
12. What is most beneficial about a prison marriage as it relates to the
inmate:
spouse:
other inmates:
institution:
13. What is most detrimental about a prison marriage as it relates to the
inmate:
spouse:
other inmates:
institution:
14. What do the other inmates think about those who marry while in prison?
15. Are you aware of any attitude or behavior changes in an inmate after he/she is married?
16. What factors contribute to post-release failure (failure: either divorce/separation, or re-conviction/parole revocation within one year after discharge)?
17. What factors contribute to post-release success (success; either still married, or crime free after one year)?
18. What factors contribute to post-release contact between your

office and the inmate?

If so, what kind of statements are made concerning the marriage?

19. What is your personal perspective about prison marriages (e.g., the rationale, conjugal visiting, future outlook)?

20. Do you think inmates should marry? Why or why not?

Additional comments:

VITA

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