

CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF HOMOSEXUALITY, RAPE, AND PROSTITUTION IN MALE PRISONS

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The traditional literature on homosexuality in prisons employed an essentialist approach that held that sexuality was a static trait. To avoid the apparent contradiction that occurred when researchers were forced to explain how heterosexual men engaged in homosexual behavior, the literature shifted its focus to rape. Rape victims, prostitutes, and rapists were then defined as situational homosexuals, which served to blur the distinction between consensual sexual acts and coercive ones. This study examines correctional officers' attitudes toward homosexuality and prostitution to determine whether they reflect an essentialist approach to prison sexuality. It also examines officers' ability to distinguish between these various types of acts.

The literature on male rape in prisons suggests that a wide variety of programs and administrative tactics could be used to deal with this issue. These solutions include implementing conjugal visits and furlough programs (Ibrahim, 1974; Karpman, 1948; Lee, 1965; Nice, 1966; Scacco, 1975; Vedder & King, 1967); placing victims in separate housing units (Bowker, 1982; Ibrahim, 1974); providing vocational, educational, psychological, and athletic programs (Davis, 1968; Ibrahim, 1974; Lockwood, 1980; Wooden & Parker, 1982); and normalizing the prison environment by increasing the number of female officers (Ibrahim, 1974; Scacco, 1975). None of these strategies are based on empirical data and many of them lack any conceptual basis (e.g., educational and vocational programs). An interesting exception, however, is the research conducted by Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson, Rucker, Bumby, and Donaldson (1996). They report that both inmates and correctional officers suggest that rape would be reduced if there were (a) better screening and classification procedures available to allow staff to identify and segregate potential aggressors and victims, (b) improved staff supervision and more staff to provide it, (c) faster and more certain pun-

ishment for perpetrators, (d) increased utilization of single cells, and (e) better training for inmates and staff.

Surprisingly, very little research has examined how correctional officers view rape in prison or whether their attitudes influence rule enforcement or order maintenance activities. Perhaps officers are proactive law enforcement officials who help to deter and prevent rape, or perhaps they directly or indirectly facilitate victimization in a variety of ways. This influence can occur as a result of both formal and informal means of social control. Officers, as the police of the prison (Crouch & Marquart, 1980; Lombardo, 1981; Poole & Regoli, 1980), are responsible for formal rule enforcement. As such, they are more likely than other employees to introduce a case into the prison disciplinary system. In prisons, both consensual homosexual acts and rapes are prohibitive behavior and subject to disciplinary sanctions. Thus, correctional officers are responsible for charging violators when this type of behavior is encountered. However, it is not clear whether officers regularly report these infractions or whether they use their discretionary power and ignore some violations. For example, some officers may fail to enforce regulations if they define acts as consensual homosexuality rather than coercive acts of violence.

Officers may affect inmates' responses to prison rape in other ways as well. For example, at one end of a continuum, officers who are sympathetic and/or well trained might recognize the symptoms of inmates who have been raped and take appropriate actions such as making medical and psychological referrals, even if an inmate will not self-identify as a rape victim. Vigilant officers with good observational skills might notice that a particular inmate appears to be afraid to sleep in an open housing unit or that he is refusing to shower. Officers who believe that they have identified potential victims might take preventive actions such as increasing their patrols of the dormitory area or requesting that an inmate be transferred to another cell block. Thus, some officers may prevent some rapes or may at least make sure that victims get adequate services.

At the other end of the continuum, however, officers may contribute to a rape-prone culture. They may use rape or the threat of sexual violence to control inmates. Officers may use housing assignments to intimidate inmates. They may threaten to assign inmates to cells with known sexual predators as a way to gain compliance from those inmates who are less confident in their ability to protect themselves or officers may use housing assignments to reward predators who otherwise agree to "stay in line." Officers may tolerate coercive sexuality as part of a divide-and-conquer strategy—finding that sexual assaults facilitate division among inmates making them, as a group, more manageable. Officers may contribute to a rape-prone culture in less direct

ways as well. They may indicate their disdain and disrespect for victims by calling them derogatory names (e.g., “punks”, “bitches”, “queens”) or may use female pronouns when they refer to these men. Thus, perhaps officers are proactive law enforcement officials who help to deter and prevent rape, or perhaps they indirectly or directly facilitate victimization in a variety of ways.

There is very little empirical evidence available to determine where most officers can be located on this continuum. Surprisingly, very little research has examined how correctional officers view rape in prison or whether their attitudes influence rule enforcement and order maintenance activities. Whereas officers report that they should or would respond to acts of homosexuality and rape (Eigenberg, 1994; Nacci & Kane, 1983, 1984a, 1984b), inmate populations report that correctional officers are not responsive and contribute to rape in prisons (Davis, 1968; Lockwood, 1980; Wooden & Parker, 1982). The discrepancy in these positions may be explained in several ways. First, officers may report that they respond to rape because they believe they are supposed to say they take actions to ensure the safety of inmates. Second, perhaps officers are quite willing to respond to acts of rape, but they are unable to do so because of the hidden nature of the act. As a result, officers may end up responding only to those assaults that are reported by victims and many (most) inmates may fail to disclose their victimization. Third, officers may consider themselves proactive in their responses, but they may not respond to some acts of rape because they fail to define some types of sexual activity as coercive in nature. In other words, their definition of the situation leads them to see behavior as consensual sexual activity, rather than rape.

Officers who do not “see” rape cannot take actions to discipline perpetrators or help victims. A variety of factors may influence officers’ definitions of rape. For example, some officers may choose to ignore sexual acts because they think that the men involved are engaging in consensual sexual acts involving two grown adults. Thus, officers making rounds of a housing unit may discover two inmates engaged in sexual acts and simply choose to pretend they did not see it. Officers, who may be embarrassed to confront inmates, may simply ignore acts because they perceive no harm. However, it may not be so easy to distinguish rapes from consensual sexual activity because rape in prison also relies on extortion techniques where coercion is as important as outright force. Thus, some officers may fail to define some acts of rape simply because a knife is not at a man’s throat during the sexual act.

Therefore, this study examines correctional officers to determine whether they have difficulty distinguishing between rape, consensual same-sex behavior (sometimes referred to as homosexuality or bisexuality), and prostitution. It ascertains whether officers admit ignoring some inmate behavior

and surveys officers about their perceptions of homosexuality and prostitution in prison.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The earliest discussions of male rape in prison are found in the correctional literature dealing with homosexuality. These works (Buffum, 1972; Clemmer, 1958; Fishman, 1951; Kirkham, 1971; Sagarin, 1976; Sykes, 1958) focus on creating topologies of homosexuals. Most of this body of research, like other research on sexuality during this era, employed an essentialist theoretical approach. According to this perspective, sexual orientation is a static and permanent characteristic, and people can be categorized into two dichotomous groups—heterosexual or homosexual (see Eigenberg, 1992). This approach does not accommodate bisexuality, nor does it recognize the possibility of a changing sexual orientation. As a result, most of the early literature on prison sexuality concentrated on discriminating between “true” and “situational” homosexuals.

True homosexuals were described as men who had a homosexual orientation prior to incarceration—men who imported their behavior from the streets to prison. True homosexuals presented no challenge to essentialist theories; therefore, little attention was paid to their behavior in prison. They were, however, portrayed in a negative light and referred to as abnormal types (Clemmer, 1958), fags (Buffum, 1972; Kirkham, 1971; Sykes, 1958), queens (Kirkham, 1971), and effeminate (Sagarin, 1976). They were described as men who fail to conform to appropriate gender expectations and who exhibited feminine mannerisms, appearances, and nicknames (Buffum, 1972; Clemmer, 1958; Fishman, 1951; Kirkham, 1971; Sagarin, 1976; Sykes, 1958).

Situational homosexuals provided essentialists with a more interesting challenge to their theoretical orientation because they had to account for heterosexual men who engaged in homosexual behavior. The concept of sexual deprivation became a key factor in resolving this apparent paradox. Most authors noted that inmates basically had two options in prison, celibacy or situational homosexuality.¹ Celibacy was rarely presented as a viable option; instead, most authors went to great lengths to establish the extent to which sexual deprivation was a “pain of imprisonment” (Sykes, 1958). Clemmer (1958) and Lindner (1948) discussed “sex starvation” (pp. 261 and 207, respectively). Lindner stated that rapists were driven by “the white heat their urges inspire” (p. 204). Lee (1965) discussed inmates who “crave[d] sex” (p. 57) and referred to the institution as a “giant faggot factory” (p. 61). Karpman (1948) argued that inmates eventually lost their “self-control” because the “sight and smell of naked bodies, the parading and exposure . . .

charges the atmosphere with excessive stimulation" (p. 479). Sykes (1958) claimed that inmates were "figuratively castrated by [their] involuntary celibacy" (p. 70) and "men raped as a temporary means of relieving their frustrations" (p. 71). More recently, Chonco (1989) asserts, "inmates are anxious and have pent-up tension which they *have* [emphasis added] to release" (p. 79). These authors imply that men cannot control their sexuality and assert that heterosexuals "become" situational homosexuals in response to sexual deprivation. However, this body of literature did not clearly distinguish between rape and consensual (homo)sexuality. In other words, rape victims, prostitutes, and rapists were all viewed as situational homosexuals.

Rape victims are portrayed in this literature in a very negative light. They are referred to as punks (Kirkham, 1971; Sykes, 1958), made homosexuals (Buffum, 1972), involuntary recruits, and jail house turnouts (Sagarin, 1976). Like true homosexuals, these men are described as stereotypically effeminate and weak, although researchers claimed that inmates were more contemptuous of punks than fags. Punks were viewed as weak cowards who sacrificed their manhood. Whereas both fags and punks were portrayed as taking on a female role, fags chose this role, whereas punks were forced into submission. As Sykes (1958) noted, "Punks are made, but fags are born" (p. 96). Researchers failed to acknowledge that punks were not voluntary participants acting in response to sexual deprivation but were rape victims who were unable to protect themselves from the coercive behavior of predators.

Ironically, these same predators were also labeled as situational homosexuals. They were called wolves (Kirkham, 1971; Sykes, 1958), jockers (Buffum, 1972), and voluntary aggressors (Sagarin, 1976). In contrast to true homosexuals or other situational homosexuals (such as punks), wolves retained their masculine identification. One way in which "wolves" escaped stigmatization was to focus on the type of sexual act. It was argued that wolves maintained an active role during the sexual act—men who penetrated other men during anal intercourse or men who received fellatio but did not reciprocate in kind. Men who played the active role were portrayed as dispassionate, and their partners were merely receptacles to ensure sexual gratification. The use of violence also helped to ensure that there was no perception of emotional attachment (Buffum, 1972; Kirkham, 1971; Sykes, 1958) and helped protect these men from the stigma of being labeled homosexual.

In addition to rape victims and rapists, situational homosexuality was also used to discuss inmates' involvement in prostitution. The literature suggested that some situational homosexuals were men who engaged in homosexual behavior to gain certain goods or services (Buffum, 1972; Kirkham, 1971). Kirkham (1971) called these men "canteen punks." He argued that prostitutes were generally latent homosexuals who provided sexual outlets

for other inmates who could not attract a queen or successfully coerce another inmate into engaging in sexual acts. The literature also suggested that some prostitutes were not willing entrepreneurs using their bodies to trade for commissary or other goods; instead, some of these men were rape victims. Ironically, this process was labeled *seduction* (Fishman, 1951; Scacco, 1975; Vedder & King, 1967; Weiss & Friar, 1974) and usually involved one of two scenarios.

In the first instance, inmates, especially new ones, are offered loans, gifts, or commissary. Shortly thereafter, these inmates are approached sexually and threatened with physical violence unless they repay loans or the cost of the gifts. Second, vulnerable and frightened inmates are approached by more powerful inmates who offer to keep other would-be predators at bay. After some time, these “protectors”—inmates who might otherwise have raped the more vulnerable inmate in the first place—then threaten to revoke their protection unless the targeted victim agrees to engage in a sexual relationship. The targeted inmate often perceives himself to be in a no-win situation; he can agree to a coercive sexual relationship with one man (or sometimes one man and his friends), or he can face the threat of gang rape and continual victimization by a large number of powerful inmates. Thus, some men may engage in what appears to be consensual sexual activity because they are terrified of other types of coercion and/or violence. Some of these inmates may also be perceived as prostitutes if they elect to accept gifts or commissary as a way to make these situations somewhat more bearable. In both instances, however, it is a mistake to refer to targeted inmates as situational homosexuals who have been seduced into engaging in consensual sexual acts.

In general, then, the essentialist theoretical approach used to examine sexuality in prisons concentrated on identifying homosexuals but did so in a manner that failed to distinguish between victims and aggressors. Rape was identified as a response to sexual deprivation, making it easier for researchers to obfuscate the distinction between rape and consensual sexuality. As such, essentialists did not have to confront the apparently dynamic nature of sexual orientation. By shifting the focus from consensual sexuality to rape, they were able to avoid explaining why apparently heterosexual men engaged in same-sex behavior in prison. Doing so redefined acts of rape so that perpetrators maintained a heterosexual identification and escaped stigmatization while victims were stigmatized as effeminate and homosexual. Furthermore, the blame was shifted from the rapist to the victim by emphasizing characteristics of the victim that supposedly accounted for their victimization (e.g., that they were effeminate, weak, or homosexual men).

This body of literature purportedly examined inmates' definitions of sexuality in prisons; however, most of it was written without any empirical

data to substantiate it. The domain assumptions outlined in this body of literature sound familiar to anyone who has spent time in a cell block. Furthermore, the limited amount of research on officers and rape in prison leads one to conclude that officers do, in fact, adhere to at least some of these essentialist beliefs.

There is some anecdotal evidence, for example, that correctional officers have difficulty distinguishing between rape and consensual homosexuality. This is evident in the following excerpt from one interview with an officer: "Q: Do you feel that homosexual acts between consenting adults are wrong? A: No, as long as no force is used" (Wooden & Parker, 1982, p. 196). Other research also provides evidence that some essentialist paradigms seem to be accepted by officers. In one of the earliest studies on prison rape, Davis (1968) reported that many "homosexual liaisons" developed after inmates were gang-raped or threatened with gang rape, and argued that prison officials are "too quick to label such activities 'consensual'" (p. 70). More recently, a survey of federal correctional officers (Nacci & Kane, 1983, 1984a, 1984b) supports this assertion.

Nacci and Kane (1983, 1984a, 1984b) surveyed 500 correctional officers in 17 federal institutions. They found inmates reported feeling less risk of rape when officers were satisfied with their jobs (Nacci and Kane, 1983, p. 49). Officers also indicated they were slightly more willing to prevent rape than to deter homosexuality, which is especially problematic if some rape is being committed under the guise of consenting homosexual acts. And although some research indicates that bisexual and homosexual inmates are victimized more frequently (Lockwood, 1980; Nacci & Kane, 1983, 1984a, 1984b; Wooden & Parker, 1982), officers reported that they were more willing to protect heterosexual inmates from rape. The authors interpreted these findings as evidence that officers equated bisexuality and/or homosexuality with voluntary participation.

In addition, Nacci and Kane (1983) reported that officers overestimated the number of prisoners involved in both homosexual activity and rape when compared to estimates provided by inmates (p. 49). However, it seems likely that inmates are reluctant to admit to being rapists and that rape victims and inmates engaged in consensual sexual acts avoid identifying themselves because of the stigmatization that accompanies such an identification. Thus, it is possible that the estimates provided by correctional officers were, in fact, more accurate than those provided by inmates.

Another survey of 166 correctional officers employed by the Texas Department of Corrections (Eigenberg, 1989, 1994) found that most officers thought rape and consensual homosexual acts were common events. Officers, however, were slightly more apt to believe that rape was prevalent than

homosexuality; 9% of the officers reported rape was a rare occurrence compared with 27% who indicated that consensual homosexuality was rare. And although the majority of officers believed that they should try to prevent rape (97%), the majority of officers (73%) also indicated that inmates are unwilling to report rapes to correctional staff. Officers were about equally likely to report that they should protect heterosexuals (73%) as homosexuals (71%), and most of them endorsed proactive responses to rape, such as writing disciplinary reports when possible (92%), refusing to manipulate cell assignments to expose inmates to the threat of rape (93%), and making referrals to protective custody (69%). However, only about half of the sample indicated that officers should talk to new inmates about the risk of sexual assault.

Almost half (46%) of the officers also indicated that some inmates "deserved" to be raped. Officers were more apt to believe rape victims who conformed to a stereotypical definition of a rape victim (i.e., young, White, weak, homosexual, and effeminate men). Religious officers, officers who endorsed a counseling orientation, or officers who needed less social distance from inmates were more likely to indicate they would act proactively. Likewise, officers who had liberal attitudes toward women or who condemned homosexuality were more likely to be proactive. Attitudes toward women appeared to provide a conceptual framework that formed the basis for attitudes toward rape, in general, as well as attitudes toward rape in prison. Officers with negative attitudes toward homosexuality also may have been more proactive because they condemn same-sex behavior and therefore want to punish those who engage in such acts.

A similar study concentrated on correctional officers in a midwestern state (Eigenberg, in press). This study examined how officers defined rape in prison and examined variables that might have an impact on those definitions.² Most officers were relatively liberal in their definitions of rape. The majority of them believed that an inmate had been raped when he was physically overpowered or threatened with bodily harm (95% and 96%, respectively). However, officers were less sure when coercion was used to accomplish rape. About three fourths (74%) of the officers believed it was rape when an inmate threatened to identify another inmate as a snitch to secure sexual acts. Likewise, most officers (73%) defined the situation as rape when an inmate was forced to choose between paying off a debt with sexual acts or receiving a beating. It is interesting that officers appeared to be less willing to define acts as rape when the victims were identified as informants. Only two thirds (64%) of the officers defined the situation as rape when a snitch engaged in sexual acts in exchange for protection. Likewise, slightly more than half (56%) of the officers believed it was rape when the inmate informant demanded cigarettes after engaging in sex in exchange for protection.

Most officers also appeared to be reluctant to blame the victim, although a sizeable minority was willing to say some victims deserved to be raped because of the way they acted (12%) or to blame victims if they were homosexual (16%), dressed or talked in feminine ways (17%), previously engaged in consensual sexual acts in prison (23%), or took money or cigarettes for consensual sexual acts prior to a rape (24%). Officers with less-egalitarian attitudes toward women or officers who condemned homosexuality were more apt to blame victims. Officers who rejected victim-blaming attitudes were more apt to define assaultive situations as rape. The study found that although some aspects of the officers' more general correctional orientation toward inmates (punitiveness, counseling orientation, social distance, etc.) affected officers' definitions of rape, their culturally derived attitudes about women and homosexuality more strongly predict their willingness to engage in victim blaming as well as their definitions of rape in prison.

The paucity of research on correctional officers and rape in prisons makes it difficult to make generalizations about officers and their views on prison sexuality. It is unclear whether officers accept the traditional, essentialist paradigm used by researchers to describe inmates' attitudes toward prison sexuality and rape. Do correctional officers believe that there are true homosexuals as well as men who "turn" to same-sex behavior in response to sexual deprivation? Do they view sexuality as a static trait, and do they adhere to a strict dichotomous classification scheme that separates men into homosexuals and heterosexuals? Do they stigmatize men for engaging in some types of same-sex behavior but not others? Do they view prostitutes as willing entrepreneurs, or do they acknowledge the coercive nature of some of these relationships? Are they able to distinguish between consensual and coercive acts? The current study seeks to answer some of these questions by examining correctional officers' definitions of homosexuality and prostitution to ascertain whether they accept essentialist definitions. It also examines whether officers find it difficult to distinguish between consensual and coercive acts and if they endorse a sexual-deprivation model.

METHOD

SAMPLE

Surveys were administered to all correctional officers employed by a mid-western State Department of Corrections (DOC) during the summer and fall of 1991. Surveys and cover letters were administered through interdepartmental mail. A second round of surveys was distributed to nonrespondents.³

A total of 391 surveys were distributed; 209 were returned, thus the response rate was 53%.⁴

Data on gender, age, and race were used to evaluate the representativeness of the sample. The DOC data indicated that 85.4% of officers were male compared with 85.6% of the sample. The mean age of the DOC officers was 37.5 compared with 38.5 for the sample. The majority of the officers employed for DOC were White (89.4%), followed by African Americans (7.2%), Hispanics (2.7%), and Native Americans (0.6%). In this study, 90.3% of the respondents were White, 7.2% were Black, and 1% was Hispanic (1% listed other). Thus, the sample appeared representative with respect to age, race, and gender.

OTHER DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

In addition to the demographic variables previously discussed, the survey assessed officers' education and religiosity. Some organizational characteristics such as shift, rank, job satisfaction, and experience also were included. Virtually all officers (97%) had a high school degree or its equivalency; about half (46%) of them had some college, and almost one fourth (23%) of them had a bachelor's degree. On a scale of 1 to 10, most officers indicated they were religious, although the mean value of 6 indicated that they were not extremely religious. Most officers (85%) were line staff employees, and about half (54%) worked evening or graveyard shifts. Officers were slightly more apt to be dissatisfied (57%) than satisfied (43%) with their job, and they averaged 9 years of correctional experience (including employment outside the current state system).

ATTITUDES TOWARD HOMOSEXUALITY

Officers were asked to indicate their level of agreement with eight statements associated with definitions of homosexuality in prison (ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree*). As Table 1 indicates, about three fourths (73%) of the officers believed that most inmates who participate in same-sex activities are heterosexual men responding to sexual deprivation and that one's sexual orientation is dynamic (68%). About half of the officers indicated that heterosexual men may choose to participate in same-sex behavior in certain circumstances (54%), identified inmates who engaged in consensual sexual acts as homosexuals (53%), and identified inmates performing the active role as homosexual (45%). Officers were less apt to view inmates with feminine mannerisms as homosexuals (40%) or to identify inmates in the passive sexual role as homosexuals (34%).

ATTITUDES TOWARD PROSTITUTION

Officers were also asked to indicate their level of agreement with seven statements discussing prostitution in prison (ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree*). As Table 2 indicates, the majority of officers (84%) reported that prostitutes in prison willingly participate in sexual acts in exchange for material goods. Likewise, almost all officers (93%) indicated that inmate prostitutes engage in sexual acts of their own free will. Ironically, however, these same officers generally reported that prostitutes engage in sexual acts for protection (93%). Officers were less sure if prostitutes were homosexuals; only about half (50% and 53%, depending on the version of the question) of the officers used this definition. Officers were reluctant to view prostitution as a response to deprivation; only about 40% of the officers viewed prostitutes as inmates who needed money to survive. Similarly, only about half of the officers (53%) believed that inmates had prior experience with prostitution prior to incarceration.

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN CONSENSUAL AND COERCIVE ACTS

One statement assessed officers' abilities to distinguish between consensual and coercive acts. Almost all officers (96%) reported that it was sometimes difficult to tell whether inmates were being forced to participate in sexual acts or if they were willing partners in consensual sexual activities.

OFFICERS' WILLINGNESS TO PROTECT INMATES FROM RAPE VERSUS CONSENSUAL SEXUAL ACTS

Officers were asked to respond to a series of five statements that examined their responsiveness to consensual sexual acts and another five statements addressing rape to determine if they were more lenient toward consensual same-sex acts. These statements were identical in nature with the exception of the element of consent. As Table 3 shows, officers generally indicated a willingness to respond to both types of acts but were consistently less apt to endorse proactive responses to consensual homosexuality than to rape. The majority of officers reported that they should do everything they could to prevent rape (96%), including patrolling areas (98%), issuing disciplinary reports (99%), and encouraging inmates to report sexual assaults. Likewise, most officers suggested that officers should do everything possible to prevent consensual sexual activities (85%), including patrolling areas (93%), issuing disciplinary reports (94%), and encouraging inmates to report these activities

TABLE 1: Officers' Attitudes Toward Homosexuality in Prison

<i>Survey Question^a</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>		<i>Agree</i>		<i>Somewhat Agree</i>		<i>Disagree</i>		<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>		<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Inmates who engage in consensual sexual acts with other inmates in prison are homosexuals.	17	8	42	21	50	24	53	26	36	18	7	3
Inmates with feminine mannerisms are homosexuals.	7	3	21	10	55	27	44	21	61	30	19	9
Inmates who play the passive role (insertee) during intercourse are homosexuals.	9	5	25	12	35	17	53	26	68	34	12	6
Inmates who play the active role (insertor) during intercourse are homosexuals.	18	9	35	17	38	19	46	23	52	26	12	6
Most inmates who participate in consensual sexual acts in prison were homosexuals before they came to prison.	5	2	25	12	46	22	58	28	58	28	15	7
Most inmates who participate in consensual sexual acts in prison are heterosexual men who chose to have sex with other men because they do not have the opportunity to have sex with women.	15	7	63	31	71	35	20	10	21	10	14	7
A person is born with a sexual preference for men or women, and that preference does not change.	7	3	22	11	36	18	45	22	56	27	40	19
Under certain circumstances, heterosexual men may choose to participate in consensual sexual acts with other men.	18	9	45	22	48	23	15	7	40	20	39	19

a. Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

TABLE 2: Officers' Attitudes Toward Prostitution in Prison

<i>Survey Question^a</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>		<i>Agree</i>		<i>Somewhat Agree</i>		<i>Disagree</i>		<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>		<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Prostitutes in prison are inmates who willingly participate in sexual acts for money or other commissary.	33	16	88	42	53	26	17	8	14	7	3	1
Prostitutes in prison are homosexuals.	19	9	44	22	46	22	48	23	43	21	5	2
Inmates who engage in consensual sexual acts with other inmates in exchange for gifts or commissary are homosexuals.	15	7	34	16	56	27	44	21	49	24	10	5
Prostitutes in prison engage in sexual acts of their own free will—no one makes them do it.	34	17	106	52	49	24	9	4	6	3	2	1
Most prostitutes in prison participate in sexual acts with other men because they need money to survive.	2	1	17	8	63	31	53	26	58	28	11	5
Most prostitutes in prison also participated in consensual sexual acts for money with men prior to incarceration.	4	2	29	14	75	37	59	29	33	16	5	2
Prostitutes in prison engage in sexual acts in exchange for protection.	34	17	106	52	49	24	9	4	6	3	2	1

a. Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

TABLE 3: Officers' Willingness to Respond to Consensual Sexuality and Rape (in percentages)

<i>Survey Question</i>	<i>Percentage of Officers Who Agree When the Statement Refers to Rape</i>	<i>Percentage of Officers Who Agree When the Statement Refers to Consensual Sexuality</i>
Correctional officers should do everything they can to prevent consensual sexual acts or sexual assaults.	85	96
Correctional officers should patrol areas frequently to prevent consensual sexual acts or sexual assaults.	93	98
Correctional officers should issue disciplinary reports to inmates who participate in consensual sexual acts or who pressure other inmates for sex.	94	99
Correctional officers should encourage inmates to report consensual sexual acts or sexual assaults.	81	98
Correctional officers should talk to inmates about consensual sexual acts to discourage this type of activity or should talk to inmates about the risk of sexual assault.	64	60

(81%). It is interesting that officers were less sure about whether they should actually talk to inmates about either type of acts. About 40% of the officers did not think they should talk to inmates about the risk of sexual assault, and 36% did not believe they should discuss consensual sexual acts with inmates in an attempt to discourage this behavior.

ACTUAL BEHAVIOR

Finally, officers were asked several questions to determine whether they had ignored any type of sexual activity in the past 5 years and to determine whether they had actual experiences writing incident reports for this type of behavior. They were also asked to estimate how prevalent they thought each type of activity was in the prison. Eight percent of the officers admitted ignoring some type of sexual behavior in the preceding 5 years. The majority of the

officers had never written an incident report involving sexual activity. Officers were most apt to have written a disciplinary report for prostitution (57%) or consensual sexual acts (38%) and least apt to have written reports for rape (14%). On average, officers estimated that 25% of the inmate population engaged in consensual sexual acts and that 23% of them did so in exchange for money or commissary. Officers reported that they estimated that about 18% of inmates were raped in prison and that 15% of the population were rapists.

DISCUSSION

In general, officers in this study reject essentialist definitions associated with coercive sexuality in prison, although some of their attitudes appear to be contradictory in nature. For the most part, officers tend to view sexual orientation as dynamic in nature, but they also support the idea that situational homosexuality results when men are deprived of other sexual outlets. The majority of officers reject stereotypes that portray homosexuals as effeminate. They also reject the stereotypes associated with active and passive roles. In fact, officers are more apt to view the active role as homosexual than the passive role. This belief may reflect a more liberal perspective toward homosexuality, or it also might mean that officers identify inmates in the passive role as unwilling participants. In other words, they may view aggressors as homosexuals but victims as unwilling partners.

Officers were much less clear about their understanding of prostitution. The most interesting finding was that the majority of officers viewed prostitutes as willing participants. However, at the same time they also believed that most prostitutes engaged in sexual acts because they needed protection. It is not clear how they reconcile these two contradictory belief systems. These attitudes may reflect the notion that "punks" deserve more contempt because they have elected to "profit" from their victimization. Or, perhaps officers believe that many inmates need protection and that prostitutes secure it in a distasteful manner compared to, for example, simply buying protection. Additional research needs to focus on officers' understanding definitions of prostitution. Most of the literature on rape and consensual homosexuality fails to address prostitution at all, and when it is mentioned, the coercive element is rarely discussed.

Officers overwhelmingly demonstrated that they find it difficult to distinguish between consensual sexual acts and rapes in prison. Most officers have little experience actually catching inmates in the act, and only a few officers

report that they have ignored violations when discovered. Ironically, officers had the most experience policing prostitution even though they appear to have very confused and contradictory belief systems about the nature of this activity.

The current study also suggests that officers are relatively in touch with the extent of rape in prison. Whereas the research previously discussed by Nacci and Kane cast doubt on officers' ability to predict sexual aggression in prisons, this study suggests that officers and inmates view the risk very similarly. Officers in this study reported that about 15% of inmates experienced rape in prison. Three years later, prison staff in this same prison system once again estimated the rate of sexual coercion to be about 15% (Struckman-Johnson et al., 1996). The consistency of the figure lends credibility to the estimate. Furthermore, inmates in this same prison system also reported a similar rate of victimization. Depending on the type of facility, between 16% and 23% of inmates reported an attempted or completed act of sexual aggression (Struckman-Johnson et al., 1996). When one considers that 18% of the assaults reported in that study were completed by prison staff, it appears that the estimate of inmate on inmate assault is very similar to the estimate provided by officers in the current sample.

Consistent with prior research, most officers in this study indicated they would respond aggressively to any prohibitive acts whether they were consensual or coercive in nature. However, officers in this study, like other research, also evidenced that they were slightly less likely to respond to consensual homosexuality. This finding is problematic because it may be impossible for officers to determine whether inmates are engaged in consensual or coercive acts merely by observing a sexual interaction. As previously discussed, much of what appears on the surface to be consensual may, in fact, be coercive behavior. In other words, it may be an act of rape even if the victim does not have a knife to his throat. It is also somewhat disconcerting that such a large proportion of officers are opposed to talking to inmates about sexuality and rape in prison. Officers may have limited opportunities to prevent sexual activities by patrolling or through the use of disciplinary reports; however, officers usually have a great deal of time available to talk to inmates. An important opportunity to convey information is missed when officers are reluctant to talk about prison sexuality. It is possible that officers simply do not know what to say or that they are uncomfortable talking about the subject because of inadequate training. Good training programs could provide officers with a "script" that conveys messages that are consistent with the administration's approach to prison sexuality. Role plays and other opportunities to practice verbalizing about the subject might ease the discomfort that some officers surely feel when discussing rape and sexuality.

It is disturbing that so little attention has been given to administrative responses to male rape in prison. Although the first protocol dealing with male rape was developed for the San Francisco County Jail in 1979 (Dumond, 1992), other prisons and jails have been slow to develop a policy in this area. One notable exception is the Federal Bureau of Prisons, which had adopted a policy on sexual-assault prevention and intervention by 1995 (U.S. Department of Justice, 1995). Another organization also has been involved in efforts to change administrative responses. The Safer Society Press, an organization governed by the New York State Council of Churches, developed a series of prisoner education tapes and a manual for administrators who wish to address rape in prisons. This project was completed by Donaldson (1993), a former inmate who was raped in prison and went on to form the Stop Prison Rape organization.⁵

Each of these sources places emphasis on prevention. They require or encourage training that would enable staff, especially correctional officers, to recognize the physical, behavioral, and emotional symptoms of rape; to understand the referral process that is to be followed when victims are identified; and to have a basic understanding of the dynamics of rape in prison. These materials also stress the importance of inmate education. They identify strategies inmates can use to protect themselves including making inmates aware of treatment options and informing them about reporting procedures. These policies and protocols also concentrate on intervention efforts, including providing for the medical, psychological, and safety needs of victims.

These policies and administrative protocols are definitely steps in the right direction; however, there is still much to be done. For example, the Safer Society Press (Donaldson, 1993) states that their project is "prisoner-oriented" because "in reality, prisoner rape is most effectively prevented and controlled by the prisoners themselves. In the absence of administrative attention, it is the prisoners who tolerate sexual assaults, fail to protect their peers, and fail to protect themselves" (p. 7). The project goes on to advise inmates who are experiencing attempted rapes to try to negotiate with their perpetrators to perform oral sex instead of anal sex, which is more dangerous in terms of exposure to HIV/AIDS. They also recommend the distribution of condoms and instruct inmates how to fashion makeshift condoms out of plastic bags or gloves as a measure of last resort to try to protect themselves. These types of suggestions are offered in a sincere attempt to help inmates in desperate situations, but prison officials ought to be able to provide better solutions than these. To do so, however, requires a better understanding of how correctional officers socially construct concepts such as rape, homosexuality, and prostitution in prisons.

NOTES

1. Masturbation largely was ignored as a viable option, although some of the literature discusses bestiality as an option (see Eigenberg, 1992).
2. The study cited here involves the same sample used for the analysis in the current article.
3. Survey packets included a postcard that had a numerical code on it for tracking purposes. Respondents were instructed to mail the postcard separately from the survey to ensure anonymity.
4. Sixty-three surveys were returned as undeliverable (respondents had been terminated, resigned, or were deceased). As a result, of the original 454 surveys that were disseminated, 391 reached employees, and 209 were completed and returned to the researcher.
5. More information on this organization is available at <http://www.igc.apc.org/spr/>

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