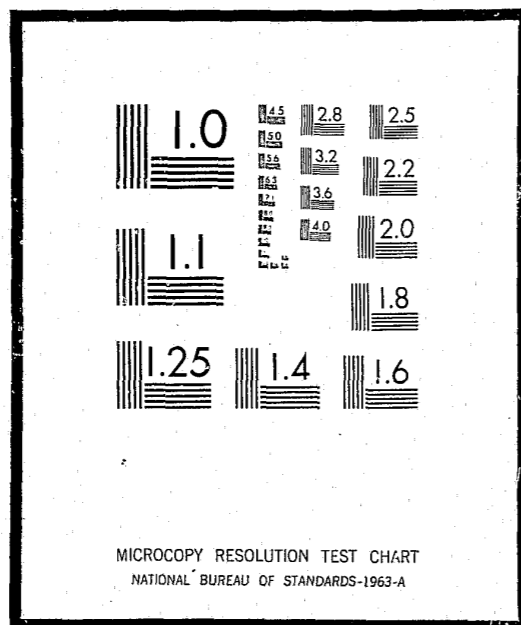


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CHILDBIRTH TO WOMEN UNDER SENTENCE:—T CHARACTERISTICS AND OUTCOME

BY
ELMER H. JOHNSON
PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY
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The birth of a baby to a woman in prison captures public interest as much as any dramatic situation associated with life within correctional institutions. Because motherhood is held in such high regard among our values, imprisonment of a woman at this climactic moment touches many hearts. Conversely, the motherhood of a prisoner draws suspicions that the birth is tainted with evil. There are vague thoughts that the perpetration of criminal offenses is associated with sin and immoral sex behavior. Frequently, it is assumed that the innocent baby is victimized by birth to a woman who will be an irresponsible and negligent mother. Furthermore, it is assumed that the infant will be marked for life by the circumstances associated with his birth.

This paper proposes to examine the characteristics of a substantial number of female inmates who were pregnant when admitted to a correctional center. Major attention will be devoted to the mother's decision on the placement of the infant and the factors involved in this important decision.

The study is based on data concerning 203 pregnant offenders admitted to the North Carolina Correctional Center for Women, Raleigh, for the period 1955-1967. As the state's

only correctional institution for adult women, the Center receives all women, of at least 16 years of age, who have been sentenced to six or more months by a North Carolina court. The facility is located on a 194-acre area with ten acres enclosed by an eight-foot wire fence. The facility includes dormitories, educational buildings, industrial plants, a medical unit, and other auxiliary buildings. The staff of 120 custodial, professional, and technical employees serves approximately 400 inmates.

Although public attitudes are changing, imprisonment brings social stigmatization for the prisoner when returned to free society. The dimensions of such stigmatization are particularly complicated when the female offender is considered. The qualities of the female sex affect the number and kinds of crimes committed. The physiology and social roles of women are marked strongly by the childbearing function and by their relatively passive role in sexual and other emotional relationships between the sexes. The aggressiveness of many kinds of crime is deemed especially inappropriate for women. However, more germane to our paper, qualities of the female sex affect the nature of societal reaction to female crimes. Convicted female offenders are less likely than convicted male offenders to be imprisoned. When imprisoned, they are more likely to be considered serious offenders or to have exhibited other behavior meriting withholding of the chivalrous attitudes. They are likely to receive shorter

* Superintendent Elizabeth McCubbin, North Carolina Correctional Center for Women, made available the data for the study and otherwise provided remarkable support. Miss Gwendolyn C. Lofquist, graduate student at Southern Illinois University, assisted in the data analysis.

sentences, to be slightly older, to have a greater share of their numbers drawn from Negroes, and are less likely to be single in marital status.¹

Imprisonment of pregnant women in itself suggests that the offense or correlate behavior of the individual was deemed sufficient to outweigh the usual special consideration given pregnant women.

The reluctance to imprison a pregnant woman would be great because of the high value placed on motherhood, the unusual need for protection and care of the pregnant woman, and the possibility that the infant will be stigmatized by being borne by an imprisoned mother.

In the case of illegitimate births, the concern for the pregnant woman is complicated. Sometimes she is viewed as a person of "lawless passion" to be scorned and punished for presumed immorality, flightiness, irresponsibility, or sexual experimentation. When a criminal offense is associated directly or indirectly with the illegitimate pregnancy, she encounters double stigmatization. On the other hand, there are more sympathetic responses when she is young and considered the wronged girl to be protected from the biological consequences of an act unwillingly performed because she is envisaged as inexperienced in the ways of the world and, therefore, untouched

1. For further discussion, see: Elmer H. Johnson, Crime, Correction, and Society, rev. ed., Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1968, pp. 72-76.

by "lawless passion." From this more sympathetic point of view, her imprisonment may qualify the young girl for the status of a victim of moral prejudice.

The concern of correctional administrators for the pregnant inmate was indicated by a 1947 study conducted by Zemans and Cole. Superintendents of female institutions were asked their opinions. There was unanimous agreement that the inmates should have the opportunity to bear the child outside the institution. The superintendents disagreed on whether the child should remain at the institution after birth.² At the time of the study, some institutions provided maternity care on the grounds, but many transferred the mother to an outside hospital for delivery. One advantage of the latter procedure is that the correctional institution is not named on the birth certificate as place of delivery. Frequently, the baby was returned to the institution after delivery, but the institutional policies varied on the length of time the baby could remain there. Usually, the stay was permitted only until other arrangements could be made for the baby's care.

At the North Carolina Correctional Center for Women the delivery is made outside the institution. The baby is cared for in the prison nursery while more suitable arrangements are made. The mother is permitted to visit the nursery

2. Eugene Zemans and Robert J. Cole, "Prison Babies," The Mother, Vol. 10, No. 1, October, 1948, pp. 1-5.

for this period. To the extent that her physical condition permits, the pregnant woman generally follows the same procedures at the time of reception into prison as the other new prisoners. Her major differences center around personal adjustments to the physiological and psychological consequences of pregnancy.

CHARACTERISTICS OF INMATE-MOTHERS

The inmate mothers are a special population in that they share the experience of imprisonment with a larger population of confined offenders but they differ in their pregnant condition. Do the mothers differ from non-pregnant prisoners in other ways? Additional differences could result from factors such as age and race which affect the likelihood of pregnancy among all women. Other factors could influence the likelihood of a woman being imprisoned. To the extent that the pregnant woman has different chances for imprisonment than a non-pregnant woman, the inmate-mother population will be different than the total female inmate population.

The occupations and educational attainment of the inmate-mothers reflect the lower socioeconomic status found among most prison inmates. Low job skills are characteristic. Of the Negroes 48.1 per cent had been domestic servants compared with 32.4 per cent of the whites. Another 22.5 per cent of the Negroes and 4.2 per cent of the whites were engaged in farming or laundry work. Waitresses or cooks comprised 7.8 per cent of the Negroes and 15.5 per cent of the whites.

Factory jobs were held by 5.2 per cent of the Negroes and 21.1 per cent of the whites. Most of the remainder were unemployed. For both races, inmate mothers were more likely than other prisoners to be domestics, work in laundries, or be unemployed.

White inmate-mothers had an average education of 8.28 years of schooling. Negro inmate-mothers resemble Negro prisoners in general by having a higher average of 8.40 years. However, both races had lower educational attainment than the equivalent racial group in the total prison population.

Inmate-mothers had a higher proportion of first offenders than total female prisoners, 82.8 per cent and 68.1 per cent respectively. The two races did not differ significantly in this respect. For each of the comparable offenses, inmate-mothers consistently had a higher rate of first offenders, but the advantage over the total prison population was most marked for assaults and offenses against children. Both of these offense categories are related to behavior within the family group. When the offenses of mothers are compared with those of other female prisoners, a higher proportion of the mothers were sentenced for homicide and crimes against property and a lower proportion for assault and moral offenses.

Although the races are roughly equal in the total population of the Correctional Center, 35 per cent of the inmate-mothers were white. Why were Negroes so heavily represented among the inmate-mothers? A combination of factors is germane.

First, the racial imbalance was attributable largely to the mothers with previous children. Whites comprise 46.3 per cent of the first births but only 32.1 per cent of the births of higher order. Because only 20 per cent of the total births were first births, the Negro dominance of additional births had particularly telling effect on the total racial distribution. Because large families are more characteristic of Negroes than of whites, the racial imbalance reflects in part the demographic characteristics of the larger population including non-criminals in the outside world.

Second, the racial imbalance stems also from the under-representation of whites among illegitimate mothers, 33.9 per cent as compared with 43.1 per cent of the legitimate births. The illegitimate births comprised 45.7 per cent of the total births but only 31.8 per cent of total white births. The racial difference was especially marked for illegitimate births occurring to mothers of previous children. White illegitimate births comprised 32.0 per cent of illegitimate first births as compared to only 21.5 per cent of illegitimate births of higher order. White legitimate births represented 68.8 per cent of legitimate first births and 39.1 per cent of legitimate births of higher order. In other words, the white's greater representation among first births was attributable to legitimate births.

Third, the racial imbalance was promoted by the differences between the age distributions. The Negro mothers

included a wider range of ages, thereby increasing the possibility that a larger number of them would be included in the prison population.

The Negroes had a slightly higher average age (25.27) than the whites (24.17.) However, the two groups which contributed the largest share of total mothers were the Negro legitimate mothers with additional children (average age 28.04) and the Negro illegitimate mothers with additional children (average age 23.92.) While these two groups were counterbalancing each other in terms of age, the largest group among the whites (legitimate mothers with additional children) was dominating the average age of the whites with their 26.89 years. All three of the groups were remarkable in the degree to which their members were represented in the highest age, but the presence of Negroes with previous children in these ages was a dominant influence. Again we find the imprisonment of Negroes with previous children a noteworthy development.

When compared with the total female prisoners, the mothers are younger. Because child-bearing is less likely as a woman exceeds age 30, the difference is expected. However, the differences between total inmates and mothers are reduced when only mothers with previous children are considered. Of all inmate-mothers bearing their first child, 63.4 per cent were less than 20 years compared with 19.1 per cent of all inmates who had had previous children. In

these ways the inmate-mothers deviate from the age distribution of total prisoners in the same pattern as mothers deviate from the total adult female population of the outside community.

Fourth, the racial imbalance may be the result of differential enforcement of laws applied to moral offenses as opposed to crimes against property and personal security. In moral offenses the criminal law moves beyond the province of crimes against property and persons to attempt to deal with social misconduct in moral areas in which there is less consensus among cultural subgroups. Under "moral offenses" we include violation of prohibition laws, neglect and abandonment of children, prostitution and adultery, intoxication, drunken driving, disorderly conduct, public nuisance, vagrancy, and similar misconduct. When the criminal law becomes a vehicle for expressing moral condemnation and a vehicle for instilling moral rectitude, great disparities can occur in the application of punishment.³ In this sense, moral offenses offer an opportunity to measure the degree to which "forgiveness" is extended to a particular offender through withholding of a prison sentence because she is pregnant.

3. For discussion of the problems raised, see Edwin M. Schur, Crime Without Victims, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965, and Joseph Fletcher, "Sex Offenses: An Ethical View," Law and Contemporary Problems, Vol. 25 (Spring, 1960), pp. 244-257.

For the mothers of the two races the proportion of moral offenses was approximately equal, 38.2 per cent for whites and 36.2 per cent for Negroes. The total population of the Correctional Center had the equivalent proportions of 54.2 per cent of the whites and 42.8 per cent of the Negroes. Mothers of both races were less likely to be imprisoned for moral offenses than were female offenders in general. However, the difference between mothers and total inmates was less for Negroes than for whites. We interpret this pattern to be evidence that the Negro mothers were less likely to be protected from imprisonment on the basis of their pregnancy.

When compared with white inmates as a whole, white mothers had lower proportion of moral offenses because of relatively fewer offenses against children, intoxication and drunken driving. When compared with Negro inmates as a whole, Negro mothers had relatively more offenses against children and violations of prohibition laws. They had fewer sentences for sexual immorality and none for intoxication or drunken driving.

In summary, pregnancy appears to have failed particularly to safeguard Negro offenders against imprisonment for neglect or abandonment of children and for prohibition law violations. Offenses against children require that children already be present in the family, and, therefore, are limited to mothers of previous children. If we can assume that offenders of both races were equal in level of performance as parents, it would appear that pregnant Negro mothers are more likely to be imprisoned for deficient parenthood. The violations of liquor laws are explained by the traditional practice of Negro women selling illegal liquor as a source of income. The practice is especially useful to mothers requiring income while caring for children in the home. Although the practice explains the difference between the races in the incidence of this kind of violation, it does not explain the imposition of a sentence on pregnant women.

TABLE 1: Age of inmate-mothers by race, legitimacy status and birth order.

Sub populations by race, legitimacy and birth order	Age of Mother at admission to prison				Totals
	Below 20	20- 24	25- 29	30- over	
TOTAL	49 ^a	59 ^a	50 ^a	45	203
White	16	23	22	10	71
Negro	32	35	27	35	129
FIRST CHILD	21	15	1	4	41
White	9	9	1	-	19
Negro	12	6	-	4	22
ADDITIONAL CHILD	28 ^a	44 ^a	49 ^a	41	162
White	7	14	21	10	52
Negro	20	29	27	31	107
LEGITIMATE MOTHER	17	27 ^a	31	34	109
WHITE					
First Child	7	3	-	-	10
Additional Child	4	8	15	10	37
NEGRO					
First Child	1	2	-	2	5
Additional Child	5	13	16	22	56
ILLEGITIMATE MOTHER	32 ^a	31 ^b	18 ^{a,b}	11	92
WHITE					
First Child	2	5	1	-	8 ^b
Additional Child	3	6	5	-	14 ^b
NEGRO					
First Child	11	4	-	2	17
Additional Child	15	16	11	9	51

a. One Indian included

b. One white case of unreported legitimacy excluded.

Fifth, the racial imbalance may be related to the large number of illegitimate births to Negroes. Of the illegitimate births, 73.9 per cent were to Negroes, compared to 56.0 of the legitimate births. Of particular interest is that, of the illegitimate mothers with previous children, 80 per cent were Negroes. Of the illegitimate first births, only 68 per cent were to Negroes. This pattern suggests that illegitimacy among inmates is related to the greater prevalence among lower socio-economic class Negroes of family relationships established outside the bounds of formal marriage. To the extent this family relationship is a practice among non-criminals, the higher illegitimacy rate among Negro inmate-mothers cannot be explained as a correlate of criminal behavior.

Imprisonment for moral crimes tended to bear more on illegitimate mothers among Negroes than on whites. Moral crimes represented 22.7 per cent of white offences and 32.4 per cent of Negro offenses among illegitimate mothers. For legitimate mothers, moral crimes comprised 45.7 per cent of white offenses and 40.7 of Negro offenses. The net effect is that imprisonment for these crimes increased the proportion of Negroes among illegitimate mothers.

When compared with white mothers in the free community, white inmate-mothers had an illegitimacy ratio ten times greater. The equivalent comparison for non-whites finds the prisoners with a ratio twice as large.⁴ The number of cases in our prisoner data is too few to permit an exact and reliable comparison, but the data suggest that inmate illegitimacy ratios tend to diverge increasingly from illegitimacy ratios as the comparison progresses up the ladder of age groups until age 35 from whence the divergence is generally less. Generally, the non-white inmate-mothers have lower ratios as age is increased whereas the white inmate-mothers show an erratic pattern probably because their small number prevents statistical stability.

The illegitimacy ratios of the youngest inmate-mothers comes closest to approximately the illegitimacy ratio of the equivalent age group in the free community. At first glance, this relative similarity suggests

4. The illegitimacy ratio is the number of illegitimate live births per 1000 total live births. Comparison is based on data for 35 American states in 1964 reported in Trends in Illegitimacy, United States, 1940-1965, *ibid*, Table 12. The ratios are: total whites 33.2, white inmates 338.5, total non-whites 361.6, and non-white inmates 523.4.

concurrence with the pattern of young unwed mothers in the community. However, 58.1 per cent of the illegitimate births to inmates less than 20 years of age were to mothers who already had children. Since 52.9 per cent of the legitimate births to this age group also were to women with previous children, the pattern is not limited to illegitimate mothers among prisoners. In the free community, only 20.9 per cent of illegitimate births for this age group are beyond first births. The idea of inexperienced, unwed mothers does not apply here to the young mothers, especially for Negroes.

A remarkable feature of the inmate ratios is the large divergence from the equivalent illegitimacy ratios in the higher ages. It may be that this pattern is explained by the illegitimate births for inmates beyond the first births. When the illegitimate birth order for inmates is compared with the birth order for illegitimate births in the total state of North Carolina, inmates are found to have consistently a higher proportion of births in each of the orders beyond the first birth. This pattern is true for both races but is most marked for non-whites.⁵ These differences may reflect underreporting

5. Comparison based on data in Trends in Illegitimacy, United States, 1940-1965, Washington, D.C.: U. S. Public Health Service, National Center for Health Statistics, Series No. 21, No. 15, February 1968, Table 6.

of illegitimate higher-order births in the state population because a married woman in free society would have a superior advantage in concealing the illegitimacy of a higher-order birth. Such concealment could be undermined when the illegitimacy is associated with social events related to the criminal offense which increased the mother's social visibility.

FACTORS COMPLICATING DECISION ON BABY'S FUTURE

The decision concerning the future status of the infant is complicated by the lack of resources available to the mother, which sometimes are related to the crime for which the mother has been imprisoned. In North Carolina one mother had three other children being cared for by her grandmother because both her parents were dead and the mother was in prison for murdering her husband. She released the infant to her grandmother. Another mother had killed her husband and had two previous children. She placed the infant with her mother rather than releasing it for adoption.

The occupational and educational history of the mothers usually indicates poor prospects for meeting the economic demands of parenthood if the inmate must depend on her own resources. In fact, generally the

mothers have lower prospects than those of the other prisoners.

Her dilemma usually is aggravated by her continued imprisonment while the interests of the infant dictate that provisions be made immediately for sending him out of the prison environment. Only 54 inmate-mothers were serving a sentence of a year or less and, thereby, had a reasonable chance for release early enough to take their babies with them.

The average inmate-mother is expected to adjust to penal confinement and pre-natal confinement concurrently. Since 83.1 per cent of the whites and 82.2 per cent of the Negroes were serving their first prison sentence, penal confinement was a new experience for the majority. For 26.8 per cent of the whites and 18.6 per cent of the Negroes, this was the first pregnancy. As Table 3 attests, the inmate-mothers anticipating their first birth had been pregnant for a greater number of months on the average than those who had borne a child previously. Therefore, anticipation of immediately impending childbirth and the psychological effects of a longer period of pregnancy operated to magnify their tensions at time of admission to prison. For 21.1 per

cent of the whites and 15.5 per cent of the Negroes this was their first experience concurrently with prison confinement and with pre-natal confinement.

For the young prisoners, their age and their criminal offense together suggest an absence of previous recognition of the responsibilities associated with motherhood. Although she is referring to adolescents in general, Wimperus speaks to the lack of preparedness for adult responsibility among many adolescents drawn from lower-class homes. Although teen-agers comprise only a small segment of prisoners, most of the prisoners are products of under-privileged homes.

"She may leave school feeling that she has at last reached adult status, but when she starts work she appears to be taught none of the interesting processes she longs to work at, but she runs errands and makes tea or dusts the shop; she is given no responsibility at all, and then accused by her elders of being irresponsible..... Little thought is given to the risks attendant upon pre-marital intercourse. Their life has not trained them to think in terms of the future..... The family

TABLE 2: Offenses of inmate-mothers by legitimacy status and birth order.

Categories of Crime by race	Legitimate		Illegitimate	
	First Child	Additional Child	First Child	Additional Child
WHITE	10 ^a	36	8 ^b	14 ^b
Property Crime	7	9	4	11
Homicide	-	7	1	-
Assault	-	2	-	-
Kidnapping	-	-	1	-
"Moral" Crimes	3	18	2	3
Violation, laws liquor	-	(2)	(1)	(1)
Against children	-	(6)	-	-
Sex immorality	(2)	(4)	-	(1)
Disorderly, etc.	(1)	(3)	(1)	(1)
Intoxication	-	(1)	-	-
Drunk Driving	-	(2)	-	-
NEGRO	5	54 ^c	17	51
Property Crime	2	15	11	15
Homicide	-	10	1	8
Assault	-	8	3	8
"Moral" Crimes	3	21	2	20
Violation, Liquor Laws	(1)	(11)	(1)	(5)
Against Children	-	(9)	-	(12)
Sex immorality	(1)	-	-	(1)
Disorderly, etc. Narcotics	(1)	(1)	-	(2)
Processing	-	-	(1)	-

a. One unclassified crime excluded.

b. One unreported legitimacy status excluded.

c. Two unclassified crimes excluded.

buy their furniture and TV on hire-purchase; you get your satisfaction first and pay up later. Brought up in that kind of milieu they never learn to look ahead."⁶

The motherhood experience awakens some of the inmates to a new sense of responsibility which their previous behavior would not suggest. A caseworker reported such a reaction by a 20-year-old woman who had been the criminal associate of an older man. In a similar situation a young mother forfeited parole because she wanted to watch over her younger sister being admitted to prison. Meanwhile, she had taken advantage of a work-release job to provide income to support her baby.

PATTERNS OF INMATE-MOTHERS' DECISIONS

The pregnant inmate faces a major decision concerning the future of the infant she will bear. Assuming there is not a still birth, she theoretically has four alternatives.

First, if the mother's sentence is short enough, or if parole is feasible within limited times, the baby can be held briefly for the mother's release from prison.

6. Virginia Wimperus, *The Unmarried Mother and Her Child*, London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1960, p. 89.

Correctional authorities deem it proper that the infant be placed as promptly as possible in an environment superior to a prison in affording physical and psychological conditions amenable to the infant's long term interests. Second, the infant may be released to relatives of the mother in the outside community. Third, the child may be placed in a foster home to await the mother's release from prison. Fourth, the mother may release the child for adoption through legal procedures handled by the courts offering the mother the same legal safeguards and absence of coercion found in all adoption cases.

Slightly more than half the babies were turned over to relatives. This choice was more characteristic of women bearing their first child than those with previous children. The races were similar in regard. However, whites with previous children turned markedly to foster homes and to adoption to a modest degree. Although Negroes who already were mothers relied less on relatives than Negroes bearing their first child, this mode of disposition continued to be dominant.

It is not clear whether the Negro mothers were at a disadvantage in obtaining foster-home care or whether the whites were at a disadvantage in obtaining assistance from relatives. Probably, the matriarchal

TABLE 3: Mean number of months of pregnancy of inmate at admission to prison - first births versus births beyond first child.

AGE AT ADMISSION TO PRISON	FIRST CHILD	ADDITIONAL CHILD
Less 20	7.00	4.71
20-24	7.92	5.07
25-29	8.00*	5.16
30-over	4.25*	5.59

*Insufficient cases for reliability.

family, very prevalent among Negroes, was the major resource for the Negro inmate mothers. Whites had greater access to foster home care, especially when previous children of the inmate-mother already were in foster homes. Only when the infant was the first child were the white infants released to relatives to a greater extent than to foster homes. When the first white child was referred to a foster home, it was an illegitimate birth of a young mother. This pattern suggests that white families were less willing than Negro families to accept responsibility for an illegitimate first child.

For both races, the similar proportions (about 14 per cent) of the infants were released with their mothers on completion of sentence or at parole. The possibility of release with mother is dependent on length of sentence and the number of months of pregnancy at time of admission to prison. Of the 14 white mothers and 40 Negro mothers with sentences less than one year, only one Negro mother placed her infant up for adoption. Relatively early release would require the mother to confront directly the responsibilities of motherhood.

For each of the races about 14 per cent of the infants were released with their inmate-mothers on

completion of sentence or parole. However, only 54 inmates were serving a sentence of a year or less and therefore had reasonable prospects for release early enough to enable them to leave with their babies. Of these 54 inmates, 31.5 per cent chose to take their babies with them. Only one Negro mother among the 54 agreed to release her baby for adoption. A larger share of Negroes as compared with whites were serving sentences of less than a year. Because there were a larger number of Negro mothers who could choose to take their baby with them, the single mother who agreed to adoption can be regarded as especially exceptional. The other ten babies released for adoption were born to women serving sentences ranging from one to three years.

Of the 195 live births, only eleven were placed for adoption. Of the eleven, nine were white infants, or 13.4 per cent of the white live births. The use of adoption by whites tended to increase as the number of previous children increased. It is significant that all the adopted infants save three of the white babies were illegitimate, and these three were borne by mothers already having at least four other children. Perhaps these legitimate mothers lacked means of caring

for additional children, but our data do not permit reliable evaluation.

Latent in the adoption decision was the affects of social stigmatization and the difficulties raised in integrating the illegitimate infant into a white family. Because all of white infants released with the mother were legitimate births, the additional stigma of illegitimacy did not enter the decision-making test for white inmates. The comparative importance of releases with mothers increased among Negroes as the number of previous children increased. There was no consistent pattern for whites in this regard.

The two Negro infants placed for adoption were illegitimate, one a first born child and the other the second-born. The small number of adoptions attests to the reluctance of Negro inmates to surrender their children. However, it would be inappropriate to assume that Negro inmates are superior to whites in degree of reluctance. The adoption demand for Negro infants is much less than for white infants. This differential can explain the greater number of white babies placed for adoption by inmate-mothers.

Of the 152,000 children adopted in United States in 1966, an estimated 95,800 were born out of wedlock. The adoptive parents were not relatives of the mother in 72.3 per cent of the 95,800 cases.⁷ The data on inmate-mothers show 89 illegitimate births of which 8 were released for adoption, or 9 per cent. In an approximate fashion, the comparable percentages suggest that inmate-mothers are less likely than non-criminal unwed mothers to give up the infant permanently to persons she does not know. The conclusion is speculative because each of the two sets of data include populations not included in the other set. The 152,000 children are only a portion of the illegitimate births in United States in 1966, whereas the 89 illegitimate births were all of such births in the Correctional Center for the period of study. Not all of the remaining 80 births were eventually adopted by relatives. In fact, we do not know whether any were adopted by relatives. However, in spite of the obscurities of the data for this purpose, the general thrust of the comparison is that

7. Supplement to Child Welfare Statistics-1966: Adoptions in 1966, (Children's Bureau Statistical Series 88), Washington: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1967, p. 1.

the inmate-mothers are much less likely than non-criminals to release the child to non-relative adoptive parents. In fact, it is probable that elimination of the obscurities would strengthen this conclusion.

CONCLUSIONS

Inmate mothers differ from both other inmates and mothers in the outside community. These differences stem from the unique effect of two commingling sets of factors in the situations of the inmate-mothers.

1. They are pregnant and, thereby, share with pregnant women in free society the effects of certain demographic factors on birth rates and illegitimacy rates. The demographic factors include age, race, occupation, education, and relative access to economic resources.

2. They had been convicted of an offense and, thereby, shared with non-pregnant female offenders the social psychological correlates of various classes of crime. For example, the perpetration of a homicide or theft by a pregnant woman exhibited many of the situational and social psychological qualities of the same offense by non-pregnant females.

The commingling of the two sets of factors cause the inmate-mothers to differ from pregnant women and non-pregnant offenders. Pregnancy may affect the selective process wherein some offenders end up in prison and others do not. However, the reluctance to imprison a pregnant woman is distorted by factors such as race and seriousness of the offense. When the offense is against children already present, the pregnancy may even cause an adverse evaluation of the woman's qualification for the pregnant woman status.

As pregnant offenders, they may be regarded as dubious candidates for the pregnant woman status. The association of illegitimacy with the presence of previous children suggest that many of the illegitimate births are a product of common law relationships which exist regardless of otherwise criminal behavior. Although the pregnant offenders resemble non-pregnant offenders in the same offense category, their pregnancies suggest that the circumstances of the offense may have centered around the pregnancy as a source of criminal motivation.

Inmate-mothers differ from other female prisoners in occupational and educational history, age distribution, number of previous sentences served, and

race. Several explanations related to demographic factors were given for the racial imbalance. On the other hand, the divergence of inmate-mothers from other pregnant women is suggested by the greater likelihood of high birth-order pregnancies among inmates. However, their greatest difference involves the difficulties they encounter in immediately performing their mother role in light of their sentence and their inferior socioeconomic resources. Nevertheless, their generally constructive response to the responsibility of motherhood is indicated by the small number of adoptions. It would be an overgeneralization to label inmates arbitrarily as inferior mothers when compared with non-prisoner mothers in the free community under identical social and economic circumstances.

END