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THE MEGARGEE CRIMINAL PERSONALITY  
TYPOLOGY IN CRIMINOLOGICAL  
RESEARCH: AN UPDATE

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## INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this paper is to report on the utilization of the Megargee typology (Megargee and Bohn, 1979) in research on prison adjustment.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, several categories of independent variables were examined for their influence on five different measures of prison adjustment. A special emphasis was placed on the role educational variables play in the process of adaptation to prison environments. This research is well documented in the original thesis (Michalek, 1985a) and subsequent report (Michalek, 1985b).

Four distinct categories of independent variables were initially examined:

1. those included under the category of pre-incarceration characteristics;
2. personality, as operationalized via the Megargee typology;
3. organizational factors related to prison environments, and
4. incarceration characteristics.

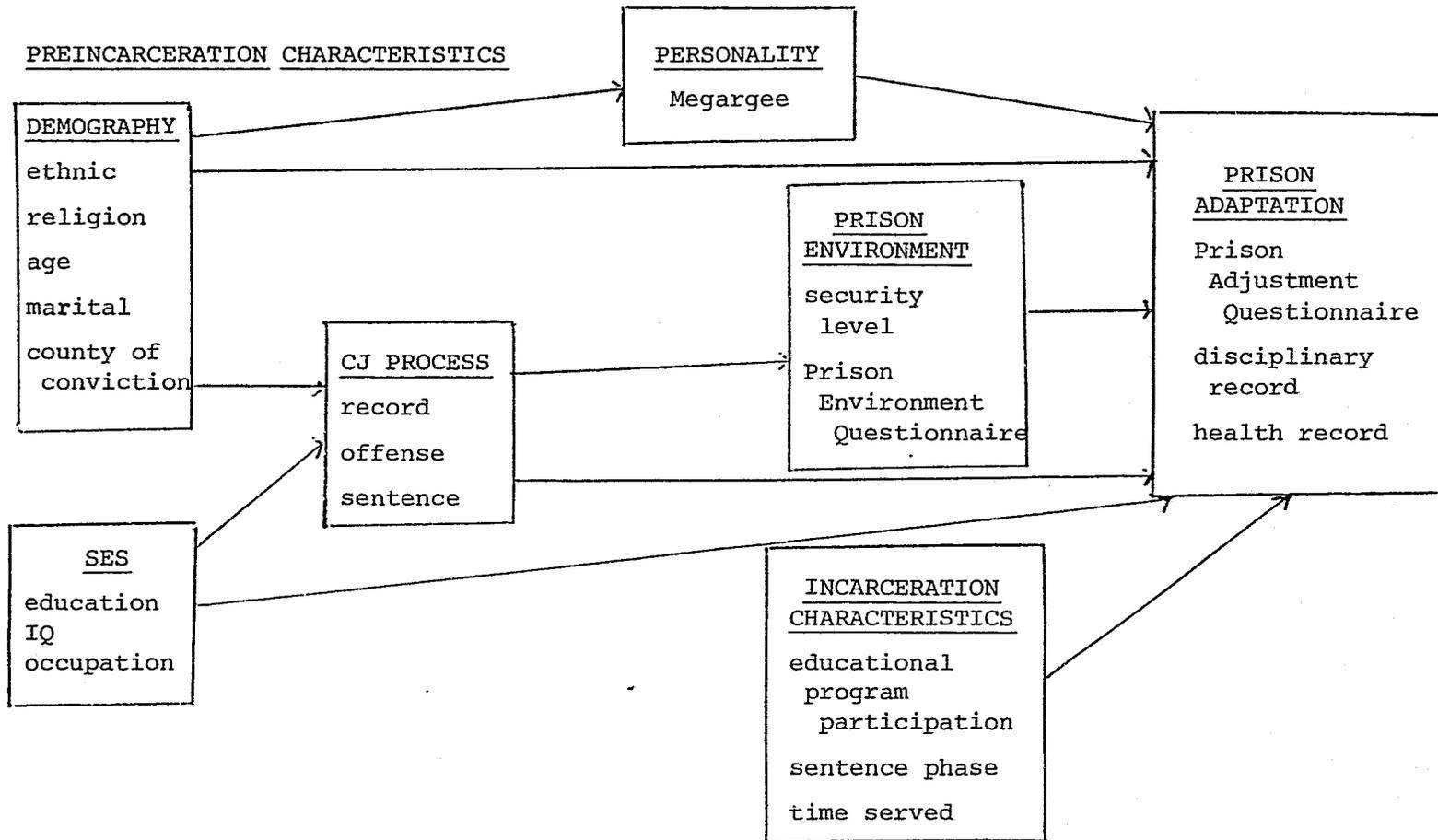
The dependent variable, prison adaptation, was operationalized in three forms:

1. various indexes derived for each subject from a Prison Adjustment Questionnaire developed by Wright (1983) during the initial phase of the major project;
2. institutional record of disciplinary infractions, and
3. institutional record of illness complaints.

The original path analytical model created from this data set is presented in Figure 1.

<sup>1</sup> This work was undertaken in conjunction with a \$150,000.00 grant from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) which Dr. Kevin Wright of SUNY-Binghamton received for a study of prison adaptation in New York state (NIJ grant #83 - IJ - CX - 0011). Dr. Wright provided a computer tape containing all the data he collected on the inmate subjects, as well as the background information gathered from the State Department of Corrections (SDOC) files. Also, I manually retrieved additional data from these SDOC files, located in the SDOC Central Office in Albany. For a detailed discussion of these procedures, see the original thesis (Michalek, 1985a).

FIGURE 1. A theoretical model relating pre-incarceration characteristics, organizational factors, incarceration characteristics and prison adaptation



Finally, the ultimate aim of this research corresponds to what has been described as policy analysis. As James Q. Wilson (1974) writes:

Policy analysis, as opposed to causal analysis, begins with a very different perspective. It asks, not what is the cause of the problem, but what is the condition one wants to bring into being, what measures do we have that will tell us when that condition exists, and finally what policy tools does a government (in our case, a democratic and libertarian government) possess that might, when applied, produce at reasonable cost a desired alteration in the present condition of progress toward the desired conditions.

In this case, the "condition" applies to the living conditions of correctional facilities and what might be done to decrease the level of violence, reduce tension and increase the general quality of life in order to create an environment more facilitative of positive growth and constructive change. It is assumed here that improving prison living conditions in this way is a worthwhile policy for correctional systems to pursue.

#### METHODOLOGY

Before a test of any model can be completed, it is essential to specify the data which will ultimately serve as indicators of key variables in the proposed model. The 581 inmate-subjects resided at five medium and five maximum security institutions in New York state: respectively, Albion, Fishkill, Mid-Orange, Mount McGregor, Ogdensburg, Attica, Auburn, Elmira, Great Meadow, and Greenhaven. Data for 42 variables were initially collected for 581 inmate subjects. As previously mentioned, the majority of the data was part of Wright's major study and was provided in automated form. Additional data were retrieved from inmate files located in the Central Office of the Department of Correctional Services (DOCS), Albany, N.Y. Some of these 42 variables initially examined were subsequently dropped for a variety of reasons (e.g., the subindexes for the Prison Adjustment Questionnaire were highly correlated with the composite index).

The five dependent variables used here as indicators of prison adjustment are categorized into three groups: responses to Wright's Prison Adjustment Questionnaire, institutional health records, and institutional disciplinary record. It should be noted that both the disciplinary and health variables were controlled for amount of time served. The Prison Adjustment Questionnaire (PAQ) is one of the new instruments developed and field tested by Wright during the initial phase of the major project. This instrument was designed to assess the inmates' self-perceptions of their adjustment in prison. Obviously subjective, the PAQ asks about their general adjustment and if they have encountered various sorts of problems while incarcerated. It also asks them to compare how they perceive themselves in prison with how they thought they were doing in the free world. Important areas this instrument seeks to tap include hostility, violence, victimization, alienation, anxiety, depression, and nonconformity. The following three continuous variables from the PAQ were used. <sup>2</sup>

1. Comfort total (COMTOT) measures how well an inmate feels he is doing now as compared to when he was in the free world.
2. Day-to-day coping (DTD) measures how well an inmate feels he is being provided with what he needs (i.e., food, sleep, and the like.)
3. Total frequency of problems in prison (FREQTOT) is a composite index which basically asks the inmate how often he feels he is having problems in prison.

Institutional health record is also utilized as an indicator of prison adjustment. Health indicators are often construed as indicators of internalized stress (Gurin, Veroff & Feld, 1960). Unlike the PAQ, an inmate's health record is an objective measure. This variable was controlled for amount of time served such that it is conceptualized as rate of health problems per year.

4. Total number of sick calls (OVERALL) is a composite index which measures the amount of trips made to the infirmary for any reason.

<sup>2</sup> The dependent and independent variable lists are organized such that the variable label (as used in the computer analyses) appears first, followed by a meaningful interpretation of the variable.

Institutional disciplinary record is utilized as the last dependent variable. Like the health variable above, this is also an objective measure. Rule infractions in prison most often involve forms of either verbal or physical aggression. Such behaviors can be construed as expressions of externalized aggression (Henry & Short, 1954). As in the case with the health variable, the disciplinary variable was controlled for amount of time served. Therefore, it is conceptualized as rate of disciplinary infraction per year.

5. Total number of disciplinary reports (OFFOTT) is another composite index which measures the amount of rule infractions committed by each inmate-subject.

The twenty-six independent variables used are categorized into four major groups: incarceration characteristics, organizational factors, personality and pre-incarceration characteristics. The last group, pre-incarceration characteristics, was further classified into three meaningful categories: criminal justice system processing, social-economic status and traditional demographic measures.

The following lists describe the three groups of independent variables.

#### Incarceration Characteristics

1. In-prison educational program participation (IPP) is a dichotomous variable which measures whether or not an inmate was involved in any sort of educational program offered by the institution during the time of the study.
2. Sentence phase (SENTPH) reflects the percentage of time served on sentence; since New York utilizes an indeterminate sentencing scheme it was necessary to create a new variable, MIDSSENT, which is the mean of the composite of the maximum sentence plus the minimum sentence; consequently, sentence phases equals the quotient of MIDSSENT divided into the next variable discussed, TIMEIN.
3. Total number of months in prison (TIMEIN); it should also be noted here that all these variables involving time were standardized in terms of months.
4. Total number of months remaining on sentence (TIMELEFT) was calculated by subtracting TIMEIN from MIDSSENT; inmates with life terms were assigned an upper time limit by the sentencing judge (99 years) which was used in the computations for these subjects.

### Organizational Factors

The next set of independent variables include various organizational factors. This group is broken into two types: the assigned security level of the institution, and the eight factors measured in the Prison Environment Inventory (PEI).

1. Type of institution (INST) is another dichotomous variable which reflects the official security classification of the facility.

The next eight variables are the various indexes derived from Wright's Prison Environment Inventory (PEI). This is a second instrument which was field tested during the course of the major project cited earlier; for further delineation regarding the development of this questionnaire see the NIJ interim of final report submitted by Wright. This new environmental measuring instrument yields values for eight dimensions of the prison environment as identified by Toch (Toch, 1977) who performed content analyses of interviews with inmates regarding their perceptions of the prison environment. All these variables are adjusted such that a higher score means that the inmate-subject's social needs are better provided for. In a recent article Wright (1985) describes these eight dimensions of the PEI as follows:

1. PRIVACY: (PRITOT) - A concern about social and physical overstimulation; a preference for isolation, peace and quiet, absence of environmental irritants such as noise and crowding.
2. SAFETY: (SAFTOT) - A concern about one's physical safety; a preference for social and physical settings that provide protection and that minimize the chances of being attacked.
3. STRUCTURE: (STRTOT) - A concern about environmental stability and predicability; a preference for consistency, clear-cut rules, orderly and scheduled events and impingements.
4. SUPPORT: (SUPTOT) - A concern about reliable, tangible assistance from persons and settings, and about services that facilitate self-advancement and self-improvement.
5. EMOTIONAL FEEDBACK: (EMOTOT) - A concern about being loved, appreciated and cared for; a desire for intimate relationships that provide emotional sustenance and empathy.

6. SOCIAL STIMULATION: (SOCTOT) - A concern with congeniality, and a preference for settings that provide an opportunity for social interaction, companionship, and gregariousness.
7. ACTIVITY: (ACTTOT) - A concern about understimulation; a need for maximizing the opportunity to be occupied and to fill time; a need for distraction.
8. FREEDOM: (FRETOT) - A concern about circumscription of one's autonomy; a need for minimal restriction and for maximum opportunity to govern one's own conduct.

## PERSONALITY

Since all subjects in this study were convicted felons, it seemed appropriate to utilize the criminal personality typology developed by Megargee (Megargee and Bohn, 1979). This typology uses the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) (perhaps the most widely used instrument in the social sciences for assessing personality) as a means of establishing group membership for the inmate-subjects.

### Pre-incarceration Characteristics

As alluded to earlier, this category of independent variables can be conceptually broken down into three meaningful groups: criminal justice system processing, social-economic states, and traditional demographic variables. They are as follows:

#### Social-economic Status

This indicator, social-economic status, is conceptualized in two forms: occupation, and four variables related to education. The education variables include IQ, grade level attained, and the two California Achievement Test (CAT) scores, verbal and math.

1. Grade level attained prior to the time of the study either inside or outside of prison (EDUCOMP).
2. Intelligence quotient (IQ) as obtained from inmate files.
3. California Achievement Test score-verbal (CAT-1)
4. California Achievement Test score-math (CAT-2)

5. Occupation prior to incarceration (OCCUP) was initially divided into nine categories, but since the sample had well over two-thirds of the subjects unemployed (approximately 72%), this variable was recorded into two values, employed and unemployed. Therefore, in the models and subsequent discussions to follow, this variable will be labeled as EMPLOYMENT.

### Criminal Justice System Processing

The set of variables related to processing by the criminal justice system include length of sentence, prior criminal record (which blends all major types of records, i.e., arrest, conviction and prior incarceration), commitment offense, and county of conviction.

1. Type of sentence (MIDSENT); as noted earlier is the amount of time in months derived from the mean of the composite of the minimum plus the maximum sentence.
2. Prior record (RECORD) entails ten values with first time offenders in the lowest category (i.e., 0 indicating no priors whatsoever; 1 indicating some evidence of a criminal offense, like an arrest, but no convictions; 2 indicating an adult conviction, though not entailing a sentence of probation or youthful offender status). Individuals with repeated arrests, prosecutions and convictions are in the highest numbered groups, e.g., a 9 indicates a repeat offender who has spent time on probation, served time in a local jail (for a misdemeanor) and has served time in a federal or state facility (for a felony).
3. Commitment offense (CRIME) utilizes ten categories of offenses. An effort was made to arrange the types of offenses in a hierarchical order of progressive deviance, thus creating a continuous variable. Specifically, the values of this variable are:
  - 1 = youthful offender status,
  - 2 = a miscellaneous category including criminal possession of a weapon, DWI, coercion, etc.,
  - 3 = drug offenders,
  - 4 = sex offenses such as pimping/pandering, sodomy, sexual abuse,
  - 5 = arson,
  - 6 = burglary, larceny, criminal possession of stolen property, criminal usury,
  - 7 = felony assault,
  - 8 = robbery,
  - 9 = rape and
  - 10 = murder/homicide.

### Demographics

The final category of independent variables consists of five demographic variables: county of conviction, ethnicity, age, marital status, and religious

orientation.

1. Location of commitment offense by county (COUNTCNV) is a variable using three values which denote whether the crime had been committed in New York City (1), suburban New York (2), or upstate New York (3).
2. Race (ETHNIC) of inmate-subjects is a categorical variable which utilizes four values: white (1), black (2), hispanic (3), and other (4).
3. Age (AGE) is the years to the eight decimal point.
4. Marital status (MARITAL) indicates whether the individual is married or widowed (1), cohabitating (2), those never married (3), and those divorced or separated (4).
5. Religion (REL) represents religious orientation as classified into one of four categories: Catholic (1), Protestant (2), an "other" category (3) which included Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist and Hinduism, and a category for those who indicated that they had no religion or were a member of some sort of unorthodox or radical sect such as Rastafarian, agnostic, Black Nationalist, 5%ers, animism, etc. (4).

#### QUALITY OF SAMPLE

An important consideration in any study is how well the sample represents the universe from which it is drawn. Several important background variables were selected for comparison of this sample and the entire New York State prison population, as presented in their 1983 annual report. This group of background variables included ethnicity, commitment offense, educational level attained prior to incarceration, age, prior criminal record, and county of conviction.

Visual inspection of the percentages for the various categories of these background variables indicates great similarity. But the chi-square statistic is superior. At the .01 significance level, only the last two variables, prior criminal record, and county of conviction, demonstrate any significance difference between the sample and the DOCS universe. For prior criminal record, the difference is slight. Chi-square equals 11.901; the critical value of the .01 significance level with three degrees of freedom is 11.34. For county of conviction, the difference is greater. Here, chi-square equals 25.3, but the relevant critical value is 9.21. The sample contains a higher proportion of

inmates from the upstate regions.

It is important to recognize that, at least, three factors may account for these differences. First, there is a much greater number of people which DOCS has custody of ( $N=29,521$ ). The sample is much smaller ( $n=581$ ). That great of disparity could account for some of the difference in the comparison. Secondly, the entire DOCS universe includes inmates from minimum security facilities, those in half-way houses, on furloughs, and parolees. It is reasonable to suggest that many inmates programmed in this way (i.e., community corrections) are from the New York City area. There are more of these types of facilities and programs there. There are more inmates from there. Finally, the figure used for the entire DOCS population includes women inmates; the sample does not.

The conclusion drawn from these comparisons is that this sample is reasonably representative of the universe from which it is drawn.

#### THE MEGARGEY TYPOLOGY

As alluded to previously, the primary purpose of this paper is to scrutinize the personality variable as operationalized via the Megargey typology. This is a relatively new classification system which establishes group membership through analyses of a given inmate's MMPI profile. In the major work documenting the development of this instrument (Megargey & Bohn, 1979), several important criteria are cited for a good classification system (i.e., that it be complete, clear, reliable, valid, dynamic, treatment oriented, and economical). The Megargey typology strives to fulfill these criteria.

Subsequent reliability and validity testing of the Megargey typology was performed by Edinger (1979). Additionally, Bohn (1979) reports on the implementation of Megargey typology as a classification tool used to assign inmates to housing units at a Federal Correctional Institution. The results indicate a reduction in the level of violence and an improvement in the quality

of life at the institution six months after the classification scheme began.

The Megargee typology may be construed as a continuous variable because the groups were originally conceptualized in a hierarchical format beginning with the least deviant groups and extending upward to the more deviant profiles. A brief description of the group's hierarchy follows.

(1) Group Item was the least deviant group. The most significant characteristic being an absence of any marked elevation on the various psychopathology scales contained in the MMPI. Inmates assigned to this group had an essentially normal profile. These individuals came from good families and demonstrated high post-release success. Members from Group Item were felt not to have any pressing treatment needs. A prison environment entailing minimum restriction, such as a minimum security facility or half-way house, was thought to be sufficient for these individuals.

(2) Group Easy, the second least deviant group, was characterized by a pronounced fake-good tendency on the MMPI and might best be labelled as "psychopathic manipulators." These men came from a generally positive home environment that included many natural advantages (i.e., middle and upper class), although there was some indication of the family having deviant siblings. Easy had the highest intellectual and academic measures, having an average Beta IQ of 106. Although innately endowed with intelligence, these individuals lacked motivation and discipline in school. These men tended to score high in dominance, yet were one of the least violent or aggressive of the groups (e.g., Easy had the lowest mean number of institutional disciplinary write-ups, with two-thirds of the group having none at all). This was reported to be the best adjusted and controlled group, plus being very good at interpersonal relations. As might be expected, these inmates were weak in response to supervision and in dependability. They performed better in the

classroom than on the job and had the lowest recidivism rate. No special treatment needs were cited. It was felt this group required firmness and structure rather than support. They might respond well to educational programming and might be good candidates for an insight-therapy approach.

(3) Group Baker could be described as the "neurotic delinquent" group, marked by several apparent contradictions. Here we have one of the least deviant MMPI profiles but the adult criminal records were the second most serious, thus possibly indicating that problems were increasing with age. These men reported the lowest drug use, highest alcohol use, and had a history of many authority conflicts. Their personalities were described as constricted, withdrawn, asocial and low in interpersonal maturity, resulting in what might be described as a passive-aggressive syndrome. Baker was found to be one of the more troublesome groups inside the institution, though usually engaging in petty/annoying offenses rather than serious infractions. Contradiction was further manifested by the fact that these inmates demonstrated one of the worst reconviction rates, yet maintained the best reincarceration rates. In sum, these men could be described as depressed, withdrawn, anxious and unable to relate well with others. A supportive treatment approach where an individual could encounter success experiences, and thereby facilitate a positive self image, was thought to be most appropriate. Because of a pressing need for education, treatment should involve an academic component.

(4) Group Able demonstrated a juvenile delinquent profile. This group had the highest proportion of whites (72.5%) and the lowest percentage of blacks (26%). Coming primarily from middle class backgrounds, they were above average in terms of social-economic status. Prior records were light to moderate. The men of Group Able had the ability to form good interpersonal relations and were described as having high energy levels. Able was the least anxious of all ten groups, and these men were thought likely to recidivate. Because aftercare was

thought to be the key element in treatment, an optimal approach might entail short periods of incarceration subsequently coupled with close community supervision, like a half-way house or an intensive parole program. The agent of treatment may be the most critical factor in realizing success. Ideally, a therapist who is direct, confrontive, and challenging may be most effective: a treatment modality which utilizes its own language, procedures, stages, etc., (e.g., Transactional Analysis) might be best suited for this group.

(5) Group George had the highest degree of drug involvement, though these men functioned more as providers than users. Whites were again overrepresented (69%). George was one of the brightest and best educated groups, though the families were reported as being more socially deviant than most. Somewhat retreatist in overall orientation, these men were low in authority conflicts and in dominance. Though highly adaptable, these convicts remained uninvolved in the institution, preferring to "do my own time." Assertiveness training was thought to be an appropriate form of treatment and since their crimes, by and large, were economically motivated, training in legitimate avenues of employment would be an important adjunct to treatment.

(6) Group Delta could be described as traditional psychopaths ("all id with no lid"). Personality descriptors included hedonistic, amoral, inability to delay gratification, bright, charming, intelligent, and manipulative with a lack of anxiety and guilt. Family histories were characterized by considerable tension with a high degree of deviance, parental rejection and poor discipline. These men encountered significant problems regarding interpersonal relations and general social adjustment. Group Delta had one of the poorest records of institutional adjustment which included a high rate of violent infractions. Delta also had the worst Comprehensive Recidivism Rating. In terms of treatment, these inmates would best be dealt with by agents who are fair,

strong-willed, self confident, consistent and possess a good sense of humor. Since these individuals are so impulsive, a non-reflective, present oriented approach, like Reality Therapy, might be optimal.

(7) Group Jupiter was largely composed of blacks (60%) and had a high rate of property offenses. These were men described as those who rose above initial deficiencies and, while encountering many problems, might be expected to be in worse condition. These individuals came from families that were highly unstable and the most deviant; they reported having the least adequate dwellings. Jupiter was the most prisonized group and displayed what might be described as a "smiling depressive" syndrome (i.e., low in aggression, avoidance of hostile encounters--an introverted, passive individual who is uncomfortable in, and awkward at social interaction). Jupiter also displayed the highest degree of drug abuse and had the highest rate of institutional violence (possibly as a result of bigotry). In prison these men performed better on the job than in the classroom and did better than expected once on the street. Treatment requirements indicated an institutional setting initially, perhaps followed by a half-way house. In either case, programs with a practical orientation aimed at capitalizing on their motivation would be best.

(8) Group Foxtrot displayed deficits in almost every area of functioning. These individuals were among the poorest educated and least able. Coming from a deprived social-economic background, their families were characterized by coldness, rejection, instability, with a frequently absent father, and inadequate discipline. Foxtrot was one of the groups with more extensive criminal records. Their personalities were described as anti-social, egocentric, dominant and assertive. This was one of the most deviant groups, containing people who reject conventional values and ideals. Foxtrot had the second worst record of prison adjustment, coming in with both poor work ratings and poor performance in the classroom. These inmates also had the lowest mean

Beta IQ. Here the convicts were more of a management than treatment concern. Though treatment programming should emphasize structure and activity with swift and definite responses to behavior, perhaps traditional behavior modification or Guided Group Interaction would be best.

(9) The men of Group Charlie were described as anti-social, misanthropic individuals who were bitter, hostile, quite sensitive to perceived insults and ready to lash out at the slightest provocation. The inmates came from the more deviant, stressful and inadequate family environments. Their profiles indicated major deficits in every area of functioning and were the poorest at interpersonal relations. Charlie was among the groups having the most extensive prior criminal record. Described as "hostile loners", these were highly aggressive people who were socially withdrawn, preoccupied with their own problems and had little or no interest in empathy. They were also characterized by poor educational attainment. In terms of correctional treatment, a period of incarceration was expected to increase their levels of hostility and resentment. These convicts would need a great deal of structure and extensive personality reconstruction. Because of a pressing need for an improvement in the area of interpersonal relations, Reality Therapy was suggested.

(10) Group How was one of the lowest on all measures of intellectual ability and educational achievement. These profiles indicated a broad range of disturbance and pathology. How also had the lowest social-economic status. One of the most aggressive groups with serious deficits in ego strength, their personalities were described as withdrawn, introverted, passive and constricted. These men expressed extreme negative feelings toward both parents and felt significantly more anxiety than all others. How also displayed the most pervasive pattern of poor institutional performance and adjustment, being the poorest in Work Performance Ratings and the lowest group on Educational

Evaluations. The most immediate treatment need was a more comprehensive individual diagnosis. In the institution, these were the convicts described as "flakes." These men seem to need a warm, though structured and organized, therapeutic approach where they might gain some insight. Indeed, their criminality was considered secondary to their psychopathology.

#### ANALYSES

In order to test the relations among the variables, a stepwise regression was performed on each of the five dependent variables. The significance level was set at .10. Because this research was exploratory in nature, the significance level was set higher than usual in order to ferret out as many significant independent variables as possible, and thus maximize the amount of variance accounted for in the various dependent variables.

The stepwise regression procedures calculated standardized betas for the significant independent variables. These constitute main effects on the path analytical models. Indirect effects were then computed by taking each of the significant independent variables and, working backwards (right to left on the model) from the original dependent variable, posing all endogenous independent variables as dependent variables, and, in turn, regressing them upon the remaining independent variables in that particular model.

During the process of these analyses a major difficulty arose with regard to the Megargee typology used to represent the criminal personality variable. It came in with only 262 usable cases, 56 of which had to be placed into a newly created category, multiple classification. This eleventh group consisted of subjects who had significant MMPI scores in more than one of Megargee's personality categories. This left 206 "pure" cases (approximately 35% of the sample), i.e., "pure" defined as a significant MMPI score in only one of the personality categories.

Table 1 presents a comparison of these 206 cases with the distribution originally obtained by Megargee (1979). The chi-square statistic indicates that the distribution in this sample is significantly different from the distribution originally obtained by Megargee (1979). The difference is slight and should be expected since the Megargee distribution is based on federal prisoners and the sample based on state prisoners. In fact, Megargee and Bohn (1977) suggested that state inmate samples might very well have different frequencies of the 10 groups than federal inmate samples. Additionally, Edinger (1979) also obtained a different distribution of state inmates from Alabama; in fact, the Alabama distribution demonstrates greater disparity from Megargee's original federal sample than this New York sample.

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TABLE 1

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<u>Group</u>	<u>Megargee</u>	<u>Sample</u>
Item	19%	19%
Easy	7%	2%
Baker	4%	3%
Able	17%	19%
George	7%	9%
Delta	10%	6%
Jupiter	3%	5%
Foxtrot	8%	13%
Charlie	8.5%	12%
How	13%	13%
Chi-square = 30.432		df=9 prob. = 0.0004

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Rather than reduce the sample size by 55%, an effort was made to develop a method for predicting personality typology for the missing cases. To accomplish this, the MEGARGEЕ variable was posed as a dependent variable and a stepwise regression was conducted for all remaining variables in the model.

With the significance level set at .10, this procedure resulted in two

variables accounting for any variance, AGE and EDUCOMP, with standardized betas of  $-.15$  and  $-.16$  respectively.<sup>3</sup>

The adjusted R-square was  $.05$  and  $u$ , or unexplained variance (Blalock, 1969), was equal to  $.97$ . It was concluded that an accurate prediction for the missing cases of the personality variable was not feasible.

Consequently, the only other alternative was to test the five models dealing with the initial indicators of prison adaptation (i.e., DTD, OVERALL, FREQTOT, OFFTOT, and COMTOT) both with and without Megargee. Of course, the model testing with MEGARGEE included utilized only 45% of the sample ( $n=262$ ).

#### INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

The multivariate regression analyses resulted in the Megargee personality variable having significance influence on three of the (subjective) dependent variables: DTD, or day to day coping; FREQTOT, or total frequency of problems in prison; and COMTOT, or comfort total. It is interesting to note that the Megargee personality variable did not demonstrate any significance influence on the two objective measures of prison adaptation: OVERALL, or total number of sick calls per year; and OFFTOT, total number of disciplinary reports. The following three figures present the path models for the three subjective dependent variables in which the Megargee personality variable demonstrated significant influence.

On Figure 2, the relationship between the personality variable and DTD is interpreted as the lower an inmate is on the Megargee typology (i.e., the less deviant), the more he feels his basic needs are not met by the prison environment. On Figure 3, the relationship indicates that the lower an inmate

<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note that these findings are generally consistent with Megargee's original conception of the typology: specifically, as age and educational level drop, an inmates classification on the typology goes up (i.e., the lower the age and the less education a subject has, the more deviant he tends to be).

FIGURE 2. DTD

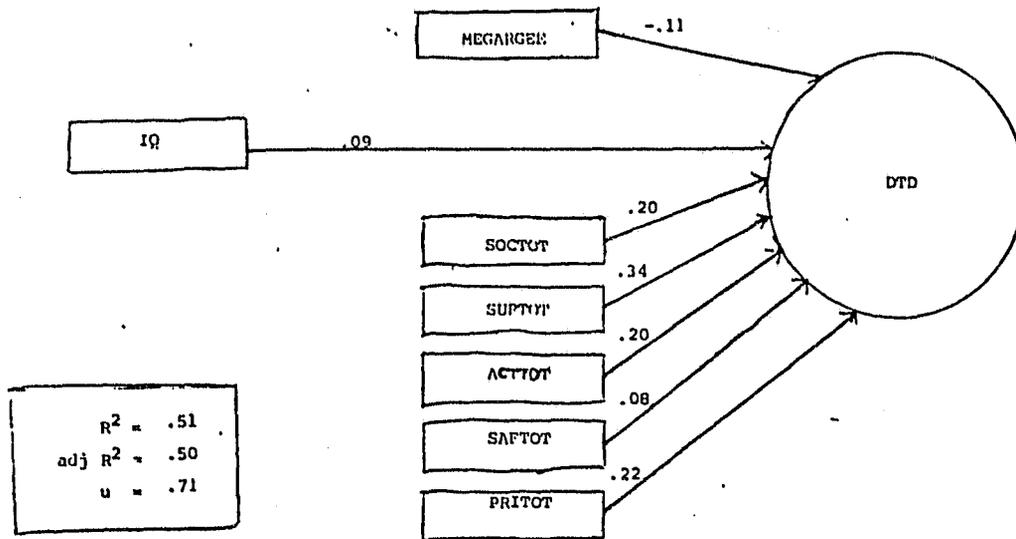


FIGURE 3. FREQTOT

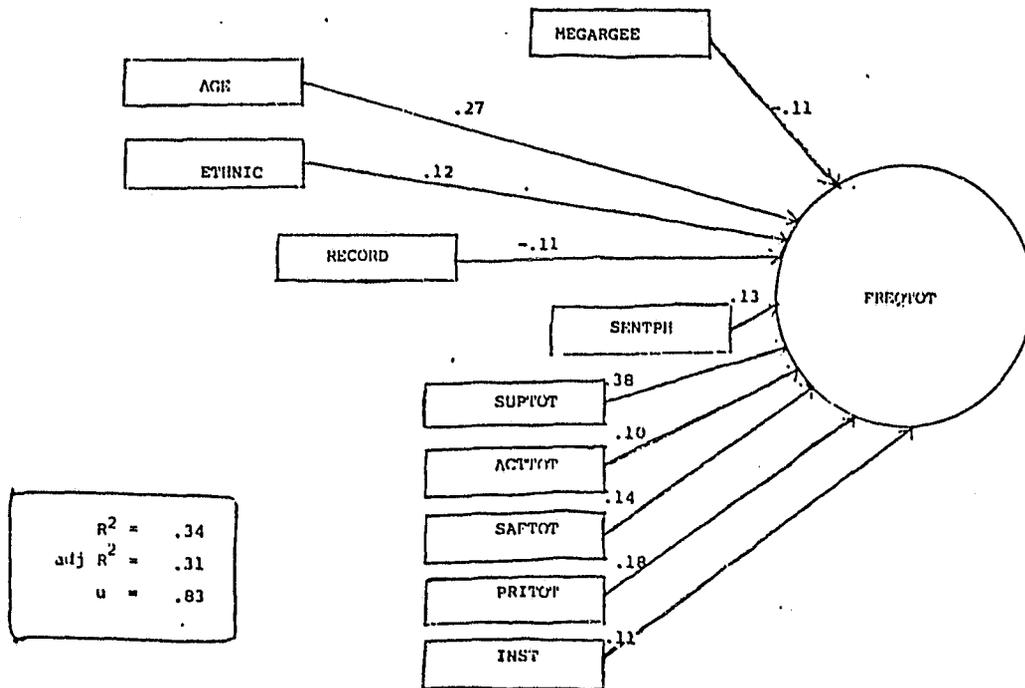
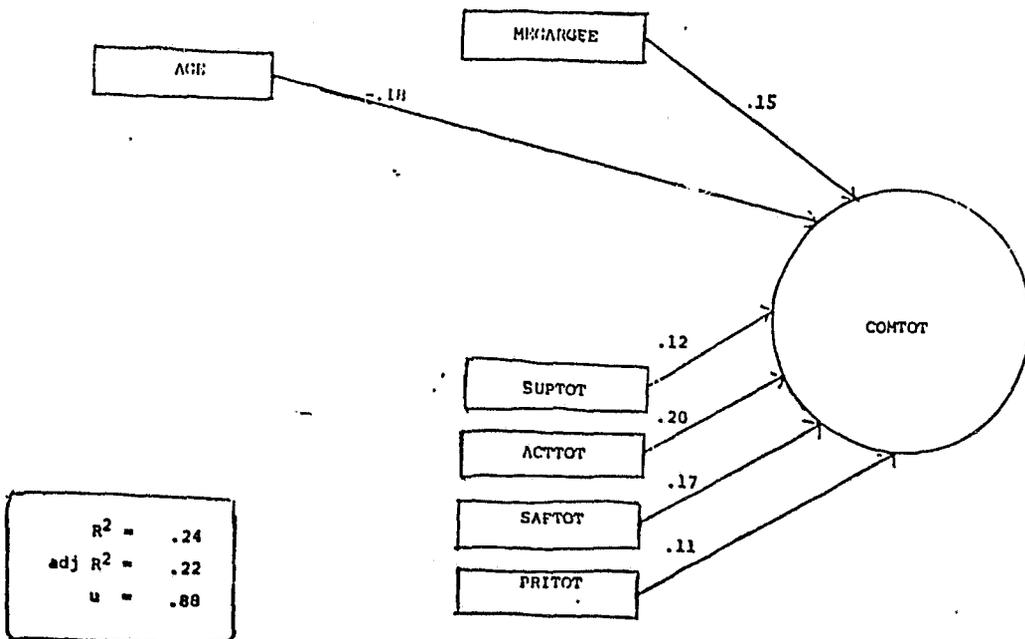


FIGURE 4. COHTOT



is on the Megargee typology (i.e., the less deviant), the greater number of perceived problems he reports having in prison. Finally, on Figure 4, the interpretation is the higher an inmate is on the Megargee typology (i.e., the more deviant), then the more an inmate tends to feel he is not doing well in prison as compared to free world living.

In sum, these data indicate an apparent contradiction: less deviant inmates report more problems in the institution; yet the more deviant inmates feel they are not doing well in prison as compared to when they were in the free world. Perhaps a clue to explaining this lies in the institutional environment. It is fact that medium and maximum security correctional institutions are, for the most part, abrasive, dehumanizing and degrading places. The less deviant inmates feel that this highly abnormal environment does not meet their basic needs well and they experience many problems. They have trouble adapting to this crazy place called prison. At the same time, these less deviant inmates feel they are doing alright compared to free world living. Perhaps these inmates have retained something in the way of a conscience -- they experience guilt -- and prison serves as a mechanism to expiate their transgressions against society. Another question that crops up is, "What were their free world living conditions like?" Perhaps the rigid regimentation of the prison, where they have to assume little responsibility, is to their liking.

The more deviant inmates, on the other hand, seem to adapt well to the deviant institutional environment. They feel their basic needs are adequately met and they are less apt to report problems. It may well be that in their free world living conditions, because of extreme poverty, they experienced great difficulty in mere survival. Yet these inmates long for the free world, where the institutional constraints do not inhibit them from doing whatever they please, whenever they want.

The other noteworthy item is, of course, the problem experienced with the Megargee personality variable, i.e., less than half the sample could be meaningfully classified. Why was it that 55% of the sample could not be classified? In the major work dealing with the development of the typology (Megargee & Bohn, 1979), Megargee deals with the requirements of a good classification system (i.e., the first of which is that the system be "complete"). Megargee asserts, quoting Gibbons (1975): "A third requirement of an adequate taxonomy, whether it is to be used in etiological analysis or in correctional treatment, is that it must be comprehensive. In other words, all or most of the population of actual offenders ought to be placed within one or another type within the scheme." All of the other research relevant research cited in this paper, from Megargee's original work thru Edinger's study, experienced significantly higher successful classification rates on the typology. What is it about New York state inmates that makes them so difficult to classify. Clearly, the Megargee typology can be described as the "new kid on the block." It is worthwhile to note that another criterion of a good classification system initially posited by Megargee is that it be dynamic, i.e., that it can be changed or modified as needed. Hopefully, subsequent discussions, analyses and refinements will reveal insights into this dilemma.

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