

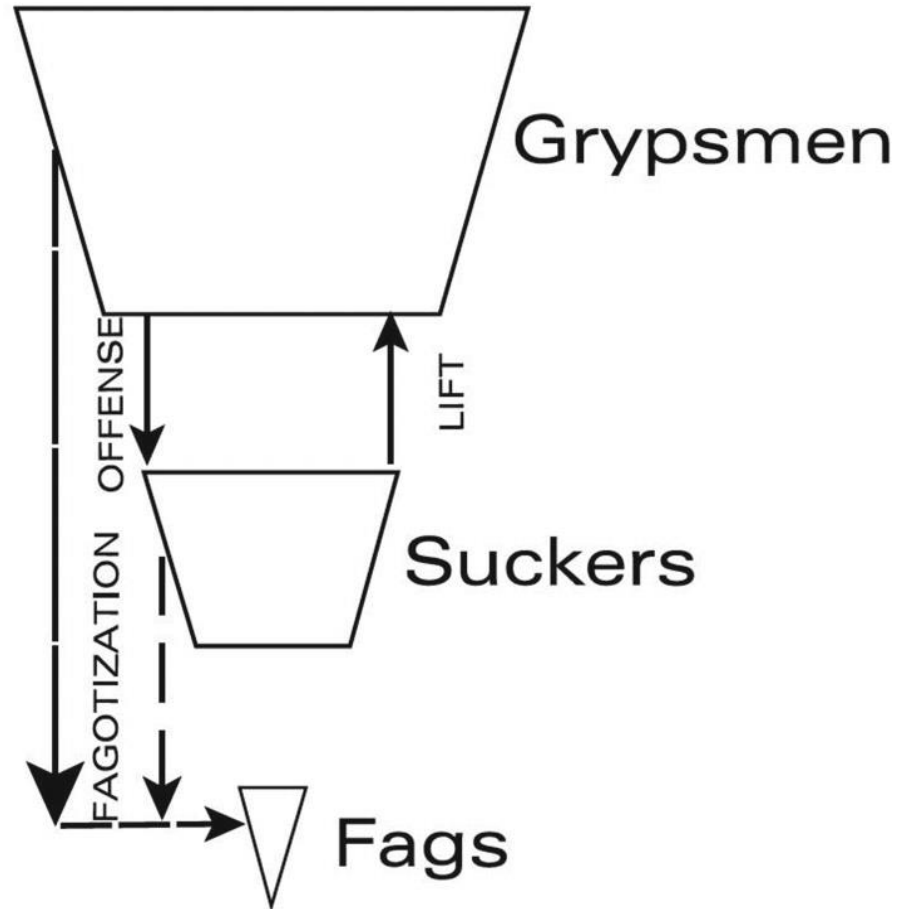
Prison subculture in Poland before and after 1989

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Prisons in Poland between 1945 and 1989

- Imprisonment was the main, almost the only, state response to crime
- The goal was retribution, even revenge from the state, not rehabilitation
- Prisons were severely overcrowded
- Employment was used to exploit the prisoners
- All goods, including food, were in short supply
- In 1973, 130,000 prisoners were guarded by just 16,000 Prison Service officers
- The largest waves of riots swept through Polish prisons in the years 1955-1956, 1971-1972, 1981, 1984 and the strongest in 1989
- To be able to control situation, Prison Service was equipped with machine guns, batons, gas, dogs and handcuffs, was allowed to beat prisoners, but was also allowed to do agent work among the prisoners

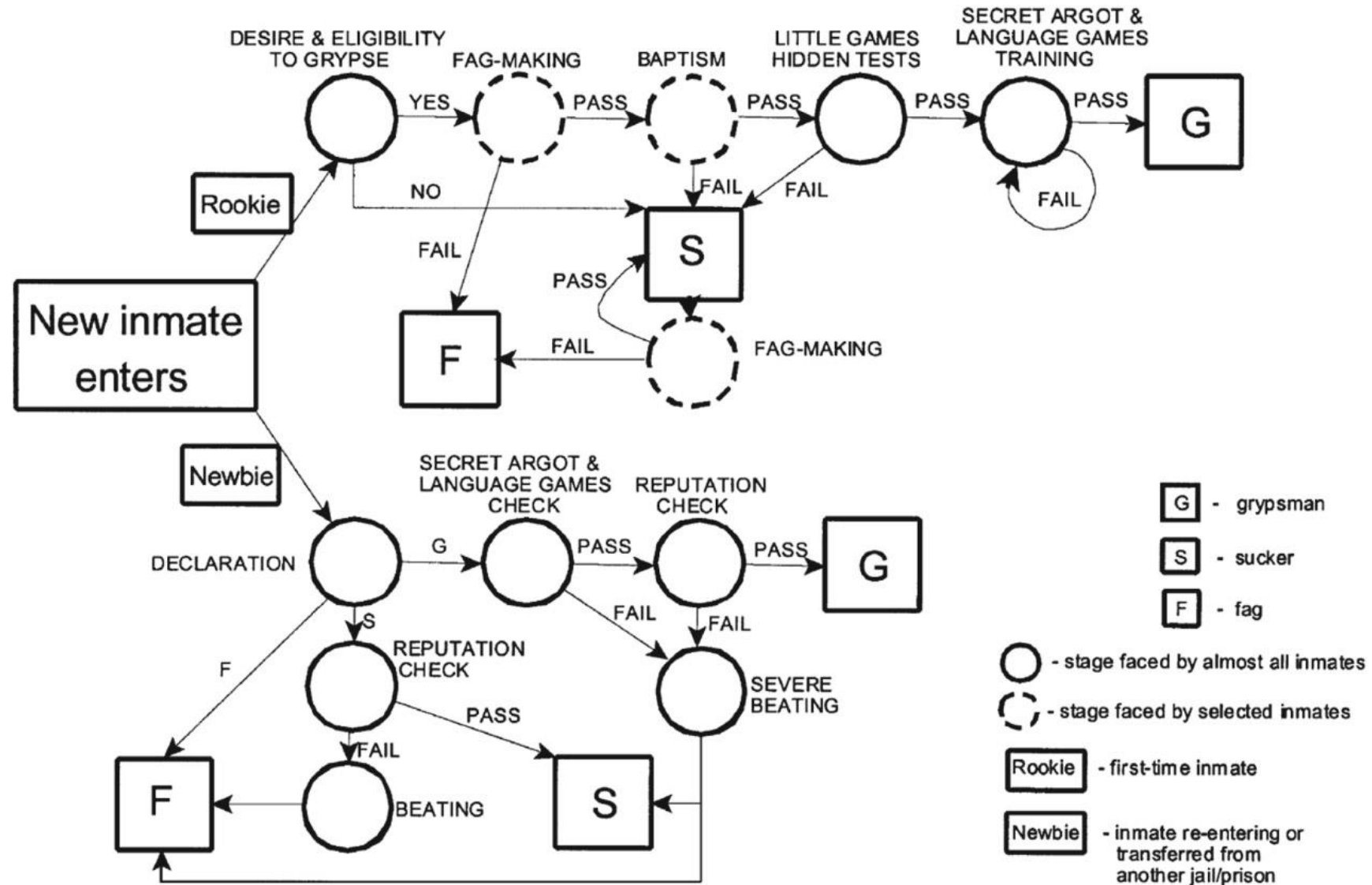
Prison hierarchy



Fundamental norms of grypsmen subculture

- Honor
- Solidarity
- Refusal
- Help
- Hygiene

Grypsman initiation



Everyday life

- Boredom
- Tea
- Art and culture

1989: Transition

Don't fucking beat 'em!

Dr. Paweł Moczydłowski (new Director General of the Prison Service)
at a briefing with prison and detention centers wardens,

May 1990

Social Structure, Allocation to Castes and Lack of Grypsman Initiation

- Grypsmen in minority
- Decline of subculture rules
- Lack of initiation
- The role of drugs
- Prison argot now known by everyone
- The role of money

Everyday life nowadays

- TVs, tape recorders, Playstations
- Coffee instead of tea
- Drugs instead of tea
- Popculture instead of prison culture

Two faces of the same subculture

- Before 1989
- After 1989

Thank you for your attention 😊

... and



EUROCRIM 2026



26th Annual Conference
of the European Society of Criminology

EUROCRIM 2026
“FRONTIERS OF CRIMINOLOGY”

Warsaw, 9-12 September 2026

