SITUATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION AND PRISON CONTROL

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Cite as:

Wortley, R. (2003). Situational crime prevention and prison control. In In M.J. Smith and D.B. Cornish (Eds.), *Theory for practice in situational crime prevention. Crime prevention studies*, Volume 16. Monsey, NY: Criminal Justice Press.

ABSTRACT

This article examines the application of situational crime prevention techniques to the prison environment to address problems such as prisoner violence, sexual assault, self harm, escapes, drug use and collective disorder. On the surface the prison would seem the epitome of a controlled environment and it might be assumed that there is little that prison administrators can learn from situational prevention. However, typically control in prison lacks the micro-level, problem-solving approach that characterizes situational prevention. But the lessons are not all in one direction. While situational crime prevention has been concerned largely with reducing opportunities for crime, prison control often deals with institutional pressures that *precipitate* misbehavior. As well as tightening-up to restrict opportunities for misbehavior, prison control can also involve loosening-off to reduce these pressures. These opposing approaches to control need to be carefully balanced to avoid counterproductive intervention. The concept of situational precipitators and control through loosening-up can be applied more broadly to community settings. Thus, while prison administrators can learn from situational crime prevention, situational crime prevention practitioners have something to learn from prison control.

SITUATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION AND PRISON CONTROL

The accumulating evidence for the success of situational approaches to behavior problems in the community begs the question of whether the same techniques can be successfully employed in other settings. This article explores the potential for applying situational crime prevention interventions in the prison environment. Prison provides an interesting test of situational prevention principles on two counts. On the one hand, the prison environment particularly lends itself to situational interventions. As an enclosed space, it offers a great deal of control over situational variables. One of the limitations of situational prevention in the community is its ability to deal with highly mobile crimes. Rape, for example, typically does not occur in any designated place and so it is difficult to 'crime-proof' every location in which rape might occur (although some major hot-spots may be identified and made safer). This is less problematic in prison where there are a more limited number of locations to consider. Moreover, prison administrators are relatively unconstrained by community opposition and concerns about restrictions on person liberty and have the power to instigate more-or-less whatever changes are necessary. Potentially, all aspects of a prisoner's life can be brought under situational control. If situational prevention cannot be made to work in prison then arguably it cannot be made to work anywhere.

On the other hand prison also contains a concentration of known and often recidivist offenders. One of the criticisms frequently leveled against situational prevention is that it is only applicable to relatively non-serious crime and for offenders who are not committed to antisocial acts. At best it keeps honest people honest. Determined

offenders, so the argument goes, will simply seek out new crime opportunities when an existing avenue is blocked. That is, the more criminally committed the offender, the more likely that situational crime prevention efforts will be undermined by displacement. Prisoners by definition have a history of breaking social rules and so by this argument are likely to be relatively resistant to situational interventions. In addition, they are being confined against their will and are motivated to exploit whatever opportunities the prison environment affords. Equally, then, one may argue that if situational techniques can be made to work on convicted prisoners then they can be made to work on anyone.

There are only a handful of studies that explicitly apply the situational prevention model to the prison environment, that is, where the researcher consciously formulates the study using situational theories and language (e.g. Atlas, 1982; 1983; Bottoms et al. 1995; Clarke, 1980; 1987; La Vigne, 1994; O'Donnell and Edgar, 1996; Sparks et al., 1996). However, most prison control strategies involve manipulation of the prison environment in some way and there is consequently a great deal of prison research of a quasi-situational nature. It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine this literature in detail (for a comprehensive review see Wortley, in press). Rather, this paper focuses on the lessons for prison control that might be learned from situational crime prevention. It is argued that situational prevention principles provide a framework and a methodology for a more systematic utilization of the prison environment to control problem behavior than currently typically occurs. At the same time, because prisons have a long history of using the environment to control behavior, there are also lessons to be learned from the experience of prison control for situational crime prevention more generally.

LESSONS FROM SITUATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION FOR PRISON CONTROL

On the face of it the idea of employing situational prevention in prison might seem rather redundant. After all, the prison would already appear to be the epitome of a regulated, target-hardened environment, purpose-built to maximize control over behavior. Observation towers, guards, thick walls, bars, razor wire, electronic surveillance and so forth are all situational elements specifically calculated to reduce opportunities for prisoners to misbehave. What, then, it might be asked, can prison administrators learn from the situational approach?

However, traditional approaches to prison security and control are narrow and often crude applications of situational prevention principles. Typically, prison disorder has been treated as an institution-wide problem and the approach to prison control has been a scattergun affair that takes little account of the various motivations for misbehavior. Despite the appearance of pervasive control, most prisons offer prisoners ample opportunities to misbehave and the prevention and detection of rule violation is at best haphazard. Moreover, traditional methods of control reveal a static, dispositional perspective on prisoner behavior. The control task is conceived simply in terms of physically restraining determinedly violent and uncooperative individuals from carrying out their intended transgressions. As a consequence of this view, the control tactics employed in traditional prison regimes are generally at the heavy-handed, target-hardening end of the opportunity-reduction spectrum.

In contrast, situational prevention offers a much wider range of interventions. According to the rational choice perspective, upon which the opportunity-reduction approach is based, whether or not an individual engages in any behavior is governed by the ongoing assessment he/she makes of the perceived costs and benefits. Manipulating situational costs and benefits does not necessarily require physically constraining behavior but may simply involve making that behavior less attractive. To accomplish this, situational prevention is at its best when it adopts a micro-level, crime-specific focus. Prevention efforts need to focus on the relationship between *particular* aspects of the environment and *particular* kinds of behavior. Further, opportunity-reduction interventions require an understanding of what the prisoner is hoping to gain from his/her misbehavior, since altering the perceived costs and benefits of behavior is the key to prevention. In short, situational prison control requires a problem-solving approach that begins with a detailed analysis -- the 'what', 'where', 'when' and 'why' -- of the behavior to be prevented. The solution to any misbehavior must be tailor-made and can vary from case to case depending upon the dynamics of the problem.

'What': A behavior-specific approach

Many research articles treat prison disorder as a unidimensional phenomenon and simply pool forms of misconduct into an overall prison violence or disorder index (e.g. Farrington and Nuttall, 1980; Quinsey and Varney, 1977). Similarly, institutional responses to disorder frequently involve generalized security crackdowns that target a collection of misbehaviors simultaneously (Binda, 1975; Farmer, 1988; Holt and Phillips,

1991). However, the clear lesson from the crime prevention literature is that situational and environmental interventions are most effective when they are very specific. As a first step in conducting situational prevention in prison, the concept of prison disorder needs to be broken down as far as possible into particular kinds of misbehavior, including violence among prisoners, violence between prisoners and staff, sexual assaults, theft, vandalism, drug use, self-harm, escapes and collective disorder.

For example, the prevention of assaults by prisoners against other prisoners may require a different approach from the prevention of assaults by prisoners against guards. In one study McCorkle et al (1995) found that the correlation between the incidence of prisoner-prisoner assaults and prisoner-guard assaults was .57 -- moderately significant but low enough to suggest that the two behaviors also have distinct causations. One crucial difference between the two categories of assault is the nature of the relationship between the perpetrator and victim. Guards are in a position of authority and are often required to make prisoners do things that they would prefer not to do. A number of studies have found that the vast majority of assaults against guards occurred during routine interactions with prisoners -- issuing an order, delivering goods and services, searching cells, breaking up fights, escorting prisoners and so forth (Harris and Varney, 1986; Kauffman, 1988; Light, 1991; Quinsey and Varney, 1977). Sometimes the attacks seemed to be unprovoked but on other occasions they were deliberately or inadvertently triggered by the guard's behavior towards the prisoner. Experienced prison staff have generally been found to be less likely to be targets of assault than inexperienced staff (Davies and Burgess, 1988; Ditchfield and Harries, 1996; Ekland-Olson, 1986; Kratcoski,

1988). One specific initiative for preventing prisoner-guard assaults, then, might involve training staff in more effective interpersonal strategies for dealing with prisoners.

Offence-specificity can be taken even further. For example, prisoner-prisoner assaults involving weapons can be distinguished from prisoner-prisoner assaults without weapons. Armed assaults are more likely to involve multiple assailant and to be carried out in secluded locations, suggesting a higher degree of premeditation and planning than for unarmed assaults (Atlas, 1982, 1983). The most common weapon used -- accounting for up to three-quarters of armed assaults -- is a knife or other sharp instrument that is readily available in prison (Cooley, 1993; Jayewardene and Doherty, 1985; Porporino et al., 1987; Sylvester et al., 1977). An obvious intervention for armed assaults is 'controlling facilitators'. The issue of plastic cutlery, searching prisoners as they leave workshops, the use metal detectors and so forth are strategies designed to specifically target assaults with weapons.

In some cases, interventions designed to deter one behavior may facilitate another. For example, numerous studies have highlighted the positive role that single-cell accommodation plays in reducing prison-prison assaults (Atlas, 1982; Cox et al., 1984; Lester, 1990; O'Donnell and Edgar, 1996; Sylvester et al., 1977). Single cells afford prisoners greater protection from attackers as well as alleviating stress by allowing prisoners to meet privacy needs. However, in the case of self-harm, single-cell accommodation is contra-indicated. Over two-thirds of self-harm incidents have been found to take place in single cells (Fleming et al., 1992; Towl and Crighton, 1998).

Double-bunking of prisoners is recommended as a way to provide natural surveillance and help relieve the sense of isolation that can encourage thoughts of self-harm (Hayes, 1995; Johnston, 1991). Hence, whether single-cell or multiple-occupancy housing is recommended depends upon what behavior one is trying to prevent.

'Where' and 'When': The geography of disorder

Part of being specific about prison disorder involves determining the geographic characteristics of the misbehavior. Just as in the general community there are hot-spots of crime, so too in prison problem events are not uniformly distributed but tend to concentrate around particular points in time and space. One might seek to discover if problem behavior is more prevalent in a particular wing, or a particular part of a wing, and if so, what it is about this sub-environment that allows problems to occur. Similarly, trouble might be found to occur at particular times of the day or even particular times of the year.

Spatial analysis of misbehavior can highlight places where extra vigilance is required by prison staff or indicate areas that need to be physically redesigned. For example, prisoner-prisoner assaults have been found to occur most frequently in cells, halls, showers and other locations characterized by poor opportunities for staff surveillance (Atlas, 1982; 1983; Porporino et al., 1987; Quinsey and Varney, 1977; Sylvester et al., 1977). Targeted use of CCTV, elimination of architectural blind-spots, improved visibility into cells, and the introduction of staff inspection-protocols are ways to improve scrutiny of these areas. Relatively high prisoner-prisoner assault rates have also been

found in gyms, recreation rooms and dining rooms where prisoners congregate in free association and with little imposed structure (Atlas, 1982; 1983; Dietz and Rada, 1983; Wener and Olsen, 1978). For example, Atlas found that the design of dining rooms, where inmates are required to queue and inmate circulation is poorly planned, encouraged assaults by increasing the chances of jostling. Increasing the number of food-dispensing outlets, improving queuing arrangements and staggering meal times offer potential solutions to this problem. In the case of prisoner assaults on guards, the most common location has been found to be the perpetrator's living area (Atlas, 1982; 1983; Light, 1991; Sylvester et al., 1977). One implication of this finding is that prisoners may become particularly hostile when their personal territory in invaded, and that staff need to be sensitive to this when carrying out searches in prisoners' cells (Harris and Varney, 1986). Examining the locations of prison suicides, Welch and Gunther (1997) noted that some cells were notorious as repeat-suicide sites, suggesting that these cells had particular design problems -- hanging points, poor visibility from outside, drab interiors and so forth -- that needed to be addressed.

Similarly, temporal analyses of misbehavior can highlight stress-points in the institutional routine when staff members need to be particularly alert. Assaults on guards have been found to cluster around times of prisoner movement or reduced staffing levels. For example, Dietz and Rada (1983) found peaks in assault occurred during the transfer of prisoners to the dining room while Jayewardene and Doherty (1985) found that homicides coincided with release from cells and with change of shift. Prison suicides have been found to occur most frequently at night (Dooley, 1990) and on weekends

(Hayes, 1983; Kunzman, 1995; Porporino, 1992; Scott-Denoon, 1984). Night time and weekends are periods of low staffing levels when there is least direct supervision of prisoners and self-harming behavior is more likely to go undetected. Moreover, it is during the night, when alone in their cells, that prisoners are most likely to dwell on their situation, while weekends are typically times of low activity when prisoners are most likely to become bored and lonely. For similar reasons, drug use also tends to escalate on weekends (Grant, 1995; Select Committee on Home Affairs, 1999). Increased drug use at this time has also been taken as evidence that visitors are the primary source of drugs in prison and has been used to justify the tightening of visiting procedures (Abru, 1999; Grant, 1995; McDonald, 1992; Select Committee on Home Affairs, 1999). Clarke (1980) found that escapes from a juvenile institution increased during winter months, and further, that this increase occurred primarily between 6.00pm and 9.00pm. This is generally a period of unstructured activity when detainees have free time before lock-up, and is also the time of day most affected by seasonal changes in the time of sunset. Winter evenings, Clarke concluded, afforded more opportunities to escape by providing a cover of darkness that increased the chances that the escape would go undetected.

'Why': The motivation of the offender

Situational crime prevention is often accused by critics of adopting a mindless locks-and-bolts approach to controlling behavior. However, situational prevention is more than target hardening. Understanding the reason that the offender is performing the misbehavior is crucial to the design and implementation of effective situational interventions. Rather than contribute to the fortress-like security that typifies prison,

creative and targeted situational interventions that seek to address the motivations for misbehavior may actually reduce the reliance on traditional heavy architecture, hard physical barriers and rigid regimes.

An examination of the motives for escape illustrates the point. The vast majority of prisoners in minimum-security situations who have the opportunity to escape do not escape. Escapes generally occur for a reason. The most common explanation given by escapees for their behavior is that they had received bad news from home that they felt they needed to deal with (Gorta and Nguyen Da Huong, 1988; Laycock, 1977; Thompson, 1992). Many of these escapees believed that their escape would have been prevented if appropriate welfare services been available to them, and several studies on juvenile detainees have found that absconding rates were lower in institutions where boys felt able to discuss personal problems with staff (Cornish and Clarke, 1975; Johnson et al., 1978; Millham et al., 1977; Sinclair, 1971). Other prisoners have cited fear of or bullying by other prisoners as the reason that they escaped (Centre for Research, Evaluation and Social Assessment, 1996; Gorta and Nguyen Da Huong, 1988; Thompson, 1992). Gorta and Sillavan (1991) noted the presence on the files of a significant number of the escapees requests (usually denied) for protection. For these prisoners, their intention in escaping was to force a transfer to another institution. The prisoners knew that when they were recaptured they would be returned to a secure institution away from their tormentors. Thompson (1992) found that nearly a half of all escapees interviewed nominating preventative action that could be taken by authorities claimed that they would not have escaped if they had been transferred as requested. The

prevention of escapes, then, need not necessarily involve the erection of impenetrable walls or the imposition of greater restrictions of prisoners. Eliminating the motive for the behavior may be sufficient to prevent it.

A good example of putting this principle into practice to reduce prisoner-prisoner assaults is shown in La Vigne's (1994) report on the introduction of a computerized phone system at Rikers Island. Under the previous phone system, in which calls were supposedly logged and timed by staff but which in practice was poorly supervised, powerful prisoners allocated phone times in return for favors or payment. Fights and even murders occurred as prisoners battled for control over this lucrative commodity. The new telephone system required PIN access and automatically cut-off calls after 6 minutes. There was an immediate reduction in telephone abuse and a 50% reduction in inmate violence associated with phone use, with little evidence of displacement to other forms of violence. The computerized system greatly reduced the potential for exploitation. While prisoners could still steal cards, without the PIN the cards were worthless. Note that the intervention in this case tackled a very precise problem. The target of the intervention was not prisoner violence in general, or even prisoner-prisoner assaults in general, but prisoner-prisoner assaults specifically associated with phone use. Moreover, the intervention could not be considered draconian and ultimately benefited most prisoners. The success of the intervention in reducing prisoner-prisoner assaults depended upon manipulating the motivations for violence. The solution to the problem turned out not to involve increasing security to detect and punish assaulters, but simply neutralizing the gains derived from violence (an example of 'denying benefits').

LESSONS FROM PRISON CONTROL FOR SITUATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION

It can be argued that correctional researchers and theorists recognized the vital role the immediate environment plays in behavior many years before the development of situational crime prevention. The deprivation model of prison life presented by Sykes (1958), Goffman (1961) and others pioneered the idea in criminology that misbehavior is profoundly shaped by current circumstances and events. According to the deprivation model, prison violence is not simply the result of imported deviance, that is, the inevitable consequence of the concentration of so many antisocial individuals in one place. Rather, prisoner behavior, regarded deviant by the standards of the general community, was a reaction against the social and psychological 'pains' of the institutional regime. The harshness of prison forces prisoners to band together for psychological self-preservation. A prisoner subculture is formed with its own code of conduct and social organization. Prisoner society is characterized by its direct repudiation of conventional values and its demands on members to maintain solidarity against institutional authority. Prison violence is a normal response to abnormal circumstances.

The deprivation model is not strictly a situational theory. The interpretation of the effects of deprivation offered by Sykes and Goffman places the analysis very much within a sociological cum psychodynamic (rather than situational) framework. They viewed prison disorder as the product of a deviant subculture, which in turn was created to resolve the deep psychic trauma associated with the pains of imprisonment. Thus, the

prison environment and prison disorder were seen as twice removed. Disorder is not a direct product of the prison environment but the result of the fundamental changes to the prisoners' personality and the negativistic sub-culture that the environment has created. Nevertheless, the deprivation model oriented researchers to seek explanations for prison disorder in the prison environment and has been a driving force behind the influential argument that the key to changing prisoner behavior is changing the prison.

However, the role of the environment proposed by deprivation theorist is very different from that later proposed by situational crime prevention theorists. In situational crime prevention, immediate environments are seen primarily as the source of opportunities to offend. In fact, situational crime prevention is often referred to as opportunity-reduction. Offenders are viewed as utility-maximizers who weigh up the perceived costs and benefits of any criminal activity, and act on the basis of the outcome of this calculation. Situational crime prevention involves changing the environment so that the perceived costs of criminal activity will exceed the perceived benefits. The deprivation model, on the other hand, treats the prison as a generator of - not just location for - aberrant behavior. That is, the prison environment *causes* prisoners to perform deviant acts that they would otherwise not have performed. This is a significant point of departure from the opportunity-reduction model. If environments both provide the motivation and the opportunity to offend, then reducing opportunities is only half the situational crime prevention story. Situational prevention must also explicitly address the environmental stresses and strains that precipitate deviant behavior (Wortley, 1997; 1998; 2001; in press).

Interestingly, it was Ron Clarke's research on escapes from juvenile institutions that led him to develop his model situational crime prevention (Clarke, 1980, 1987; Cornish and Clarke, 1975; Sinclair and Clarke, 1982). Clarke's original aim was to identify personality and demographic characteristics of detainees that could reliably predict escape risk. Unable to find such predictors, Clarke instead found that differences in escape rates could be linked to differences in the regimes of the juvenile institutions. It was the way an institution was run that either encouraged or inhibited escapes. In other words, situational variables were better predictors of escaping than dispositional variables. In this early research Clarke gave equal consideration to institutional variables that made it easy or hard for prisoners to escape (opportunities) and those factors that increased or decreased the desire of prisoners to escape (precipitators). Summarizing his and colleagues' research in the area Clarke (1980) wrote: 'we found many environmental variables to be related to absconding - either, it seemed, because they mediated opportunities to abscond *or because they were the source of feelings of unhappiness or anxiety which fuelled the behavior*' (p. 123, italics added). Clarke went on to develop a model of situational crime prevention that emphasized the primary role of opportunity-reduction (Cornish and Clarke, 1986; Clarke, 1997), while the concept of crime precipitators, though perhaps not entirely ignored in this model, has been pushed to the background.

There are two important practical implications for situational crime prevention that flow from the experience in prison of attempts to control prisoner behavior. First, efforts to

reduce the institutional pressures on prisoners to misbehave suggest the possibility of a range of new and often softer prevention strategies. Second, the balance that needs to be struck between reducing these pressures while still maintaining adequate control offers insights into the dangers of counterproductive prevention.

Soft prevention

Following the lead of the deprivation theorists, the bulk of social-scientific correctional research in the last forty years or so has been premised on a view of prison as a toxic environment that produces behavioral pathologies in its residents. Much of this research has moved away from the deprivation model as a theoretical base, and has been influenced by concepts from environmental and social psychology that propose a more direct person-situation link. Research has highlighted factors such as overcrowding (Cox et al., 1984; Gaes and McGuire, 1985; Paulus, 1988), the stressful and dehumanizing living conditions (Brodsky and Fowler, 1979; Farbstein et al., 1979; Wright and Goodstein, 1989), the depressing architectural monotony (Reser, 1992; Suedfeld, 1980), the brutality of guards and fellow prisoners (Bowker, 1980; Unseem and Kimball, 1989), the lack of personal control over the environment (Wener et al., 1987; Wener and Olsen, 1978; 1980; Wright and Goodstein, 1989), and the consequent frustration, boredom and fear experienced by prisoners as generators of prison misbehavior.

The general solution to the problem of prison disorder proposed by these researchers was 'normalcy'. As far as is possible, it was argued, the prison environment needed to be redesigned to mirror life on the outside. This meant that rather than trying to control

prisoner behavior by increasing security and imposing greater restrictions on prisoners -- tightening-up -- prison administrators often needed to do just the opposite -- to loosen-off. The prison environment needed to be less harsh and forbidding, and the social relations between guards and prisoners needed to be based on cooperation and respect. As Levinson (1982) put it, we need to 'try softer'.

The clearest expression of the principle of normalcy can be seen in the development of new-generation prison architecture and the accompanying functional unit management (Atlas and Dunham, 1990; Wener and Olsen, 1978; Zupan, 1991). In new-generation prisons, prisoners were divided into small, manageable groups of twenty or so and housed in single-cells arranged to form discrete clusters or units. Prisoners were encouraged to feel a sense of ownership over their living area and treat it as their home. Instead of long corridors, each cell opened onto a central lounge area. Many units had their own kitchens allowing prisoners to prepare snacks and sometimes even cook their main meals. The hard, institutional finish of traditional prisons was replaced with a softer, friendlier architecture -- domestic-quality rather than high-security fittings and furnishings were used, and there was attention to aesthetics, such as color coordination and incidental decorations. Instead of watching prisoners from outside, staff were brought into the unit. Guards were expected to build a positive rapport with prisoners, to play an active role in resolving problems and conflicts that arise among prisoners within the unit, and to become involved in administrative and welfare concerns of prisoners in their charge. New-generation prisons, then, were explicitly designed to reduce the stress and isolation experienced by prisoners. Evaluations of functional units have reported lower

levels of disorder than in traditional prisons on a range of indices including prisoner-prisoner assaults, prisoner-staff assaults, sexual assaults, escapes and vandalism (Bayens et al., 1997; Farbstein et al., 1996; Farbstein and Wener, 1989; Farmer, 1988; King, 1991; Robson, 1989; Senese et al., 1992; Sigurdson, 1985; 1987a; 1987b; Wener et al., 1987).

These same principles can be readily applied to other settings. To list briefly just a few examples: pub violence can be reduced by gentrifying the décor and controlling environmental irritation (Graham and Homel, 1996; Homel and Clark, 1994); employee theft and vandalism can be reduced by taking steps to improve job satisfaction (Hollinger *et al*, 1992; Hollinger and Clarke, 1983; Jones, 1981; Kamp and Brooks, 1991); school bullying can be reduced by improving the quality of play facilities at recess (Boulton, 1994); and cooperative, non-confrontational methods of crowd control can reduce the likelihood of collective disorder (Veno and Veno, 1993). None of these examples involve reducing crime opportunities in the usual sense of that word but rely instead upon controlling precipitators of misbehavior. Interventions of this sort help to dispel the image of situational prevention as only being concerned with target hardening. Wortley (1998; 2001) has proposed a revised model of situational crime prevention that explicitly incorporates the concept of crime precipitators and advances a range of soft prevention techniques.

Counterproductive prevention

One of the perennial issues for prison administrators is getting the balance right between tightening-up and loosening-off. These approaches involve contradictory solutions to the

problem of prison control. On the one hand, control is sought by softening and normalizing the prison environment and reducing the pressures on prisoners that induce misbehavior; on the other hand, control is sought by hardening the prison environment and reducing the opportunities for prisoners to misbehave. Moreover, from the perspective of each approach, the alternative can be actively counterproductive. Making prison condition too tight increases the frustration and alienation that precipitate disorder; an over-concern with softening prison conditions compromises prison discipline and creates dangerous gaps in security.

Prison riots are the most dramatic consequence of getting the balance wrong. There are examples of prison riots that have occurred under both draconian and lackadaisical regimes. Many riots are explosive responses by prisoners to a history of oppressive prison conditions and repressive treatment by guards, where the pent-up fury that is unleashed overwhelms the regime that has until that time successfully kept the prisoners under tight control (Boin and Van Duin, 1995; Fox, 1971; Mahan, 1994; Martin and Zimmerman, 1990; Unseem and Kimball, 1989). Conversely, riots also occur when security is lax and prisoners are given too much freedom, often in a conscious attempt to secure their cooperation (DiIulio, 1987; 1991; Ekland-Olson, 1986; Nelson and Davis, 1995; Unseem and Kimball, 1989). Clearly neither extreme is desirable. The challenge for prison administrators is to employ control strategies that are neither too hard nor too soft.

There are choices to be made every day in prison between hard and soft control options. Are prison officers safer from assaults if they minimize their contact with prisoners, or

will this just strip them of personal qualities and make them more acceptable targets for aggression? Alternatively, should prison officers increase their interpersonal contact with prisoners in order to create a more humanized environment, or will this expose them to unnecessary risk? Should suicide-risk prisoners be placed in strip-cells and subjected to constant surveillance, or does being deprived of personal possessions and spied upon only increase feelings of depression? If, on the other hand, suicide-risk prisoners are allowed to retain personal goods and their privacy needs are respected, will they also have unacceptable opportunities do themselves harm? Is prison vandalism better reduced by the installation of tough, industrial grade furnishings and fittings, or will this simply present an irresistible challenge to prisoners? Alternatively, does the provision of domestic-quality furniture encourage prisoners to take care of their living areas, or are such furnishing too easy to destroy, perhaps to be used as weapons? And so on.

These same sorts of dilemmas and potentials for counterproductive intervention are evident in community settings. Over-policing of crowds can precipitate riots (Reicher, 1987; Scarman, 1981). Offering physical resistance to aggressors can increase the severity of the attack (Indermaur, 1996). Heavy-handed control tactics by security guards can increase levels of night club violence (Homel and Clark, 1994). Punitively-worded signs can incite defiance (Bensley and Wu, 1991; Sherman, 1994). Like prison administrators, crime prevention practitioners need to think carefully about the potential for interventions to backfire. Just as in the prison, methods of prevention that increase feelings of frustration and alienation run the risk of encouraging crime rather than preventing it (Wortley, 1998).

CONCLUSIONS

Crime prevention practitioners and prison administrators have much to learn from each other. For prison administrators, situational crime prevention offers a coherent strategy for tackling prison misbehavior. One of the chief attractions of situational prevention is its 'do-ability'. The behavior-specific focus means that interventions need not involve environmental changes on a grand scale. Situational measures offer the potential for relatively quick, practical and cost-effective solutions to immediate control problems. For crime prevention practitioners, prisons can serve as a laboratory to throw light on the role of immediate environments in misbehavior. It is perhaps significant that Ron Clarke's initial formulation of situational crime prevention derived from his work in custodial institutions. Importantly, prisons show us clearly that situational control cannot be achieved solely through the reduction of opportunities, and indeed, that at some point tightening restrictions on behavior can produce outcomes that are opposite to those intended.

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