Causes and Prevention of Violence in Prisons

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Prisons are not normal environments. They are, as Bottoms (1999) observed, not only 'total institutions' in the sense that they encompass inmates' lives to an extent qualitatively greater than other social institutions (Goffman, 1961), they are physical places (mostly surrounded by high walls) with a specific history and ethos that are designed to be places of punishment. Prisons bring troubled human beings, often with a long history of violence as victim or offender, into confined spaces against their wills. These scarred individuals are brought into close contact with staff whom they greatly outnumber but who must on a daily basis maintain a peaceful and orderly routine. The wonder is there is not more violence in prisons.

This essay provides a brief overview of what is known about what causes prison violence, and how it can be prevented or reduced. The focus is interpersonal violence rather than collective disorder or self-inflicted harm, but the review does encompass violence involving staff (whether as victim or perpetrator) as well as prisoner-to-prisoner violence. The method is a selective and interpretive review of the literature, drawing particularly on key theoretical models and well-designed empirical studies, rather than being a more formal systematic review or meta-analysis. The chapter includes an update of material in an earlier comprehensive review of the literature on violence and violence prevention (Chapter 5 in Homel, 1999)[1].

There are no over-arching theories of prison violence, but there are several influential schools of thought. In prison sociology two well-established but contrasting perspectives are the *deprivation and importation models*. The deprivation model holds, in brief, that the prison environment and loss of freedom cause deep psychological trauma so that for reasons of psychological self-preservation prisoners create a deviant prison subculture that promotes violence (Farrington & Nuttal, 1980; Sykes, 1958; Wortley, 2002). The importation model (Cao, Zhao & Vandine, 1997; Harer & Steffensmeier,1996) emphasises what prisoners bring into the institution: their histories, personal attributes and social networks, including links to criminal groups. The empirical literature supports both these models but perhaps the most

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[1] The bibliography for the 1999 chapter may be found at http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/cpd.nsf/pages/violrep_5biblio. An updated annotated bibliography, described a selection of documents published since 1999, may be found on the web site of the Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance: http://www.gu.edu.au/centre/kceljag/

pronounced trend in recent literature is a growing recognition of the importance of very specific features of the social and physical environments of the prison and of the "minutiae of the average prison day" (Bottoms, 1999: 212). Even in studies that are primarily focused on other factors, the details of how a prison is organised in time and space, how individuals interact with and help shape a dynamic environment, and the role of specific situational factors in precipitating or regulating violence emerge as crucial. Thus we should add, as two newer but influential theoretical positions, the *transactional model* (Bottoms, 1999) and the *situational model* (Wortley, 2002). These, it is suggested, are complementary not competing perspectives that help to make sense of what can be a bewildering variety of empirical findings.

Factors found to be related to violence include pre-existing prisoner characteristics (e.g., prisoner age and gender); structural or situational factors (e.g., prison architecture and design; level of security); management practices (e.g., staffing models, staff skills and training, prison culture and management style); and outside environmental influences (e.g., political pressures on prison administrators; racial tensions). Poor prison management resulting in dysfunctional forms of control emerges as a major cause of interpersonal violence, and by implication modification of these practices (especially the removal of arbitrary coercive controls) is effective in reducing violence.

Other effective prevention strategies include a range of situational measures (e.g., improved surveillance of high-risk locations, the manipulation of prisoner privileges, improvement of supervision of both staff and prisoners); some offender treatment and education programs (e.g., in-prison therapeutic communities; college-level education programs); and some 'social prevention' programs (e.g., the Barlinnie Special Unit in Scotland). It should be noted, however, that the evidence for the violence-reduction effects of prisoner treatment and education tends to be weak and inconsistent, with situational factors such as time spent in programs away from unstructured recreational activities perhaps a more parsimonious explanation for what effects were found than program philosophy or content. Situational factors also seem to be essential to the success of most social prevention approaches.

In the next section we explore in more detail the two new theoretical perspectives, linking that analysis to an overview of the factors that influence prison violence. We then summarise the evidence on the effectiveness of prevention programs, noting the paucity of good quality research. The Australian research base is particularly poor. Indeed, we observed in our earlier work that there was little specifically Australian research of any kind in relation to prison violence, despite major problems with institutionalised violence being identified in Royal Commissions (Nagle, 1978; RCIADIC, 1992) and Reports of the National Committee on Violence (1990; 1994). The situation does not seem to have improved much in the last five years.

Theories on Prison Violence and the Empirical Research

Some recent studies explicitly test the relative power of the importation and deprivation models, finding support for both (and for situational factors) (Lahm, 2002; Jiang & Fisher-Giorlando, 2002; MacDonald, 1999). Lahm, for example, used multilevel modelling on data from over 1,000 prisoners in 30 US prisons to analyse factors related to both serious and non-serious assaults perpetrated by prisoners. He concluded that importation theory was supported because age and aggressiveness were robust predictors of assaults across all types of prison contexts, while deprivation theory was supported because the percentage of non-

white prisoners predicted violence among individual prisoners. Perhaps of greater importance, he also found that highly aggressive prisoners engaged in more assaultive behaviour on other inmates in prisons which were crowded and had a higher percentage of inmates under age 25.

This suggestion of a complex interaction between characteristics of individual prisoners and of the prison environment illustrates a key feature of the transactional model, which focuses on "the continual dynamic process of interaction between the prisoner, the staff, and the environment they both inhabit" (Bottoms, 1999: 212). Bottoms illustrates what he means by this by reference to a study by Mandaraka-Sheppard (1986) on the dynamics of prisoner aggression in six English prisons for women. One of the strongest correlates of the level of physical violence was an institutional variable measuring a defiant or compliant attitude to the prison. Mandaraka-Sheppard concluded that although generally older prisoners and those rated as 'less potent' were more likely to be compliant, if the institution lacked order, prevented prisoner autonomy, and used severe punishments, even older, less potent prisoners were more likely to be non-compliant. Quoting Adams (1992), Bottoms concludes that "Inmates behave differently in different prison settings" (p. 249). This conclusion is echoed by Edgar, O'Donnell and Martin (2003), who found from their extensive research in UK prisons that the functions of violence (violence as disruption, regulator, convention and rebellion) differ according to the type of prison.

Bottoms (1999) proposes "a speculative and interactive model" of good order in prisons that gives a central place to *legitimation*, conceptualised as (a) fairness of staff; (b) fairness of regime; and (c) distributive fairness (the quality of the complaints and discipline system). He supports legitimation as a central concept by reference to the findings of the Woolf Inquiry into the 1990 UK prison disturbances, Ahmad's (1996) study of inmates' perceptions of fairness, other empirical prison research, and analyses of the problem of social order in classical political philosophy. If Bottoms' model is even partly correct in this respect the implications for prison management are profound, but the model also draws attention to a range of other features of prison life implicated in order maintenance that can be strongly influenced by management. These include prison routines as structural constraints (routines promote subconscious acquiescence), normative involvement in projects that promote a degree of prisoner commitment to the goals of the institution, the nature and balance of incentives and disincentives, physical constraints and surveillance, and staff deployment approaches and skills.

In Bottoms' model situational controls are understood mainly in terms of physical constraints and surveillance, consistent by and large with Clarke's typology as it was in the early 1990s (Clarke, 1992). However, the situational model has evolved considerably from the days when it focused mostly on the physical environment, partly due to developments in Clarke's thinking (e.g., Clarke and Homel, 1997; Clarke, 1997) and partly due to the development of a situational model of prison control by Wortley (2002). The revised typology of situational controls developed by Clarke and Homel (1997) made the model more psychological and less physical by emphasising *perceived* risks and *anticipated* rewards and punishments, and also by introduced a fourth category of opportunity reduction: inducing guilt or shame (e.g., by clarifying rules, or reducing the influence of disinhibitors such as alcohol).

Wortley (2002:56) modified the Clarke and Homel typology and greatly expanded its scope by distinguishing *situational precipitators* and *situational regulators* in a two-stage model:

In the first stage of the model, a range of psychological processes are proposed that may actively induce individuals to engage in conduct that they may not otherwise have performed. The behaviour may be avoided entirely if relevant precipitators are adequately controlled. In the event that behaviour is initiated, then, in the second stage of the model, performance of that behaviour is subject to consideration of the consequences that are likely to follow. The absence of appropriate disincentives or constraints will permit or encourage behaviour while appropriate disincentives or constraints will prevent or discourage behaviour.

Situational precipitators include: (a) environmental cues that *prompt* the individual to behave antisocially, which can be controlled by such means as 'controlling triggers '(e.g., drab, institutionalised cells that may trigger depression), or 'providing reminders' (such as warning signs); (b) environmental cues that exert *pressure* to misbehave, which can be controlled by such means as 'reducing inappropriate conformity' (e.g., dispersing trouble-makers), or 'reducing inappropriate obedience' (e.g., participatory management); (c) environmental cues that reduce self-control and *permit* individuals to engage in behaviour they would otherwise self-censure, which can be controlled by such means as 'rule setting' (e.g., clear rules on induction), or 'clarifying responsibility' (e.g., ownership of living spaces); and (d) environmental cues that can produce emotional arousal that *provokes* a violent reaction, which can be controlled by such means as 'reducing frustration' (e.g., personal control over lights), or 'reducing crowding.'

Wortley makes the important point that many of the techniques of precipitation control conflict with the techniques of opportunity reduction that have been the traditional focus of prison administrators (electronic locking, camera surveillance etc). Although the correspondence is not perfect, 'hard control' practices rely on the manipulation of situational regulators which may themselves precipitate violence, while 'soft control' practices rely on the manipulation of precipitators that may undermine effective regulation. The two stages of his model are in delicate balance in terms of the optimisation of compliance, requiring considerable skills on the part of prison managers to avoid excessive and dehumanising controls on the one hand and, on the other hand, to avoid excessively liberal regimes that facilitate prisoner victimisation or suicide.

Prison management and accountability

The theoretical models we have reviewed each, in their own way, underline the critical importance of management practices for the control of violence. This emphasis is in line with the empirical literature. There is increasing evidence that poor prison management and control is the most significant factor in contributing to and (consistent with Wortley) even promoting both individual and collective prison violence (Ekland-Olson, 1986; various studies cited in McCorkle et al., 1995; Silberman, 1992). Bottoms' interactionist model is supported by Peteron-Badali & Koegl (2002), who show that correctional staff in Canadian juvenile institutions frequently not only allowed, but actually induced, juveniles to use force on other young offenders.

An important study by Reisig (1998) contrasted the *control*, *responsibility* and *consensual* models of prison management. According to the control model, rules should guide almost all areas of prisoners' lives and these rules should be rigorously enforced to control prison behaviour. According to the responsibility model, prisoners should be provided with a high degree of responsibility over the order of the prison and management should exercise the minimum required control over such order. The consensual model is an integration of the control and responsibility models. The findings indicated that in prisons adopting the

responsibility and consensual models, prison personnel reported lower levels of all forms of disorder than in prisons adopting the control model.

A range of specific management factors related to violence are cited in the literature: security lapses, lack of prison officer discipline and morale, officers' inability or unwillingness to intervene in instances of victimisation and violence, poor grievance and dispute resolution mechanisms, the formation of gangs and cliques, prisoners relying on self-protection, staff violence for control of prisoners, deterrence and payback (especially where officers feel justified in taking matters into their own hands because the administration provides limited protection from attack). Drug use and trafficking in illegal and prescription drugs by prisoners also relates to prison violence (Edgar & O'Donnell, 1998; Inciardi et al., 1993; Incorvaia & Kirby, 1997). Echoing Bottoms' emphasis on legitimation, Silberman (1992; 1994) particularly stresses the importance of appropriate accountability and dispute resolution mechanisms, including mediation and ombudsmen, for defusing violence.

Crowding and size of prison

Various studies have considered whether violence is produced by the cognitive confusion and tension induced by density factors and crowded conditions in prisons. The latest research, comprehensively reviewed in Gaes (1994), highlights the inconsistency of existing data on crowding and therefore the difficulty of generalisation (see also Tartaro, 2002). The most likely conclusion is that over-crowding is not a causal factor in violence, but may possibly be considered a contributing factor, when correlated with other institutional variables, such as the managerial methods used to control or limit violence (Gaes, 1994; Ruback & Carr, 1993; Wortley, 2002).

Prison size alone is also not a reliable indicator of violence within the institution, suggesting that other factors (e.g., staff experience [Kratcoski, 1988]) are more significantly correlated with prison violence. Farrington & Nuttal (1980:221) found no empirical evidence in the literature or from their own study of British prisons to support the view that prison size influences behaviour inside or after leaving prison.

Architectural design

Several studies indicate that group cell housing of prisoners contributes to interpersonal violence, especially where there are poor selection procedures and safeguards in place (O'Donnell & Edgar, 1996). Individual cells greatly reduce the opportunities for prisoner-prisoner victimisation and violence, the only exception to this being self inflicted violence (self-mutilation and suicide) which is more likely when prisoners are in single cells or segregation. The linear architectural design of most prisons is indicated by several authors as a factor that contributes to violence. The inherent design features of this architecture, in conjunction with the indirect staff supervision model that necessarily accompanies this kind of design, creates opportunities for both prisoner-prisoner and prisoner-staff violence (various studies cited in Jay Farbstein et al., 1991; Wright & Goodstein; Zupan & Menke, 1991).

'New generation philosophy' which espouses a podular design (that reduces unprotected spaces) and direct supervision of prisoners is increasingly being implemented in the U.S. and the U.K. Although there are fewer empirical studies and some mixed findings on the effectiveness of this new prison concept (Tartaro, 2000), the literature generally indicates promising results for a reduction in prison violence and vandalism where new generation architectural design and staffing models have been implemented. Researchers warn, however,

that successful implementation of this approach is heavily predicated on a commitment from management and the recruitment, selection, training and retention of appropriate prison personnel (Jay Farbstein et al., 1991; Zupan & Menke, 1991).

Staff inexperience and training

There is no clear relationship between staff experience and prisoner-prisoner violence, but consistent evidence that staff inexperience is a factor influencing violence by prisoners against staff (Wortley, 2002). Kratcoski (1988) found that work experience of officers, with trainees receiving a disproportionate number of assaults, was one of the four most important factors related to prisoner-staff assault. Munroe's study of aggressive and non-aggressive offender responses to an unknown prison officer suggest that "inexperienced prison officers are more likely to become involved in violent incidents, because they are perceived by aggressive prisoners as 'ambiguous'" (Munroe, 1995:245).

Vulnerability to violence

Research evidence suggests vulnerability to victimisation and violence in prison is associated with a number of factors (younger age, race, homosexuality, transexuality, status of offence) and that certain prisoners both feel, and in fact, are more vulnerable to victimisation and violence (Cooley, 1993; Nacci & Kane, 1984; Edgar & O'Donnell, 1998; Edgar, O'Donnell & Martin, 2003). Racial institutional violence is also well documented as influencing the extent of violence against aborigines in the prison system (Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Royal Commission). However, Edgar, O'Donnell & Martin (2003) also found that while victimisation is pervasive in British prisons, there are many misconceptions about the nature of victimisation and that these are often counter-intuitive. For example, victims and victimiser are not discrete groups, with those who victimised others often likely to be victims themselves, making an understanding of the nature of conflict in prisons a matter of central importance. Prisoners rarely reported their victimization to staff.

Programs and Approaches to Reduce Prison Violence

Historically prison administrators have concentrated on the classification and segregation of different kinds of prisoners as one key tool for maintaining good order and promoting rehabilitative goals. Prisoner classification relied on methods for predicting violence and/or prison adjustment, looking to background prisoner characteristics (e.g., age, race, offence) using various risk assessment tools or inmate classification models, or to personality characteristics, using various mental health-psychopathology screening instruments (e.g. the MMPI typology). A review of the literature reveals that many of these instruments do not predict violence reliably or accurately (Cooper & Werner, 1990; Dictaldo et al., 1995; Proctor, 1994). This evidence accords with the general literature on prison violence which suggests that importation factors alone are not sufficient for understanding the causes of prison violence.

Given the more sophisticated research and theoretical models that are now available, there are currently more good ideas in the literature about how to reduce prison violence than there are careful evaluations of well-designed interventions. In this section we attempt to provide an overview of approaches for which there is some reliable evidence of effectiveness (or ineffectiveness). Strategies may be classified into three broad categories: programs for prisoners, situational approaches, and institutional reforms and management practices. All

strategies rely for their success, of course, on far-sighted management that is willing to act on the basis of evidence.

Programs for prisoners

A range of prison educational and rehabilitative programs are reported in the literature, although primarily these studies address post-release recidivism. Fewer studies directly consider the effectiveness of such programs for reducing interpersonal violence in prisons. Some program types (academic and vocational) may with reasonable confidence be expected to reduce prison violence, while other program types (such as violence alternatives) require far more rigorous research, particularly of different treatment modalities, in order to confidently predict outcomes. It is tentatively concluded from the literature that programs that implement violence alternative training or other forms of treatment such as drug rehabilitation within a supportive and 'opportunity enhancing' environment of a specialist or rehabilitative unit are more likely to be effective in reducing prisoner violence (Bottoms et al., 1995; Dietz, 2003; Rucker, 1994; Wolfus & Bierman, 1996).

Several authors refer to program principles for ensuring effective offender rehabilitation to reduce recidivism (Gerber & Fritsch, 1995; MacKenzie, 1997). While no similar literature indicating program principles for reducing prison violence *per se* were found, several of the studies in this review discuss program strengths and limitations in light of the following program requirements. These include the need for programs to:

- provide sufficient program integrity so that what is delivered is consistent with the planned design;
- address offender characteristics that are capable of change and predictive of future criminal activities, such as antisocial attitudes and behaviour, drug use, anger responses;
- allow sufficient intensity or time in view of the desired changes;
- use treatment modes and delivery styles that take account of offender learning styles and abilities (cognitive and behavioural methods that provide positive reinforcement and privileges for prosocial behaviour are generally favoured).

One recent study (Benton & Gesch, 2003) is difficult to classify because it was based on a dietary supplement (vitamins and fatty acids) rather than education or rehabilitation. However, because it involved a double-blind randomised controlled trial of 231 prisoners aged 18-21 years in a maximum security prison in the UK, and produced a 26% reduction in antisocial behaviour (including violence), it cannot be ignored. The old literature that emphasised the physical as well as psychological deprivations of prison may well yet have life in it.

Generally, the literature suggests that *prisoner academic and vocational education programs* help decrease prison rule violations and violence and are therefore one of the more useful management approaches for maintaining prison order (Gerber & Fritsch, 1995). McCorkle et al.'s (1995:325) study of 371 U.S. state prisons found that "even after controlling for other institutional characteristics, prisons in which a large percentage of the prisoner population was involved in educational, vocational, and prison industry programs reported lower rates of violence against inmates and staff." Furthermore, their findings suggested that order was best promoted when prisoners were involved in meaningful

programs that offered opportunities for self-improvement, and not just structure or 'keep busy' assignments.

The empirical evidence is not strong for the violence-reduction effects of *treatment programs, including cognitive-behavioural, violence alternatives, and anger management* (e.g., Baro, 1999; Walrath, 2001). While a number of programs running in prisons both in Australia and the U.S. are reportedly successful (Love, 1994; Smith, 1995; Report into Youth Violence in NSW, 1995) a rigorous evaluation of their effects on prison violence and post-program prisoner behaviour was not always conducted or available. Howells and his colleagues (2002) report the evaluation of well-implemented anger management programs in South Australian and West Australian prisons, concluding that "With some consistency, the results demonstrate that the overall impact of the anger management interventions was small" (p. 3). There is much wisdom in this paper about why offender populations are different from other populations for which anger management interventions are much more successful, and how programs can be made more effective in correctional settings (broadly consistent with the principles listed earlier). Promising approaches appear to be multi-modal methods that utilise a broad range of behavioural, cognitive-behavioural and psychological skills training (Morrisey, 1997), or the siting of programs in a rehabilitation unit with an intensive dual program modality (group and individual sessions) (Wolfus & Bierman, 1996).

Given the positive relationship between prison violence and prisoner drug taking, *substance abuse programs* in prisons may also be useful for reducing prison violence, particularly prisoner-prisoner assaults. The literature suggests that the most promising treatments are prison-based therapeutic communities operating as segregated facilities within the prison (Dietz et al., 2003; Incorvaia & Kirby, 1997; McKenzie 1997). Drug treatment as a stand-alone program is less promising (Kinlock et al., 2003).

Situational prevention strategies

This is a field where rapid developments are taking place. A strong theoretical case has already been outlined for paying much closer attention to the fine-grained details of everyday routines and the minutiae of prison contexts when planning preventive interventions. The empirical research increasingly supports this perspective (e.g., Jiang et al., 2002; O'Donnell & Edgar; 1996; 2003). Wortley's (2002) book contains comprehensive and up-to-date overviews of many promising (but in most cases not 'proven') situational strategies for the reduction of prisoner-prisoner and other forms of violence, the details of which cannot be presented here. Some examples:

- single-cell accommodation can reduce crowding and respect a prisoner's territory (precipitation-control), while 'target hardening' a prisoner (opportunity reduction, or regulation-control);
- increasing prisoner control over their environments can encourage compliance and reduce frustration (precipitation-control);
- small or subdivided prisons can reduce anonymity (precipitation-control);
- age-heterogeneous populations can reduce both inappropriate imitation and conformity (precipitation-control);
- increasing women staff may encourage compliance and reduce frustration (precipitation-control), reducing assaults on staff;
- elimination of blind spots may improve formal and natural surveillance (regulation-control).

Institutional reforms and management practices

Ultimately even the smallest features of prison life depend on management, but in this section our focus is not specialised programs or specific aspects of the prison environment, but policies or programs that affect the whole institution. The distinction, of course, is artificial, but is convenient for present purposes.

Recent research confirms that the control model of prison management, with its emphasis on highly formal or coercive managerial practices, is less effective at controlling disorder than practices based on the responsibility or consensual models (Reisig, 1998; 2002). Deprivation theory, with its emphasis on the formation of an oppositional subculture, suggests that management policies that minimise the deprivations of imprisonment by (for example) fostering links with families or improving the fairness of the application of rules will reduce disorder. Bottoms et al. (1995) link such an approach with *social crime prevention*, distinguishing it sharply from situational prevention (Wortley, 2002). In the prison context social prevention approaches rely heavily on a changed role for prison officers and an 'opportunity-enhancing' environment for prisoners. Bottoms argues that this approach improves the legitimacy of the prison regime in the eyes of prisoners.

One of the more successful examples of this approach reported in the literature is the *Barlinnie Special Unit* in Scotland for violent offenders (Bottoms, 1999). This unit while it operated was characterised by a sense of community involving both prisoners and staff, greater than usual prisoner autonomy, and distinctive incentives and disincentives (such as unlimited rights to family visits, subject to good behaviour). The fact that prisoners often resided in this unit for several years may also have significantly contributed to its long-term success in reducing violence, as prisoners were socialised into new ways of thinking and behaving. Bottoms et al. (1995) also contrast the success of the social preventive approach adopted by the Long Lartin maximum security prison in England with the less positive outcomes of the more controlling but similar status Albany prison.

Allied to social prevention are *'whole of prison' approaches* to reducing violence. Such approaches are effective in other contexts such as schools (Homel, 1999), and are strongly endorsed in the research conducted on the British Prison Service by O'Donnell & Edgar (1996). This research highlighted the ineffectiveness of relying on anti-bullying policies without strong support for communication and implementation of the policies and concomitant intervention across a range of areas, including situational prevention, prisoner education programs, staff training, victim support, and ongoing research.

Staff recruitment and training are critical to any management policy, but little relevant evaluation literature on these topics is available. The Pennsylvania conflict resolution program that jointly trains officers and prisoners is reportedly successful in improving staff-prisoner relationships (Love, 1994), and many authors endorse new approaches to recruitment and training in order to screen out inappropriate staff (e.g., Peteron- Badali & Koegl, 2002), to equip staff to recognise and deal with conflict (e.g., Edgar & Martin, 2002; Patrick, 1998), or to improve supervison (e.g., Zupan & Menke, 1991). The impact of such policies has yet to be scientifically determined.

Conclusion

Although the picture is complex, and some inconsistent findings have emerged, generally the literature supports the notion that the more coercive the prison environment the greater the potential for violence. This is especially so where prison management and treatment of prisoners are perceived by prisoners as unfair or illegitimate, as this strengthens prisoner solidarity in opposition to the authorities. This in turn threatens the legitimacy of the regime and reduces prisoner compliance. Conversely, prisons that provide more opportunities for prisoner participation in education and vocational programs and promote self-efficacy, generally report reduced levels of rule violations and violence.

The literature also strongly supports the contention that situational strategies are amongst the most powerful weapons in our armoury. The prison environment is such a powerful influence, whether understood in physical, psychological, social or cultural terms, that it must become much more the focus of attention in devising prevention policies. Many possible strategies are now 'on the menu,' but each requires careful development and evaluation, with an eye to the broader dimensions of prison control discussed in this chapter. A whole-of-prison approach that thoughtfully combines situational and social prevention strategies, supported by appropriate management policies and research-based staff recruitment and training practices, is probably the most promising model for reducing interpersonal violence in prisons.

Further reading

The three core readings for this chapter are Bottoms (1999), Edgar, O'Donnell & Martin (2003), and Wortley (2002). It has not been possible in this chapter to do more than adumbrate the complex models and empirical findings described in these sources, and readers with a serious interest in prison violence are urged to read them in full. Related sources include Bottoms, Hay & Sparks (1995), O'Donnell & Edgar (1996), Edgar & Martin (2002), and Wortley (1998).

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