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Contradictory Directives in Complex Organizations: The Case of the Prison

In a custodially oriented prison, the author found that guards were to enforce discipline and at the same time to minimize friction among inmates and between inmates and staff. In a treatment-oriented prison, guards were expected to contribute to inmate rehabilitation by being nondirective and showing concern for inmate personality problems. But they were also expected to maintain order. These conflicting directives, which characterize organizations of many kinds, made it necessary for administrators of both institutions to use multiple criteria in judging the performance of guards. However, even theoretically, criteria which would seem to define desirable over-all performance, to be rewarded and encouraged, could not be specified.¹

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AMERICAN prisons have changed from relatively simple institutions with punishment and custody as objectives to more complex organizations with difficult and contradictory goals. Such change has required alteration in the kinds of direction and supervision

¹This paper, read at the annual meetings of the American Sociological Society in August 1958, is based on field research conducted between July 1955 and September 1956, when the author was attached to the Center for Education and Research in Corrections, University of Chicago. The results of this research project are now being prepared for early publication and are being integrated with the results of

given employees. In early prisons the organizational goal was fairly clear and the role of the employee was correspondingly precise. A bureaucratic hierarchy of ranks operating through an established set of punishment-enforced rules ensured that discipline was maintained among inmates and among employees. Guards, as the workers in the system, were expected to handle inmates without favoritism and without giving special consideration to the problems of individual prisoners. Supervisors in turn were expected to treat guards alike and to see that they enforced the disciplinary rules for inmates. Thus a set of rather precise rules for inmate behavior had as its corollary a rather precise set of rules for the behavior of employees. In this system administrative judgment of the quality of a guard's work was based on a single criterion, the degree to which he conformed to the rules for his behavior. A guard who followed the rules was evaluated most highly.

Because of changes in prison goals, guards in modern prisons are expected to do more than stand guard. Even in the type of institution which continues to emphasize custody, called here the "custodially oriented prison," humanitarian concern for the welfare of inmates and external demands that inmate labor be utilized have effectively deprived the personnel of many means of control. The goal of such institutions has shifted from mere custody to humanitarian custody or productive custody. Thus inmates cannot be kept docile by severe punishments or severe deprivations; neither can a large number be kept in solitary confinement. Custodial control is to be maintained among prisoners who must be handled humanely and permitted to work together and in other ways consort with each other. Guards then are to maintain discipline and follow rules for doing so, but they also are to ensure that antagonism, hostility, and unco-operativeness are not aroused in inmate populations even though these have been granted a degree of freedom which could be used to initiate riot or rebellion.

In the other principal type of modern prison, called here the "treatment-oriented prison," the role of the guard has been even more sharply bifurcated. Here guards must preserve some measure

other research conducted at the Center during the years 1953-1956. The author is greatly indebted to Lloyd E. Ohlin, director of the Center, to Donnell M. Pappenfort and Herman Piven, who were research assistants, and to the Russell Sage Foundation, which financed the Center.

of order and discipline since this is essential to a prison's custodial goal, but they must also contribute to accomplishment of an institutional therapy or individualized-treatment goal. Generally speaking, the latter goal can be achieved only if guards are instructed to relax in custodial and disciplinary matters, to take the personality needs of each inmate into account, and to individualize the handling of inmates accordingly.² These practices are viewed either as constituting treatment itself or as means of assisting (or at least not hindering) the treatment practices of professional personnel such as social workers and psychologists.

The shift in prison goals has therefore had as one of its effects the introduction of conflicting directives for employees in both major types of institution. In the course of a year spent partly in a custodially oriented prison and partly in a treatment-oriented prison, we were able to observe these conflicting directives by studying the criteria used to evaluate the performance of guards in both systems. Generally, guards in the custodially oriented prison were expected to enforce rules and maintain discipline while at the same time minimizing friction among inmates or between inmates and staff. In the treatment-oriented institution guards were to contribute to inmate rehabilitation by relaxing, being nondirective, and showing concern for inmate personality problems, but they were also expected to maintain order, keep inmates productively employed, administer justice, and see that escapes did not occur. These conflicting directives made it necessary to use multiple criteria in evaluating guard performance and made the guard's job an extraordinarily difficult one. One consequence in the custodially oriented prison was low employee morale and the highest employee turnover rate of any state institution, and a consequence in the treatment-oriented prison was high morale and the lowest institutional turnover rate.

MULTIPLE CRITERIA

The use of multiple criteria in judging worker performance always makes it necessary for the employee to make judgments

²See Donald R. Cressey, "Social Organization of Correctional Institutions," paper read at the annual meetings of the American Sociological Society, 1956; and *Rehabilitation and Reality, II, Organization and Freedom, California Youth Authority Quarterly*, 10 (1957), 40-47.

about committing himself to the task or tasks which have been set for him. As Ridgway has said, "Without a single over-all composite measure of performance, the individual is forced to rely on his judgment as to whether increased effort on one criterion improves over-all performance, or whether there may be reduction on some other criterion which will outweigh the increase in the first."³ The use of multiple criteria is therefore either implicitly or explicitly based on the assumption that the individual worker will commit his "efforts, attention, and resources in greater measure to those activities which promise to contribute the greatest improvement to over-all performance."⁴ For maximum organizational efficiency theoretical criteria must be specified so that additional effort in one area will yield desirable results in over-all performance.

There are two principal systems for specifying theoretical conditions in which conformity by a worker will be evaluated as desirable over-all performance, to be rewarded and encouraged. One is to standardize procedures and work tasks in explicit sets of rules. In this kind of system individuals who commit themselves explicitly to form and procedure are rewarded even if such commitment means a decline in achievement of success measured by some other criterion, such as quality of the end product. Even if multiple criteria are used in judging performance, a worker employed under these conditions will be able to discover that conforming to standardized procedures will be most highly rewarded. He will be able to discern, for example, that commitment to routinized forms is highly desirable even if one stated criterion for measuring his worth is an acceptable end product.

The other system is to evaluate workers on the basis of clearly specified results which they are expected to accomplish. This system encourages ingenuity and, at the same time, "assures the standardization necessary for bureaucratic operation."⁵ The worker here commits himself to creation of the desired, specified, standard, end product, even if such commitment means deviation from supervisors' conceptions of how the end product is to be produced.

³V. F. Ridgway, *Dysfunctional Consequences of Performance Measurements*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 1 (1956), 240-247.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵Peter M. Blau, *Bureaucracy in Modern Society* (New York, 1956), p. 66.

Workers will somehow learn that over-all performance is judged on the basis of end product, even if one stated criterion for measuring achievement is conformity to standardized rules of procedure.

A high rating on over-all performance depends, then, upon the worker's ability to discover these two systems and, when multiple criteria are used in evaluations, to exercise discretion regarding the tasks to which energy will be committed. However, one of the most significant things about the two prisons studied was that neither provided even theoretical criteria which guards could use in order to gain over-all ratings of excellence. As indicated below, in both institutions multiple and contradictory criteria were used in such a way that it was impossible for guards to discern whether it would be profitable to commit themselves to following rules, to accomplishing a desirable end product, or to some combination of these two.

In the custodially oriented prison this situation was a consequence of administrative inability to specify the appropriate means for achieving the desired end result—minimum disorderliness among inmates—and at the same time stressing that dedication to these means would bring the greatest rewards. In the treatment-oriented prison it was a consequence of administrative inability either to measure the effect of an employee's activity on production of the end product specified as desirable—reformation of inmates—or to specify appropriate means for achieving this goal. Stated in another way, administrators in the custodially oriented prison stressed the importance of means, not end product, yet they were unable to specify the desirable means; whereas in the treatment-oriented prison administrators emphasized that competence was to be judged on the basis of end results, but in making evaluations of employees they were unable to use as a criterion either end product or degree of commitment to routines. In both organizations use of multiple criteria under such conditions of open discretion stemmed from the administrative view of the nature of inmates.

THE CUSTODIALLY ORIENTED PRISON

In the custodially oriented prison inmates were officially viewed as dangerous, scheming, conniving men in need of close surveil-

lance. Accordingly one important administrative task was minimization, to the fullest extent possible under the law and the humanitarian concern of external groups interested in the institution's operation, of inmate freedom. Rules that set the limits of inmate freedom precisely were therefore specified, and one major set of criteria used for evaluating guard performance was the extent to which the inmate rules were enforced. The chief custodial administrator had the following to say in a speech to new guards:

You are here to enforce the rules of the institution. Every rule. You must enforce every rule. If we thought that one of these rules was not needed, we would throw it out. We go over them every now and then and decide whether they should be changed. We did that about five years ago—went over with all of the departments the rules that applied to them. So don't fail to enforce a rule, even if you think it is nonsense. It is there for a reason. Don't blow hot and cold; enforce the same rule in the same way every day. Come in and see me or see a lieutenant if you think the rule doesn't make sense. We will take it up. But if it is there, enforce it.

This general rule for guard behavior was a corollary of the general rule to inmates that all rules were to be obeyed. Similarly, slightly less general rules for all employees, such as, "escapes shall be prevented at all costs," were corollaries of less general rules for inmates: "No inmate shall escape." Correlated also were the specific lists of rules pertaining to each guard's post. A shop guard might be instructed that no inmate was to be permitted to smoke in the shop, while inmates were instructed that smoking was not permitted. Then, if an inmate escaped or smoked, there had been a rule violation by both an inmate and an employee. A bureaucratic chain of command designed to enforce the personnel rules was well developed and had as its ultimate objective the enforcement of rules for inmate conduct. In essence guards were expected to guard, and supervisors were expected to see that this task was accomplished.

Because of this emphasis on rules for enforcing rules it was difficult to find a guard activity that was not regulated from above. We could find no system of rules or rule enforcement for guards which was equivalent to the "mock bureaucracy" or the "repre-

sentative bureaucracy" described by Gouldner for a factory.⁶ Guards' duties were defined in such a way that only rarely could an employee do something which was not either in accordance with, or a violation of, rules. Such activities as going to the toilet, whistling, laughing, talking, and smoking were among the actions about which regulation from above was sought, for guards as well as inmates. Generally speaking, guards were expected, while in the institution, to place themselves completely at the disposal of the administrators, to be used as the latter saw fit.⁷

A second important administrative task in this institution was minimization of the number of disgruntled inmates. When complete physical incapacitation of the governed is impossible, and when government is by a small minority, consent of the majority to be governed must somehow be obtained. Rules must be enforced, but enforcement must not be so rigid and arbitrary that the governed are stimulated to riot or rebel. In contemporary conditions of imprisonment, where inmates do not consent to be governed and cannot be physically segregated, numerous near-equivalents of physical incapacitation have been devised. For example, incentives and rewards, such as parole, "good time" allowances, and trustee status, are granted principally to inmates who have remained isolated from others. In this way psychological solitary confinement has been substituted for the physical solitary confinement characterizing early prisons.⁸ In addition, caution must be exercised in what is called the enforcement of rules.

⁶In the first type of bureaucracy the rule is neither enforced by management nor obeyed by the workers, and in the second there is mutual *acceptance* of the rule, so that deviation from it can be viewed as due to ignorance or carelessness rather than as due to willful resistance. Alvin W. Gouldner, *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy* (Glencoe, Ill., 1954), pp. 181-206, 215-219.

⁷Herbert A. Simon, "Inducements and Incentives in Bureaucracy," in Robert K. Merton, Aliso P. Gray, Barbara Hockey, and Hanan C. Selvin, *Reader in Bureaucracy* (Glencoe, Ill., 1952), p. 331. In the custodially oriented institution framed copies of a state statute providing that the warden may conscript the aid of any citizen to assist in maintaining order in the prison were posted in conspicuous places. The lesson for guards was intended to be: A warden who has authority to draft men on the street, without regard for their personal preferences or opinions, in order to maintain order certainly can utilize the lives of *employees* in any manner he sees fit. The chief custodian made this point explicit in his talks to new guards.

⁸This practice has developed as a response to denial of administrative power to confine most inmates in solitary and, positively, to insistence that inmate labor be used efficiently, at least in the maintenance of prisons. See Richard A. Cloward,

Although the set of rules for inmates serves as advance notice that nonconformists will be punished,⁹ rules and punishments must be administered in such a way that both the conditions of imprisonment and the punishments are accepted by a maximum number of inmates. Such acceptance will minimize the probability of revolt, riot, and even individual rebellion. Positively this means that the rules must be enforced in a manner which does not make inmates disgruntled; guards must use discretion and common sense in enforcing rules. An administrator had the following to say about the undesirable action of an employee whose duty it was to enforce the rule that inmates shall not, among other things, write to criminals or criticize the administration in their letters:

He was letting a few things through so we talked to him about it, and right away he started just sending letters back with a little slip saying "rejected" or "rewrite." And when that happens, of course, everybody gets upset and you have all these disgruntled inmates on your hands.

In the custodially oriented prison the conflicting directives to guards and the conflicting criteria for judging their competence were directly related to these two principal administrative tasks. Guards were to secure strict conformity to institutional rules and, at the same time, were to exercise common sense in order to maintain conditions in which a minimum number of inmates would become disgruntled and potentially rebellious. In the words of one administrator, "The good guard is the one who gets the best discipline with the least friction." Although both were directives to commit one's energy to form and procedure, it is significant that precise rules for minimizing the amount of inmate disgruntledness were not given the guards. The result was that guards could rely neither on "following the rules for enforcing inmate rules" nor on "using common sense in enforcing the rules" in order to gain high over-all ratings. This was observed in two principal contexts.

"Social Control in the Prison," a paper read at a meeting of the Social Science Research Council Conference Group on Research in Correctional Organization, February 1956; and Donald R. Cressey and Witold Krassowski, Inmate Organization and Anomie in American Prisons and Soviet Labor Camps, *Social Problems*, 5 (1957), 217-230.

⁹Gouldner has specified this as an important condition necessary to obtaining consent. *Op. cit.*, pp. 168-171.

First, the administrative view of inmates as dangerous and con-
niving put emphasis upon detection and prevention of *potential*
as well as actual inmate rule violation. The general order to enforce
inmate rules was complicated by its implication that guard action
was to be ex post facto. A guard who took the order literally could
only watch and wait, in much the way traffic policemen sometimes
hide behind billboards waiting for violations. Since such action
in the prison would grant inmates an opportunity to gamble on the
advantages of nonconformity against the disadvantages of possible
detection and punishment, enforcing inmate rules had to be inter-
preted to mean that guards were to be alert to *potential* violations.
They could not be instructed that absence of trouble on individual
posts was the desired end product, to be achieved by individually
initiated means, including the exercise of common sense, because
absence of trouble on a post could mean that a guard had entered
into a conspiracy with inmates and had created a condition poten-
tially dangerous to institutional security.¹⁰ A supervisory system for
observing and testing the alertness of guards—for testing the degree
of their commitment to form and procedure—was therefore neces-
sary. But the presence of alertness tests always assumes that rules are
completely explicational and that discretion or common-sense pro-
cedures are not expected. Since this was not the case in the prison,
a guard's use of common sense to prevent inmates from becoming
disgruntled became a potential source of a demerit, not of a reward.
Stated in another way, a guard's alertness to expectations regarding
his duty to keep inmates from becoming disgruntled could not be
tested, for explicit rules defining this duty could not be formulated;
and deviating (in an attempt to keep inmates from becoming
disgruntled) from the specified rules could be taken as a sign of
nonalertness, not of competence.

It became impossible then for guards to find a principle for com-
mitting their energy to following rules, to using common sense
and discretion, or to an acceptable combination of the two. If a

¹⁰This is one of the principal devices guards in some prisons use to control inmates
and to get along with their superior officers. See Lloyd W. McCorkle and Richard
Korn, Resocialization within Walls, *Annals of the American Academy of Political
and Social Science*, 293 (1954), 90-98; and Gresham M. Sykes, Corruption of Authority
and Rehabilitation, *Social Forces*, 34 (1956), 257-262.

guard enforced the rules by formally reporting all inmate misconduct or potential misconduct to a central disciplinary court, the relatively high frequency of such reports when he was on duty was likely to be taken as evidence of poor performance, with a demerit as its consequence. Conversely if he were detected exercising discretion and overlooking violations or potential violations of minor rules he also might receive a demerit, in this case for not being alert to potential danger. The ensuing problem for guards is illustrated in the following three statements:

I think the big problem in here is the problem of counselors. You hear in the schoolroom [in-service training] up there that we are supposed to be counselors to these men and everybody is talking about how you have to be a counselor, you have to help them and such things as that. But if you get caught talking to an inmate, it's murder. They see you talking to an inmate and they think that you're trying to help him get over the wall or smuggle in some whiskey or something like that. Now, that just isn't right. I think that we ought to be counselors. I agree with that. But I think that in order to be counselors we've got to be trusted, and they just don't trust the officers. They don't want them to do any thinking themselves.

They always think there is something wrong with what you do. Like talking to inmates. I talk to them all the time. I have to talk to them. How in hell are you going to get anything done if you don't talk to them? I find out about them, whether I can trust them and things like that by talking to them. Then the lieutenant comes in and you aren't supposed to be talking to them. To hell with them. I just keep on talking to them. Of course, on my job it's a little different, because I have only a small bunch of inmates. But how are you going to get to know them if you don't talk to them?

A probationary guard was assigned to one of the shops for a day's tour of duty so he could learn the rules of the shop. The old guard to whom he was assigned gave him the following lesson, among others.

Now, especially when you are on probation, what you are going to hear is that you shouldn't talk to these inmates. That's the rule. But you've got to talk to them. You and I know that you can't get along with them unless you talk to them. If they come up to you with something, well, you've got to talk to them about it. You can't just scare them away. But you have to watch out to see that you do it wisely and see that the lieutenant doesn't catch you at it. Just like in here I

have to be over there around the corner to see what in hell the inmates are doing, and at the same time if the lieutenant comes in and I'm over there in the corner talking with them or something, to see that they don't get in a fight or something like that, then I'm on the carpet for not being alert and saluting the lieutenant or the deputy warden when they come through.

Second, the two facets of the guard's role logically called for two very different administrative reactions to guard deviation, but guards could discern only one response. As is illustrated in criminal law theory and procedures, in our culture the reaction to deviation viewed as *deliberate* is one of punishment and close surveillance, whereas the reaction to deviation perceived as *unintentional*—as due to ignorance or inability to conform—is education and therapy.¹¹ It follows that when the guard's role is primarily a simple one of following orders, writing conduct reports, and participating in a show of force, deviation will be perceived as *deliberate unco-operativeness*, with punishment as a consequence. But when the role is viewed primarily as a more complex one of using finesse, subtleties, discretion, and other individualized measures to keep inmates contented, deviation must be assumed to be the *unintentional* consequence of ignorance, with education as a consequence. In the custodially oriented prison the bifurcated role of the guard obscured the distinction between these two responses. Significantly the organizational structure designed to repress inmates made it impossible for administrators and supervisors to respond in clearly nonpunitive terms to guard deviation resulting from expectations that they would properly use discretion and common sense.

In order to gain employment in the custodially oriented prison guards had to (1) pass a written examination and be certified by the state personnel department; (2) survive interviews with the warden, an administrative assistant, and the deputy warden; (3) survive a check into their personal lives by parole agents in their home communities, and (4) pass a six-month probationary period during which they were under very close scrutiny by all the supervisory personnel. Such a formidable screening device should eliminate

¹¹Gouldner has observed this principle in operation in the relationships between management and workers in a factory. *Op. cit.*, pp. 159-161, 176-180, 215-219, 232-234.

the unfit and incompetent—men who are *unable* to perform the duties of a guard as these duties are perceived by supervisors—and it was presumed to do so. No complaints were voiced to the investigator about the system of selection or about the quality of the candidates from among whom the selections were made.

Opinions were voiced, however, about the civil service system that conferred job tenure on guards as soon as they passed their probationary period. Despite the fact that all custodial administrators had begun their employment as guards and had thus once been on probation themselves, they often complained that once a guard had passed probation he became negligent in his duties, "because he knows we can't fire him." The first words spoken by a captain to the investigator during his first day at the institution included something like, "I have more trouble with the guards around here than I have with the inmates." "Trouble" with guards was found to include perception of their conduct as *deliberate* refusal to enforce inmate rules and to keep order. If screening procedures keep out the obviously unfit, then not performing one's duties must be viewed as due to deliberate laziness, deliberate indifference, or deliberate insubordination.

But guards were also expected to use discretion and common sense, and their deviation from this administrative expectation was viewed as stemming from *inability* to meet expectations rather than from deliberate unco-operativeness. Consistently *education* rather than punishment was the device used for correcting the deviation. Supervisors and administrators attempted to give this guidance both in on-the-job consultations and in more general in-service training sessions. However, the judicial system which necessarily had to be used for handling those deviations that were perceived as deliberate made it difficult for the guards to view the supervisory consultations as anything but devices for administering demerits, and they viewed the education received in in-service training sessions as unrelated to everyday institutional practices.

The rigid system for screening guards, with the consequent assumption that most guard deviation was deliberate, made it necessary to handle employee deviations from the rules (both those coinciding with rules for inmates and those for co-ordinating employee behavior—such as rules specifying the type of dress and

the time at which one should arrive for work) by a procedure similar to that used in "strict liability" cases in criminal law.¹² In such criminal law cases the traditional differential in response to intentional and unintentional deviations is abandoned, for criminal intent is *assumed* to be present. Offenders are held liable for their conduct regardless of their intentions. For example, in statutory rape (intercourse with a female younger than the age of consent) a man's honest belief that the girl was above the age of consent does not preclude a finding of guilty. Most traffic violations are handled under the same principle. Generally speaking, the strict liability procedure is used in criminal law for determining guilt in those types of cases in which *mens rea* would be difficult to prove and in which the prohibited behavior is administratively undesirable but not highly reprehensible.

Use of the strict liability procedure in the custodially oriented prison was administratively important because it emphasized the impersonal nature of security rules, the necessity for employee unity, and the importance of organizational integration. Use of the procedure also minimized the number of extenuating circumstances which guards could use as defenses against charges of rule violation. For example, guards could not defend tardiness with excuses indicating that they did not intend to be tardy. When twenty-nine employees were late because of a severe snowstorm, each was given a demerit—a total of three such demerits in a year was punished by a suspension without pay. Similarly guards who were not considered alert by a lieutenant passing their post were given demerits, just as were guards caught deliberately violating the rules in some way. Demerits for not being alert were, in fact, sometimes awarded without the guard's knowledge.

In criminal law strict liability procedures are used only for handling deviations from precise rules such as those specifying speed limits and the age of consent. In the custodially oriented prison, however, this procedure was used to handle deviation from expectations of supervisors regarding the proper use of discretion and common-sense handling to prevent inmates from becoming disgruntled. As indicated earlier, the rules regarding such expecta-

¹²See Jerome Hall, *General Principles of Criminal Law* (Indianapolis, 1948), pp. 279-322.

tions were necessarily imprecise. Because the rules were imprecise, deviation in turn was necessarily unintentional, not deliberate. A guard could not deliberately violate a rule (making himself a candidate for punishment) because he could not be told what the rule was. Yet there was no alternative to assuming, as in strict liability procedures, that such deviations were deliberate. Supervisors could use only negative evidence in estimating a guard's competence. As indicated, they were obligated to give demerits when they caught a guard violating security rules by using discretion or common sense in the handling of inmates. A guard could not be rewarded for doing his duty; he could only be downgraded if he did not conform to the rules designed to ensure that he would be alert and would enforce rules for inmates. Accordingly the educational devices used in responses to expectations that guards would minimize inmate disgruntlement necessarily were double-edged—in on-the-spot consultations guards were educated regarding proper conduct, but the fact that they had deviated from prescribed rules was, under strict liability procedures, ground for punitive action in the form of a demerit.

In these circumstances a guard could not do anything in the hope that it would bring him a high rating; low ratings could be avoided by doing nothing, by staying out of sight. Guard reactions took three principal forms, which cannot be discussed here: apathy, deliberate misconduct, and deliberate concealment. These of course were precisely the reactions which the system of close supervision was designed to prevent.

THE TREATMENT-ORIENTED PRISON

Contradictory directives for guards were even more apparent in the treatment-oriented prison. In this institution guards were expected both to guard and to use discretion in enforcing rules, just as they were in the custodially oriented prison. The principal difference was the objective of the exercise of discretion—to aid in treatment rather than to reduce disgruntlement. Although this institution's walls, gun towers, bars, locks, and rules revealed official concern for protecting society by repressing inmates, the stated policy was "to co-ordinate all the institution's facilities in a program of individualized treatment." Official emphasis, therefore, was on

the goal of rehabilitating inmates, who were not viewed as dangerous, conniving men, but rather as "clients" who needed the nonpunitive treatment services which the institution could provide.

The behavioral theory officially used was a mixture of humanitarianism, middle-class values, and psychiatric principles. One significant point of view was that conformity to prison rules is an undesirable restriction of inmates who need opportunities for self-expression and "acting out."¹³ Inmate deviation from rules within the institution, like criminality itself, was often considered a consequence of *inability* to conform rather than as intentional and deliberate violation. Accordingly it was the duty of guards to respond therapeutically—to understand inmates and to help them with their problems, to avoid being rigid or punitive. Decision making was decentralized so that guards could handle inmates individually and could informally reward those showing signs of improvement. Thus, the discretion which guards in the custodially oriented prison were to use as a means for preventing inmates from becoming disgruntled was to be used here for rehabilitating inmates.

It was impossible, however, for administrators to use a guard's contribution to inmate rehabilitation as the only index of his competence. There were two principal reasons for this.

First, although inmate rehabilitation was an explicit goal of the organization, it was impossible to measure the institution's success in this regard. Numerous preinstitutional and postinstitutional conditions affect recidivism rates, making it impossible to correlate either high or low recidivism rates with institutional activities.¹⁴ More specifically the contribution of any one guard to the rehabilitation or recidivism of inmates could not be measured. In judgment of guard competence, emphasis was placed on the production

¹³See Donald R. Cressey, *Rehabilitation Theory and Reality*, pp. 40-47.

¹⁴This inability to measure the effectiveness of crime prevention and corrections programs is extremely important to personnel engaged in the administration of criminal justice and even to workers in theoretical criminology, for it enables men with vastly different ideologies and theoretical conceptions to work together. See Donald R. Cressey, *The State of Criminal Statistics*, *National Probation and Parole Association Journal*, 3 (1957), 230-241; and *The Nature and Effectiveness of Correctional Techniques*, *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 2 (1958), 754-771.

of a desired end result, rehabilitated inmates, rather than on adherence to specified procedures for achieving this goal. But because the rehabilitative effectiveness of a guard could not be measured, the guard in association with inmates who became rehabilitated could not be given higher ratings than guards who had supervised inmates who became recidivists.

Second, the administrators' commitment to democratic values, such as equality and justice, and to the subsidiary organizational goal of protecting society from inmates required that they secure inmate compliance with rules. From the professional or treatment standpoint, guards were to act as referral agents for the professionally trained staff and were to handle inmates' minor emotional problems themselves. As indicated, this meant that guards were to be receptive, passive, and relaxed. But like employees of the custodially oriented prison, guards were also expected to guard. While they were to be relaxed and professional so as to contribute to inmate rehabilitation, they were also to maintain order and see that inmates performed work tasks that had to be accomplished if the institution were to continue operating.¹⁵ Although institutional policy stressed inmate welfare and rehabilitation, guards were expected to contribute to the welfare of the institution and to the protection of society.

In this situation rules stating that guards should relax and, in so doing, contribute to inmate rehabilitation could not be explicitly stipulated nor enforced. In other organizations the fact that a worker's contribution to the desired end product could not be measured might have shifted emphasis in personnel supervision toward a system of evaluation on the basis of adherence to form and procedure, rather than on production of a standardized product. It was impossible to use this system in the treatment-oriented prison, however, because it is impossible to break down into a set of "rules for therapeutic action" the expectation that each inmate will be handled according to his individualized needs for treatment. Guards could not be given an explicit set of treatment rules to follow any more than guards in the custodially oriented prison could be given a set of rules for minimizing the number of disgruntled inmates. They could only be instructed to be profes-

¹⁵See Cressey, "Social Organization of Correctional Institutions."

sional, to relax, and to use discretion in handling inmates. Accordingly their performance could not be evaluated by determining the degree to which they conformed to form and procedure.

Furthermore the administrative commitment to create a relaxed, therapeutic climate made it impractical to use as criteria of worth either the guard's skill in enforcement of inmate rules or adherence to rules for the *custodial* behavior of personnel. In the first place, an explicit body of custodial rules for inmates, to be carefully enforced by guards, would have vitiated the official view that the inmate was essentially a sick person in need of help or treatment rather than a bad man in need of punishment or close surveillance. In the second place, an explicit body of rules for the custodial conduct of guards could not be formulated or enforced, because it was principally in reference to custodial relationships that guards were to relax. The nonprofessional supervisors who were expected to diffuse treatment values to guards also were expected to achieve the institution's custodial goal. But positive instructions for handling guards in a manner which would contribute to the therapeutic climate were as difficult to formulate and communicate as were positive instructions to the guards for handling inmates therapeutically.

Supervisors were, generally speaking, expected to do nothing which would make the guards tense or rigid, and this meant that they could not precisely formulate, let alone enforce, even custodial rules for guards. Thus the expectation that guards would contribute to the treatment of inmates deprived supervisors of punishment-enforced (bureaucratic or rank) authority to secure compliance with routines which either they or the administrators considered desirable from a security standpoint. And the fact that neither supervisors nor guards were treatment specialists meant that supervisors did not have the professional or technical authority to secure compliance with professional expectations regarding treatment. Consequently the supervisors' authority was neutralized; they could scarcely judge a guard as either *unwilling* to do his job, which would make him the subject of punishment, or as *unable* to do his job, which would make him the subject of education and therapy. One result was a system in which supervisors maintained with workers personal, friendly, neighborly, and equal-

itarian relations based on criteria other than work performance rather than formal, bureaucratic, authoritarian, supervisory, professional, or other relations ordinarily existing between managers and workers.

The relaxed supervision thus created pleasant working conditions but also complicated the criteria to be used in judging guard competence. Each guard had to decide for himself the degree to which either relaxation or custodial rigidity was to be used in particular circumstances. On treatment grounds guards were to overlook inmate deviations, but on custodial grounds they were, at the same time, to secure inmate compliance with rules. If they enforced discipline and insisted on inmate orderliness, they risked undesirable diagnosis as rigid, punitive, or neurotic, because such enforcement theoretically interfered with individualized treatment. But if they relaxed to a degree that institutional security and organization seemed to be threatened, then they risked undesirable diagnosis as lazy or unmotivated. One consequence was widespread inability of guards to discover the theoretical conditions under which additional effort in one area of behavior would yield desirable ratings on over-all performance.

CONCLUSION

In both a custodially oriented prison and a treatment-oriented prison multiple and contradictory criteria were used to evaluate the performance of guards, but a system which enabled the guard to commit himself to one activity in order to improve his over-all rating was not provided. In the custodially oriented prison he had to follow rules, but he also had to violate the rules in order to keep inmates from becoming disgruntled. In the treatment-oriented prison he was to be relaxed and therapeutic in order to rehabilitate inmates, but at the same time he was expected to preserve institutional orderliness.

These conditions seem to be inherent in the kind of internal organization that is necessary if a prison is to achieve the multiple and somewhat contradictory goals which society sets for it. Prisons differ significantly, if not uniquely, from other organizations, because their personnel hierarchies are organized down to the lowest level for the administration of the daily activities of men.

The guard, who is the lowest-level worker in a prison, is also a manager. He is managed in a system of regulations and controls from above, but he also manages, by a corresponding system of regulations, the inmates who are in his charge. Essentially because he is a worker, he cannot be given full discretion to produce a desired end product such as inmate docility or inmate rehabilitation, and essentially because he is a manager his activities cannot be bureaucratized in a set of routine procedures.

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