This Issue in Brief

The Future of Parole—In Rebuttal of S.157.—While S.157 appears to deal with the problems of uncertainty and disparity in criminal sentences, it actually would cause more harm than good, asserts Cecil C. McPike, chairman of the U.S. Parole Commission. Disparity would increase with the elimination of the parole release function and judicial discretion would be needlessly restricted, he adds. Congress should preserve the gains made in the 1976 Parole Reorganization Act, and retain the Parole Commission in its present role as the term-center for sentences of more than one year, he concludes.

Criminal Diversion in the Federal System: A Congressional Examination.—Timothy Kevin McPike, deputy counsel to the Senate Subcommittee on Improvements in Judicial Machinery, examines the history of Federal involvement with the pretrial diversion concept, including a chronology, a brief description of the contents of methadone detoxification and maintenance treatment, and the history of Federal involvement. While diversion and methadone in the detoxification and maintenance treatment method. However, diversion and methadone are becoming the focus of chronic disruptive inmates, and assume that such persons are violence-prone in all sorts of settings, asserts author Hans Toch. Other explanations have centered on prison conditions, but have over-generalized prison impact, or (more frequently) they have highlighted deterrent features, such as security measures. This article examines and illustrates ways in which prison subenvironments may contribute to the use of violence in prisons. In studying inmate aggression, this group partly focused on the victimization of the individual prisoner, highlighting the immediate motives of inmates (aggressors and victims) that went into producing each incident (Mueller, Toch, and Molof, 1965). This sort of analysis illuminated (among other things) the contribution of extortion, homosexual relationships and pressures, debts, stealing, and routine prison disputes to the genesis of violent prison encounters in the mid-sixties.

Methodology: Blessing or Curse?—The use of methadone in the detoxification and maintenance of narcotic addiction has been accepted as a viable treatment method. However, diversion and abuse of methadone are becoming serious problems. This article by Dr. George Gubar does not advocate one position or the other concerning the long-standing controversy about the use of methadone. Rather, there is an attempt to describe the historical background of methadone, its diversion, and some suggestions as to possible approaches to reduce its abuse.
voked these dispositions. In this view, a prison incident can be seen as resulting, given a perceived affront to an inmate who is oversensitive to such affronts, or from the availability of a tempting target to an inmate who is a habitual bully.

There are probably several ways of defining violence-relevant contextual stimuli such as the examples (peer challenges or vulnerable victims) we mentioned. One appealing term is "social climate" (Moxo, 1974; Toch, 1977), because the concept of "climate" includes the inmate himself. In prison, the concern would be with each inmate's immediate world (staff, other inmates, physical setting) as the inmate experiences it and reacts to it. The presumption is that any prison setting in which inmates spend a significant portion of time (tiers, shops, classrooms, etc.) has behavior-relevant features for that sort of individual. A shop, for instance, may feature a paternalistic foreman, relaxed (or firm) supervision, a group of street-raised youths (or lifers), high (or low) levels of noise, a playful (or businesslike) regime. Such factors may be more salient for most inmates than the fact that the shop teaches the plumbing trade, though this learning opportunity is another climate attribute that will be significant to inmates. Three fairly obvious points are of theoretical and practical concern: (1) any social climate feature may be critical in the life of one inmate and irrelevant to another; (2) the expression of this may be welcomed by some and seen with hostility by others, and (3) positive and negative reactions to features of climate helps motivate an inmate's behavior, including participation in violent incidents.

How do climate features enter into the genesis of violence? The following examples, some of which are more complex than others: (a) A farm setting in a youth prison is an informal haven for "problem" inmates because of its low level of supervision, which reduces the level of resentment and rebellious behavior; inmates who have been aggressors before arriving on this farm become relatively well-behaved; however, (b) an inexperienced rural inmate is assigned to the farm; he promptly becomes the target of homosocial pressure; (c) the victim evolves a panic reaction to the setting and the other inmates; in an effort at self-protection he assaults one of his tormentors.

Social Climate and Aggressors' Motives

I have implied that to understand incident-motives in violence-proneness means more than to locate prior behavior patterns or consistencies; it also means that we must know the stimulus that invoked the person's motives. We have seen that staff, police, and other indigenous inmate groupings—such as debtors, drug users, and members of rival gangs—facilitate or invite them, the group that encourages or applauds them, and the milieu that makes them fashionable or susceptible to rationalization. We must start with the incident; we ask ourselves how the victimizer arrived at his resolve. Was his goal, profit? Retribution? Loyalty to his group? Wounded self-esteem? Search for reputation? Escape from danger? The temptation of another inmate's vulnerability? Ethnic prejudice? Recognition of authority or prestige or "the code"?

It is true that we can often infer the inmate's motives from his folder where the information we have about him is so much more complete than the data we have about victimization incidents; and it helps us differentiate chronic victimizers—whose personal behavior patterns must be addressed—from occasional victimizers, whose conduct is more of a product of specific situational forces.

But situational context is always of relevance, even with chronicity. A bully merits rehabilitative attention, but what such a person immediately needs is to be deprived of access to inmates with victim-attributes. In a setting that is exclusively receptive, the bully pulls the victim into a predatory pattern of behavior that is harder to break than the data we have about victimization incidents; and it helps us differentiate chronic victimizers—whose personal behavior patterns must be addressed—from occasional victimizers, whose conduct is more of a product of specific situational forces.

Violence-Promotion by Climate Features

Our point about situational context is not that the context produces the incident but that it increases or reduces the probability of Incident-occurrence. It follows that the context-variability can be increased or decreased through contextual interventions, even though incident-cornpatibility is likely to be elicited by other stimuli. For instance, the social environment affects the opportunities for security measures (whatever the level of security) of necessity must be uneven, leaving times and places of lower-density supervision. My point, in fact, is that neither custody deficits nor other formal arrangements of the environment produce predatory behavior. Incidents are products of the interactional world because the relationships that spring up among people in a subsisting mixture or become sequentially destructive. There are chains of these circumstances, some of which get imported from outside the prison (such as the toughness-provoking needs of our farm youths and the ethnic tensions in the recreational room). Personal motives get magnified by environmental impingements, which press the relevant motivational button. Once a violence motive exists, meanings assigned to features of the environment (such as sex at the shower or gladiating to the stairway) then determine where and when incidents may occur.

Social Climate and Prison Violence

where there are more "hidden" reward systems, conditions which focus on "punishment" given to a pred­
ator to a status-conferring segregation setting (2) By Providing Immunity or Protection: Vi­} ous escape from the same data "code of silence" that is highlighted by Westely (1970) for police violence; however the significance of the protective code in prison is compounded by inmate-staff social distance, by "labels" such as "bullying," "fighting," by fear of retaliation, etc. Legalistic solutions to the victimization problem are encum­bered by difficulties in securing reliable evidence, such as witnesses and victim-complainants. Pris­ons share this difficulty with other "subcultural" activities such as the organized crime.

(3) By Providing Opportunity: The prison world features predictability and routine, such as in physical movement, custodial supervision pat­terns of necessity must be uneven, leaving times and places of lower-density supervision. Our example is the prison farm. The farm juxtaposes large areas in which an acknowledged need for security is highlighted by Westely (1970) for police violence; however the significance of the protective code in prison is compounded by inmate-staff social distance, by "labels" such as "bullying," etc. The farm regimen reduces the opportunities for security measures, and can plan, when incidents may occur. Deployment of •

Reduction of Opportunity: Climate features may unwittingly or unavoidable contain stimuli that spark victimization, as does the police precinct or the violent inner-city street. But situational context is always of relevance, even with chronicity. A bully merits rehabilitative attention, but what such a person immediately needs is to be deprived of access to inmates with victim-attributes. In a setting that is exclusively receptive, the bully pulls the victim into a predatory pattern of behavior that is harder to break than the data we have about victimization incidents; and it helps us differentiate chronic victimizers—whose personal behavior patterns must be addressed—from occasional victimizers, whose conduct is more of a product of specific situational forces.

But situational context is always of relevance, even with chronicity. A bully merits rehabilitative attention, but what such a person immediately needs is to be deprived of access to inmates with victim-attributes. In a setting that is exclusively receptive, the bully pulls the victim into a predatory pattern of behavior that is harder to break than the data we have about victimization incidents; and it helps us differentiate chronic victimizers—whose personal behavior patterns must be addressed—from occasional victimizers, whose conduct is more of a product of specific situational forces.

But situational context is always of relevance, even with chronicity. A bully merits rehabilitative attention, but what such a person immediately needs is to be deprived of access to inmates with victim-attributes. In a setting that is exclusively receptive, the bully pulls the victim into a predatory pattern of behavior that is harder to break than the data we have about victimization incidents; and it helps us differentiate chronic victimizers—whose personal behavior patterns must be addressed—from occasional victimizers, whose conduct is more of a product of specific situational forces.
for violence-prone exploitation. If these considerations hold, controlling population mixes separately or combines potential aggressors, victims and violent contenders.

*Research and Program Implications*

Prison outsiders have a penchant for outlook recommendations. Worse still, they often ship coal (old ideas) to Newstone. Some of my points will be familiar to prison staff; some suggest formalizing what is done, and affirming its value:

1. **Understanding violence “hot spots” and low-violence subenvironments:** Measures such as disciplining aggressors require little information about the causation of violence because the issue is culpability. Furthermore, incident participants are reticent in such inquiries, except for arguments-in-mutation of their involvement. A corollary is that any prevention of institutional violence cannot depend on information secured through factfinding that occurs in disciplinary settings.

2. **Disciplining aggressors require information secured through factfinding that occurs in disciplinary contexts.** Given everyone’s stake in minimizing trouble, it is vital that we may be afraid-without-cause, or unafraid where violence occurs in a setting can be discussed as a direct effect at source-level or best alignment.

3. **Helping inmates and staff in high-violence settings address their own violence problem:** This gambit presumes that solutions that originate with those affected by their implementation are least likely to mobilize resistance. It also assumes that (as mentioned above) subsettings are communities that have a stake in reducing localized danger and disruption. The point holds even for violent individual. Such persons have elsewhere become successfully engaged in “solving the violence problem” in their settings (Toch, Grant and Galvin, 1975). Staff and inmate groups can be run separately or together, charged with documenting the reasons for violence patterns, and asked to recommend policy changes to neutralize violence patterns. This must obviously be done with the understanding that documented and practical suggestions will be implemented.

4. **Creating Support Systems for Victims and Potential Victims:** Reactive violence-measures address aggressors; by segregating them, they form prison enclaves (such as segregation wings) in which levels of violence become disproportionately high. Obvious victim-centered strategies also entail problems. They stigmatize inmates (such as in “sissie companies”) or may secret prisoners in program voids, such as protective segregation areas. Less drastic options are available through the creation of new settings in which inmate-prone inmates are mixed with others, with clear social catalysts who act as workers, such as program-oriented persons who are trained to facilitate violence.

5. **Crisis Intervention Teams are an example of support measures designed to be invoked where the violence problem is still “hot.”** One use of this strategy is the California deployment of inmate social catalysts (Sumner, 1976) who act as liaison and calming influences in gang wars, racial conflict and other group disturbances. Staff interventers can take forms counterpart to police family crisis teams, persons who are trained to defuse violent conflicts and who refer participants (if necessary) for professional assistance. Such teams can range in composition from chaplains to custodial officers or inmates. A less drastic option is “to debrief” violence participants (separately or in confrontation) to prevent lingering disputes from flaring up after the protagonists leave segregation and return to the yard.

6. **Using Violence-Related Data in Staff Training and inmate Indoc-timization requires no technology beyond collation of relevant information.** My suggestion is that such data should be as setting-specific as possible. In other words, the information would not consist of general “human relations” coursework for staff, or of rule-centered, didactic lectures to inmates, but of statistics and illustrations which sensitize staff and inmates to situations they are likely to encounter on the tier, on the job, in the classroom and in recreation areas. This means that “canned” curricula should be avoided in favor of updated information about contemporary interpersonal problems, group tensions, etc., and about solutions that have been tried and that have worked. Inmates and staff could also be specifically informed about the parameters of their assignments (informal routines, special population and their habits, etc.) so as to avoid dependence on scuttlebutt or trial and error learning.

None of these strategies will “solve” emerging problems. No matter what any of us do, low-visibility disputes can arise and dedicated predators can find room for predation. The goal is the reduction of violence through the creation of a climate that faces occasions for violence and begins to defuse them. If we accomplish this goal, residual violence will be "person centered," and can be addressed as such.

---

### References
