

Jail Officers' Perceptions of the Work Environment in Traditional Versus New Generation Facilities

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Abstract New Generation jails have emerged as an important innovation in local incarceration. The results of existing research suggest that new generation jail design and operation can positively impact inmates and staff, but the literature is far from unequivocal. The current study utilized data collected from a single jail complex to provide a unique test of how the type of facility influences jail staff perceptions of the work environment along several dimensions. Our results revealed few differences between correctional officers working in traditional units and those posted in new generation units. We discuss the implications of these findings, including the use of direct supervision inmate management in traditional as well as new generation jails.

Keywords Direct supervision · Correctional officers · New generation jail

Introduction

One of the most meaningful innovations in jailing in the last three decades has been the development of podular/direct supervision units. Representing dramatic departures from traditional jails in physical structure and inmate management, podular/direct supervision facilities - often referred to as “new generation” jails - first emerged in the mid 1970s. Although some commentators believed that these jails would fail, or that they were wholly unrealistic for housing the sort of inmates found in most local jails (Nelson and O’Toole 1983; Wener 2005; Zupan 1991), they have become fairly common. A recent national sample survey of medium to large jails reported that more than one in five said they operated direct supervision facilities

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(Tartaro 2002b). Despite the relative popularity of new generation jails, there is still much we do not know about how their innovative approach influences local corrections. The current study contributes to the existing literature by assessing differences between the work perceptions of jail guards supervising inmates in new generation units and those employed in more traditional facilities.

Literature Review

The Nature of Podular/Direct Supervision

The new generation philosophy is manifested as a departure from traditional jails along two dimensions. First, the physical environment is different. Traditionally, jail cells have been arranged linearly along a corridor (Wener et al. 1985). In contrast, the new generation architectural design separates inmates into relatively small groups (usually 50 or less), housed in self-contained living units including several one- to two-person cells, a day room, and recreation space (Zupan 1991). These units, or “pods,” usually are triangular or wedge shaped so that jail officers have a direct line of sight into all areas of the pod at all times. The furnishings in new generation living units also differ. Rather than “vandal proof” stainless steel and concrete fixtures that are permanently affixed, the pods include carpeting, porcelain lavatories, moveable furniture that may be padded or plastic, and other “soft” fixtures.

The physical features lend themselves to expression of a unique inmate management approach, the second dimension along which new generation jails diverge from traditional facilities. In traditional jails, officers are separated from inmates by bars, glass, or other physical barriers. When cells are arranged linearly, officers must patrol halls where their line of sight into each cell is severely restricted. The result is intermittent surveillance—officers can observe what is happening inside a cell only when they are almost directly in front of it. Other jails provide more constant surveillance by grouping inmates into pods, but they continue to separate inmates from officers. Such facilities are known as podular/remote supervision (Gettinger 1984). Full expression of the new generation philosophy occurs only in podular/direct supervision units, where officers are stationed within the living area with no physical barriers to separate them from inmates. In these units, officers maintain a constant physical presence, but they also interact extensively with inmates.

Correctional officers’ work in traditional facilities has been characterized as “fragmented, routinized and menial” or as “bureaucratic chores that require little or no judgment, initiative, or skill on the part of the officer” (Zupan and Menke 1988, p. 615). In such units, officers are often relegated to patrolling corridors, conducting counts, escorting inmates from one area to another, attempting to maintain order, and so on. Personal security is obtained by physical separation from inmates, and authority is frequently shared with inmates through tacit agreements where guards ignore minor rule violations in exchange for inmates’ general compliance (Zupan 1991) see also Sykes (1958).

Direct supervision, on the other hand, requires well-developed interpersonal skills, creativity in managing inmates, and independence. Zupan (1991) has identified seven dimensions of officer behaviors essential to effective direct supervision. First, officers

must be proactive in addressing even minor conflicts and problems within the pod. Rather than seeking control through coercion, however, officers should formulate “innovative and creative solutions to deal with inmate problems and disputes” (Zupan 1991, p. 109). Second, building rapport and credibility with inmates is important. Officers offer positive leadership within the pod not only through their position but also by being fair and treating inmates with respect and dignity. Third, unity among staff and supervisors brings predictability to the jail experience. To foster consistency and alleviate some of the ambiguity officers traditionally experience in their work, “officers in New Generation facilities are expected to enforce all jail rules, no matter how minor or inconsequential” (Zupan 1991, p. 115). It is important for supervisors to support line officers’ disciplinary decisions (Westbrook 1994). Fourth, Zupan (1991, p. 115) observes that “active observation is necessary for officers to gather information about what is occurring in the module, to gauge sources of conflict or tension, and above all, to identify and react to situations before they escalate into serious problems.” The fifth dimension noted by Zupan involves responding to inmate requests. Closely linked with treating inmates with respect, officers should address all inmate requests honestly and directly, even if it is only to say “no.” Sixth, inmate discipline should be fair, consistent, and progressive. Both formal and informal sanctions should be used so that punishment can be tailored to the gravity of the infraction. Further, officers should explain the reason for imposing a punishment and should administer sanctions in a way that impacts only individual offending inmates, not the entire pod. The final critical dimension of officer behavior in new generation units involves “supervising in a clear, well-organized and attention-getting manner” (Zupan 1991, p. 123). Managing the new generation inmate living unit apparently requires more skills, responsibility, and interpersonal engagement from officers than traditional jail arrangements (Zupan and Menke 1988).

In discussions of the new generation philosophy, its two distinguishing features consistently appear together, intimating that they are inextricable. The thinking appears to be that the normalized physical environment helps inmates meet their needs and communicates an expectation of good inmate behavior. With its absence of physical barriers to control inmates, however, this design can only be successful when coupled with a more active, engaged form of inmate management (Gettinger 1984). Likewise, podular architecture and layouts that allow direct line of sight into all areas of the living unit facilitate direct supervision. Zupan and Menke (1991, p. 187) contend that these two features of the new generation jail “must be linked,” though this remains to be assessed empirically. Our study begins to examine this issue. According to the jail’s management staff, direct inmate supervision techniques are used throughout the units, including those constructed with more traditional architecture, allowing consideration of how the physical aspects of new generation philosophy affect staff perceptions.

The Impact of New Generation Jails on Officers

Despite the relative popularity of podular/direct supervision jails and clear expectations that they alter the job of jail officers, only a handful of studies address the influence of podular units and direct supervision of inmates from the guards’ perspective. The earliest assessments were “post occupancy” studies, suggesting that the architectural design was satisfactory. Although they provided no data for

comparison with linear jails, Wener and his colleagues (1985) reported that staff in the Contra Costa County (California) jail were satisfied with the overall appearance, cleanliness, and number of televisions in the new units (Wener et al. 1985). The authors also believed that jail officers approached their job more professionally and that posts within the jail were more desirable in the new generation facility. They reported that staff “no longer saw themselves as mere guards or defined their job as simply to keep criminals locked up” and that “correctional duty is [now] a position of choice” (Wener et al. 1985, p. 88). Farbstein, Liebert, and Sigurdson (1996), who audited three podular/direct supervision jails, also found that officers were more positive than negative about their facilities.

More recent studies have used pre-post designs or have gathered data from officers working in traditional jails to compare with those posted in podular/direct supervision facilities. Such research has examined widely disparate outcomes, often using rather small samples, and the results can be described as equivocal (Wener 2006). Among the evidence for positive impacts, officers in new generation jails tend to see the facility as cleaner, less crowded, having fresher air, and being more temperate (Williams et al. 1999). Some outcomes also suggest that new generation jail officers are more satisfied with their jobs, believe there is greater opportunity for advancement, think the staff has better control of the unit, and that problems with inmate attacks on staff and other inmates are less (Houston et al. 1988; Williams et al. 1999; Zupan 1991; Zupan and Menke 1988). The same research, however, reports that staff are no more satisfied with their jobs, do not feel any safer, are no less stressed, and are no different from staff in linear jails on several dimensions of perceived job enrichment (Houston et al. 1988; Williams et al. 1999; Zupan 1991; Zupan and Menke 1988).

The two most rigorous, conceptually grounded, and thorough assessments of new generation design impacts on jail staff were conducted by Zupan (1991) and Zupan and Menke (1988). Zupan and Menke (1988) explored the job enrichment capacity of moving from a traditional to a podular/direct supervision jail using data from staff at one facility six months before and six months after it made such a transition. Zupan (1991) followed up this effort with a similar comparative survey of officers at four podular/direct supervision jails and three linear jails. Using bivariate analyses, the two studies report largely inconsistent results. Zupan and Menke (1988) found improved job enrichment—revealed by a “motivating potential” score—and greater job satisfaction on five dimensions—character of work, level of pay, quality of supervision, people on the job, and overall satisfaction - but not opportunities for promotion. In contrast, only character of work, level of pay, and opportunities for promotion were perceived to be greater among new generation than traditional jail officers in Zupan’s (1991) comparative analysis. In short, these studies follow the pattern evident in the entire body of work in this area: equivocal results.

Occupational Attitudes: Expectations About New Generation Jail Effects

Researchers have long studied the attitudes of correctional employees. As a central component of such research, several dimensions have been utilized as both independent and dependent variables. Some of the most studied attitudes are related directly to the correctional occupational environment including, but not limited to, perceptions of dangerousness (e.g., Cullen et al. 1985; Triplett et al. 1996; Van Voorhis et al. 1991),

work group cohesion (e.g., Finn 1999; Marston 1993; Paoline et al. 2006), instrumental communication (e.g., Lambert et al. 2002, 2006), job satisfaction (e.g., Byrd et al. 2000; Camp 1994; Cullen et al. 1989), job stress (e.g., Cullen et al. 1985; Grossi et al. 1996; Stohr et al. 1994), routinization (e.g., Brief et al. 1976; Lambert 2004), autonomy (e.g., Lambert 2004; Lambert et al. 2006; Wright et al. 1997), role ambiguity (e.g., Lambert et al. 2005; Poole and Regoli 1980; Triplett et al. 1996), and job involvement (e.g., Robinson et al. 1993, 1996, 1997). What has yet to be part of empirical inquires is the extent to which these attitudes might vary as a function of one's facility assignment (i.e., traditional versus new generation). We suggest there are good reasons to believe that the unique aspects of working in a new generation jail matter.

Based on consideration of the physical structures and inmate management demands of traditional versus new generation jails, we expect the following for staff working in these types of facilities. Role ambiguity will be lower among direct supervision staff. The new generation directive to enforce all rules, all the time should make it more clear what officers are to be doing as they supervise inmates. We also expect improved communication and work group cohesion. Several authors have noted the importance of interpersonal communication skills for successfully supervising inmates in new generation jails. And, as noted above, officers must present a unified front, which could be expected to build cohesion among jail staff. The need for innovation in dealing with inmate conflicts and problems leads us to predict that new generation jail officers will see their job as less routine and as offering more opportunity for autonomous decision making than traditional jail officers. We also anticipate that officers in podular/direct supervision units will be more personally invested in their work and will experience greater job satisfaction.

Finally, although the influence of a new generation approach is unclear, we also investigate possible differences between officers' perceptions of stress and dangerousness. On the one hand, the absence of physical barriers to separate inmates from staff may increase concerns about safety among officers. On the other hand, proponents of the new generation design contend that direct supervision, when implemented fully, can substantially reduce the risk of assaults and other major infractions (Tartaro 2002a; Wener 2005; Zupan 1991). We therefore test the hypothesis that new generation jail officers will be less stressed and will perceive their job as less dangerous than those working in a traditional facility.

Methodology

Research Site and Sample

The data for the current study were collected from the staff working in the detention facilities of the Orange County Corrections Department (OCCD), a large, county jail complex located in Orlando, Florida. The county contains 1 major city and 10 other municipalities, all of which exclusively use the county jail for local detention needs. The jail employs approximately 1,500 paid staff and typically houses in excess of 4,000 inmates. Ordered according to the inmate average daily population, the jail was among the fifteen largest jails in the country at the time data for this project were collected (Beck et al. 2002). In addition to intake areas and specialized function

space (e.g., work release, health services), inmates are housed in five separate facilities that are contained on a single campus. Four of these facilities are podular/direct supervision units. In our analyses below, the data from these facilities are combined, and we refer to them collectively as “new generation” units. The remaining facility, which we refer to as “traditional” is a more traditional architectural style, combining linear and podular/remote supervision areas.

This jail complex first opened a new generation unit in 1988, and considerable attention was devoted to the innovative inmate management style it demanded for the first few years thereafter. Currently, however, the term “direct supervision” is seldom used because this style of managing inmates has permeated the culture of the department and it is simply an expected way of doing correctional work in this jurisdiction. That is, regardless of whether officers are working in a podular/direct supervision, podular/remote supervision, or linear/intermittent supervision facility, the inmate management style is the same. Although we did not collect data directly on officers’ management styles, the jail’s top administrative staff contend that all officers are trained and expected to always maintain control of the living unit, to control inmates through interpersonal communication rather than force or coercion, to treat inmates with respect (and to demand respect in return), to be fair and consistent, and so on. The differences in physical design, however, create unique situations. In the podular/direct supervision areas (new generation units) officers have greater opportunities for mingling, contact, and proactive involvement with inmates.

The original data collection effort was conducted in the fall of 2001 under the direction of an ad hoc oversight commission, which was interested in exploring concerns and issues among the jail’s staff. To accomplish this task, the researchers first conducted a series of focus groups designed to understand more fully those problems that might be unique to OCCD employees. Research staff conducted seven two-hour focus groups, with 48 OCCD employees from different organizational levels and facilities, during a ten-day period. Findings from the OCCD focus groups assisted in the development of a questionnaire that would be administered to staff at all levels within the department.

During five consecutive days in the fall of 2001, the staff from the nine separate facilities of the OCCD were surveyed. The staff were informed that the survey was completely voluntary in nature and the responses would be anonymous. With the consent of the jail director, jail personnel received two hours of overtime for participating in the survey. The administration of the survey took place across each of the three primary shifts (i.e., 6:00 A.M.–5:30 P.M., 3:00 P.M.–2:30 A.M., and 7:00 P.M.–6:30 A.M.), and staff were afforded the opportunity to take part in any of the survey times even if it was not their assigned shift or work day. There were approximately 1500 paid employees at the facility during the week the survey was administered, and 1062 staff members participated in the survey, which resulted in a response rate of 70 percent.

Respondents represented all areas of the correctional facility, such as correctional officers, case managers, medical staff, industry staff, food service workers, and so on. Moreover, the respondents represented various administrative levels of the correctional facility, from line staff to supervisors and managers. In addition, respondents were assigned to various facilities such as central booking, administration, community corrections, work release, traditional units, new generation units, and other areas.

Because we are interested only in line officers (i.e., correctional officers) who were posted in either a traditional or new generation living unit, 385 respondents are included in the present analysis.

Operationalization of Independent Variables

The central independent variable of interest is the type of facility in which an officer is posted. In the survey, each respondent was asked to report to which facility he or she was assigned. Responses were later dichotomized to indicate whether staff were working in a traditional (n=202) versus a new generation (n=183) living unit.

Prior research has shown that correctional officers' views of their work environment may be related to several institutional and individual attributes (Philiber 1987). In light of these findings, we include several variables to be used as controls in examining the relationship between work perceptions and working in a new generation versus traditional jail unit. A 3-item index measured overall morale based on the extent to which the officer felt respect, cohesiveness, and trust from other occupational members, and a 5-item index assessed the respondents' perceptions about promotional opportunities within the department (Items used to operationalize these work climate variables are available from the authors on request). In addition to these work climate variables, individual demographics of the officers included sex, age, race, and education level. Work experience was measured as the total number of years the respondent had worked in corrections.

Operationalization of Dependent Variables

As noted above, we anticipated that the type of facility would have an influence on several dimensions of jail officers' perceptions of the work environment. Multiple-item indices were created to assess officers' perceptions of each dimension. For each of the individual items, the respondents answered on a 5-point scale. Where necessary, responses were reverse-coded so that in each case, higher index scores indicate more of the concept being measured. A list of each of the survey items that were used to form the additive indices is provided in the [Appendix](#).

Work Group Cohesion was measured using three items and indicated the degree to which correctional officers are personally connected to peers in their immediate work group. For example, one item in the index asked respondents to rate "to what extent do the people in your work group take a personal interest in you?"

The index for Instrumental Communication measured the degree to which respondents felt informed about central components of the job such as what tasks and activities are to be completed and what rules and regulations govern job performance. Five items made up the index, including one that asked, "On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1=not informed at all and 5=very well informed, how well informed are you about...what is most important about the job?"

Job Satisfaction, which was measured with five items, was assessed as the respondent's overall satisfaction with his or her current position. The index covered dimensions of enthusiasm, boredom, comparison with other workers, and enjoyment using items adapted from Brayfield and Rothe's (1951) job satisfaction index such as "I am fairly well satisfied with my job" and "Most days I am enthusiastic about my

job.” By assessing global satisfaction, we maintained as distinct and separate concepts some facets, such as expectations about promotion and communication with work peers, that other researchers have combined into indicators of job satisfaction (see, for example, Williams et al. 1999; Zupan 1991).

The index of Autonomy considered the respondents’ belief that their job allows them freedom, discretion in their day-to-day activities, and input into decisions that affect their work. Four items made up the index, including “how much freedom do you have as to how to do your job?”

Job Involvement measured the degree of identification with one’s occupation. Four items assessed this personal salience of jail work. For example, respondents’ were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statement, “I am very much involved personally in my job.”

Dangerousness is a particularly salient aspect of correctional work (Cullen et al. 1985; Lombardo 1981). Jail officers routinely work with a wide variety of inmates, and there is always some degree of concern in correctional work that inmates may become violent toward officers or officers may need to intervene in a fight between inmates (Bowker 1980; Conover 2000). An index of perceived dangerousness was created from five items previously used by Cullen et al. (1985), including one that asked the respondents to agree or disagree that “in my job, a person stands a good chance of getting hurt.”

Some previous research has treated job-related stress as made up of role ambiguity, perceptions of dangerousness, and other dimensions (see, for example, Lambert et al. 2004). In the current study, a separate index was developed for Job Stress, operationalizing feelings of stress independently from other perceptions of the work environment. The focus of the scale was on psychological anxiety generated specifically from working in the jail (cf. Cullen et al. 1985). Respondents were asked to agree or disagree that “when I’m at work I often feel tense or uptight” and five other items.

Routinization, a four-item index, measured the degree to which officers perceived their job as uncreative and monotonous. For example, one item asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed that “My job requires that I do the same things over and over again.”

The final index, Role Ambiguity, measured the respondents’ feelings of uncertainty about their work, especially what rules and regulations are to be followed. The six items that made up the index included, “I know exactly what is expected of me” and “the rules that we’re supposed to follow never seem to be very clear” (reverse coded).

Results

Table 1 shows the demographic and other characteristics of the officers that will later be used to explore variations in work perceptions. As shown, about half of the respondents worked in a traditional unit, half in one of the new generation facilities. A majority of the officers were nonwhite, male, and had completed some college. Experience varied widely, from one month to 35 years working in corrections. The average age of the participants was in the mid to upper thirties, and on average their morale was somewhat low, but they were neither highly positive nor negative about promotional prospects.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of explanatory variables (N=385)

Variable	Description	MIN	MAX	MEAN	SD
Independent Facility	0=Traditional; 1=New Generation	0.00	1.00	.48	.50
Controls					
Race	0=Non-White; 1=White	0.00	1.00	.37	.48
Gender	0=Female; 1=Male	0.00	1.00	.66	.47
Experience	Total Years of Experience	.08	35.00	9.39	6.75
Age	1=Less than 25; 4=35–39 years 2=25–29 years; 5=40–44 years 3=30–34 years; 6=45–49 years 7=50+ years	1.00	7.00	4.12	1.65
Education	1= \leq High School 2=Some College 3=BS/BA Degree & Higher	0.00	1.00	.24	.43
Perceived Promotional Opportunity	5 Items; $\alpha=.81$	5.00	25.00	15.65	4.73
Morale	3 Items; $\alpha=.66$	3.00	13.00	6.96	2.63

Table 2 lists the indices, the number of items that make up each index, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient, and overall level of officers' feelings toward their work. The generally accepted cut-off point for alpha scores is .60 (Gronlund 1981), and all but one index reached this threshold (i.e., dangerousness), while two others just met this requirement (i.e., job involvement and routinization). Because these indices have a rather long research tradition in corrections, and other fields, we were reluctant to exclude individual items. We did find, in utilizing another common statistical technique for scale/index construction (i.e., factor analysis), that each of the three indices measured a single factor (i.e., eigenvalues were above the accepted level of 1.0 and each individual item loaded above the .30 threshold requirement) (Gorsuch 1983). Because of variations in the number of items included in each index, the mean scores shown in the table are not directly comparable. Taking the number of items in each index into account, however, the highest score was for perceived Dangerousness. On average, the officers agreed somewhat that they risked physical assault in their job. On a more positive note, officers also expressed a fair amount of Work Group Cohesion, Instrumental Communication, and Job Satisfac-

Table 2 Descriptive statistics of correctional officer work perception indices (N=385)

Index	Description	MIN	MAX	Mean	SD	H
Work Group Cohesion	3 Items; $\alpha=.81$	3	15	10.07	2.99	+
Instrumental Communication	5 Items; $\alpha=.87$	5	25	15.99	4.16	+
Job Satisfaction	5 Items; $\alpha=.81$	5	15	15.79	4.91	+
Autonomy	4 Items; $\alpha=.86$	4	20	11.06	3.36	+
Job Involvement	4 Items; $\alpha=.61$	4	19	9.00	3.25	+
Dangerousness	5 Items; $\alpha=.53$	10	25	20.98	3.20	-
Job Stress	6 Items; $\alpha=.78$	7	30	18.77	5.25	-
Routinization	4 Items; $\alpha=.63$	5	20	12.57	3.43	-
Role Ambiguity	6 Items; $\alpha=.71$	6	29	15.78	4.30	-

α represents Cronbach's alpha. "H" denotes the hypothesized direction of relationship between the officers' work perception and being posted in a new generation jail facility.

tion. For all of these indices, the mean scores fall somewhere between the middle score and a positive response. Mean responses for Job Stress, Routinization, and Autonomy show middling perceptions. Finally, Role Ambiguity was somewhat low but so were feelings of Job Involvement.

In Table 3, we turn our attention to assessing the predictors of officers' work perceptions. As shown in the table, race, gender, and education had few effects on feelings about jail work. Nonwhites experienced more job involvement, more educated officers believed their role was more ambiguous, and female officers felt greater autonomy but were less concerned about the dangerousness of their work environment. For all other outcomes, however, these variables were not significant. Correctional experience and age were more salient to work perceptions. In each case where experience was significant, officers with a longer history of involvement in corrections work were less positive. They tended to perceive their work as more routine, less satisfying, and more stressful. Their satisfaction with communication levels and cohesion with coworkers also were lower. In contrast, age had almost uniformly positive effects on work perceptions. The only exception was perceived dangerousness, which was not influenced by respondent's age. Feelings of work group cohesion, instrumental communication, autonomy, and job involvement were higher for older officers. These officers also tended to be more satisfied with their jobs, experience less job stress, feel that their role was less ambiguous, and perceive their job as less routine.

Theoretically, the most salient predictor variable for the current study was Facility, and it shows some unanticipated results. First, working in a new generation versus a traditional facility was related to only 3 of the 9 work perceptions examined. Facility maintained no significant relationship with perceptions of Instrumental Communication, Work Group Cohesion, Job Satisfaction, Job Involvement, Job Stress, or Routinization. Second, where Facility was significant, the direction of influence was opposite what was hypothesized. Rather than feeling safer, more certain about the expectations of job performance, and more freedom to exercise discretion in supervising inmates, the new generation jail officers perceived their jobs as more dangerous, more ambiguous, and characterized by less autonomy.

The final two explanatory variables included in the analyses—perceived promotional opportunities and morale—maintained the strongest and most consistent effects on jail officers' work perceptions. When officers believed that the possibility of advancement was available and could be achieved by demonstrating high quality job performance, they tended to view other aspects of jail work positively as well. Thus, Perceived Promotional Opportunity was positively related to Work Group Cohesion, Instrumental Communication, Job Satisfaction, Autonomy, and Job Involvement, and it was negatively associated with Job Stress, Routinization, and Role Ambiguity. Similarly, high Morale influenced all of these perceptions in the same directions and also led to lower perceptions of Dangerousness.

Discussion

Over the past three decades the new generation philosophy has emerged as a significant contribution to the design and operation of jails. Early critics may not

Table 3 OLS standardized regression coefficients representing estimated effects of independent variables on dependent variables

Variable	Work Group Cohesion	Instrumental Communication	Job Satisfaction	Autonomy	Job Involvement	Dangerousness	Job Stress	Routinization	Role Ambiguity
Facility	-.06 (.32)	-.03 (.45)	-.02 (.50)	-.12* (.33)	-.07 (.37)	.13* (.35)	.09 (.52)	.00 (.38)	.11* (.44)
Race	-.01 (.34)	.01 (.47)	.06 (.53)	.04 (.35)	-.11* (.39)	.01 (.37)	.01 (.55)	-.02 (.40)	.04 (.46)
Gender	.05 (.36)	-.06 (.49)	-.03 (.56)	-.11* (.37)	.04 (.41)	.17** (.39)	-.01 (.58)	.04 (.42)	.06 (.49)
Experience	-.15* (.03)	-.21** (.16)	-.12* (.04)	-.11 (.03)	-.09 (.03)	-.02 (.03)	.20** (.05)	.15* (.03)	-.01 (.04)
Age	.17* (.12)	.21** (.16)	.25** (.18)	.24** (.12)	.20* (.13)	.01 (.13)	-.14* (.19)	-.28** (.14)	-.21** (.16)
Education ^a									
Some College	-.05 (.39)	-.01 (.54)	.03 (.61)	-.01 (.40)	.09 (.45)	-.01 (.43)	-.04 (.63)	.06 (.46)	.15* (.54)
BS/BA & Higher	-.02 (.57)	-.02 (.78)	-.10 (.87)	.06 (.57)	-.02 (.64)	.00 (.61)	-.02 (.90)	.05 (.65)	.16** (.76)
Perceived Promotional Opportunity	.18** (.04)	.26** (.05)	.40** (.06)	.37** (.04)	.26** (.04)	-.05 (.04)	-.38** (.06)	-.27** (.04)	-.34** (.05)
Morale	.23** (.07)	.26** (.09)	.22** (.10)	.28** (.07)	.15** (.07)	-.24** (.07)	-.24** (.11)	-.13* (.08)	-.26** (.09)
N	306	300	300	306	295	303	301	301	299
R ²	.15	.23	.31	.31	.15	.10	.31	.16	.26

Standard errors of coefficient estimates shown in parentheses. ^a High school or less is comparison category.

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$

have foreseen this development as they raised concerns about whether new generation facilities could safely handle the myriad and sometimes seriously criminal people who are confined in local detention facilities (Nelson and O'Toole 1983; Wener 2005; Zupan 1991). With the benefit of hindsight, however, few observers today would likely be surprised at how broadly this innovation has been embraced. The new generation ideal promises many benefits for inmates, jail staff members, and institutions, and early evaluations in particular suggested that these promises were being kept (Wener 2006). The present study sought to add to the existing literature on the impact of new generation jails. It was unique in several ways. First, data were collected on officers' perceptions of their work environment from staff employed at a single institution, at the same time. Furthermore, this institution had been using podular/direct supervision facilities continuously for more than a decade before data were collected, and it had adopted direct supervision inmate management techniques throughout all housing areas of the jail complex. Thus, our study allowed the exploration of how new generation inmate management affects officers under podular versus more traditional architecture. Finally, the dimensions of work perceptions we examined have a history of being particularly salient in correctional contexts.

Largely, our study produced null results. That is, for most of the dependent variables we examined, there were no significant differences between the perceptions of officers posted in new generation versus traditional facilities. Despite expectations drawn from the existing literature and a consideration of how direct supervision might alter the demands of working in a jail, new generation officers were no more satisfied with their jobs, did not feel any greater sense of personal involvement in their work, were not less stressed, did not feel more connected to their coworkers, did not believe communication was improved, and were just as likely to see their jobs as monotonous and routine as officers working in the more traditional facility.

Wener (2006) has proposed that podular/direct supervision may be a "mixed blessing" for correctional officers (p. 404). On the one hand, their jobs may be enriched in some ways. Working in a new generation institution may be more professional and could be more rewarding. On the other hand, the work is more demanding, and the absence of familiar physical barriers to separate officers from inmates may raise anxieties. Although our results revealed no positive benefits of working in a new generation unit, we did find that officers posted in these facilities perceived a greater threat to their physical safety than officers who were posted in the traditional facility where at least one barrier—a locked steel door or heavy Plexiglas—always stood between them and the inmates. The mix of pros and cons for staff in new generation jails may help to explain not only our failure to uncover evidence of anticipated benefits but also the equivocal findings throughout the literature.

In any interpretation of our results, it is important to keep in mind that the jail system we examined has a relatively long history of podular/direct supervision and has adopted direct supervision inmate management techniques even in the traditional jail unit. Thus, we have assessed something somewhat different from past studies. We are aware of no prior investigations that have disengaged the architecture and inmate management components of the new generation philosophy. Instead, past studies have compared ostensibly fully traditional units—linear or dormitory architecture and remote or intermittent surveillance—with separate units or ones that have made a wholesale shift to new generation design and practice—podular architecture and direct inmate

supervision. A systematic assessment of the separate effects of the physical design and inmate management aspects of new generation thinking would be enlightening. While few jails are probably operating linear/direct supervision or podular/intermittent surveillance facilities as pure types, it would be useful to begin thinking of new generation efforts as more of a continuum, rather than dichotomizing jails as traditional or new generation.

The potential insight to be gained from this approach is suggested by Tartaro's (2006) recent findings regarding the implementation of the new generation philosophy in 150 direct supervision jails. Her analyses revealed considerable variation in the extent to which key elements of the philosophy were borne out in practice, including officer training, facility management structure, and physical design features (also see Tartaro 2002a). Given that we did not measure officers' inmate management styles directly, our study does more to raise questions than provide answers about how direct supervision may be borne out in different contexts. Even so, it suggests that a potentially fruitful line of research would seek to correlate a number of inmate, staff, and facility outcome measures with systematic assessments of the extent to which jails have implemented the physical design elements and the inmate management aspects of the new generation philosophy.

In the meantime, some policy implications can be drawn from the single jurisdiction studied here. One way of interpreting our results is that they showed new generation units did not improve officers' work perceptions. It is equally true to say that officers who were posted in the traditional unit and who were expected and trained to use direct supervision techniques fared no worse than those in podular units. Thus, our results suggest that new generation inmate management (i.e., direct supervision) may be used regardless of the architectural design of the facility with no ill effects on staff. Jails where officers merely provide surveillance because they are operating a more traditional physical plant may be able to realize some of the benefits of direct supervision for inmates without detrimental effects on officers' perceptions of their work. Any efforts to implement direct supervision in traditional jails, of course, should be undertaken carefully. Such a transition would need to attend to how officers are supervised (Westbrook 1994) and perhaps the overall organizational climate of the jail (Stohr et al. 1994). Still, adherence to the principles of direct supervision offers the possibility of battling some of the long-standing challenges to a humane jail environment (Zupan 1991; also see Fishman 1923).

Appendix

Survey Item Measures

Work Group Cohesion

1. To what extent are the people in your immediate group friendly? (response: 1=not friendly at all, 2=somewhat unfriendly, 3=uncertain, 4=somewhat friendly, 5=very friendly)
2. To what extent do the people in your work group take a personal interest in you? (response: 1=not interested at all, 2=somewhat uninterested, 3=uncertain, 4=somewhat interested, 5=very interested)

3. To what extent do you look forward to being with people in your work group each day? (response: 1=do not look forward to being with them, 2=somewhat do not look forward to being with them, 3=uncertain, 4=somewhat look forward to being with them, 5=very much look forward to being with them)

Instrumental Communication

1. How well informed are you regarding: What is to be done?
2. How well informed are you regarding: What is most important about the job?
3. How well informed are you regarding: How the equipment is used?
4. How well informed are you regarding: Rules and regulations?
5. How well informed are you regarding: What you need to know to do the job correctly, including computer software? (response for all items: 1=not informed at all, 2=informed very little, 3=informed somewhat, 4=informed, 5=very well informed)

Job Satisfaction

1. I like my job better than the average worker (correctional officer) does.
2. I am seldom bored with my job.
3. Most days I am enthusiastic about my job.
4. I feel fairly well satisfied with my job.
5. I find real enjoyment in my job. (response for all items 1=*strongly disagree*, 2=*disagree somewhat*, 3=*uncertain*, 4=*agree somewhat*, 5=*strongly agree*)

Autonomy

1. How much freedom do you have as to how to do your job?
2. How much does your job allow you to make decisions on your own?
3. How much does your job allow you to take part in making decisions that affect you?
4. How much say do you have over what happens on your job? (response for all items 1=*none at all*, 2=*very little*, 3=*some*, 4=*a lot*, 5=*a great deal*)

Job Involvement

1. I live, eat, and breathe my job.
2. The major satisfaction in my life comes from my job.
3. I am very much involved personally in my work.
4. The most important things that happen to me involve my work. (response for all items 1=*strongly disagree*, 2=*disagree somewhat*, 3=*uncertain*, 4=*agree somewhat*, 5=*strongly agree*)

Dangerousness

1. In my job, a person stands a good chance of getting hurt.
2. There is really not much chance of getting hurt in my job (reverse coded).
3. I work in a dangerous job.
4. A lot of people I work with get physically injured in the line of duty.
5. My job is a lot more dangerous than other kinds of jobs. (response for all items 1=*strongly disagree*, 2=*disagree somewhat*, 3=*uncertain*, 4=*agree somewhat*, 5=*strongly agree*)

Job Stress

1. When I'm at work I often feel tense or uptight.
2. A lot of time my job makes me very frustrated or angry.
3. I am usually calm and at ease when I'm working (reverse coded).
4. Most of the time when I'm at work I don't feel that I have much to worry about (reverse coded).
5. I am usually under a lot of pressure when I am at work.
6. There are a lot of aspects of my job that make me upset. (response for all items 1=*strongly disagree*, 2=*disagree somewhat*, 3=*uncertain*, 4=*agree somewhat*, 5=*strongly agree*)

Routinization

1. My job requires that I do the same things over and over again.
2. My job requires that I keep learning new things (reverse coded).
3. My job requires me to be very creative (reverse coded).
4. I get to do a number of different things on my job (reverse coded). (response for all items 1=*strongly disagree*, 2=*disagree somewhat*, 3=*uncertain*, 4=*agree somewhat*, 5=*strongly agree*)

Role Ambiguity

1. The rules that we're supposed to follow never seem to be very clear.
2. The rules and regulations are clear enough here that I know specifically what I can and cannot do on my job (reverse coded).
3. I know that I have divided my time properly (reverse coded)
4. I feel certain how much authority I have (reverse coded).
5. I know what my responsibilities are (reverse coded).
6. I know what is exactly expected of me (reverse coded). (response for all items 1=*strongly disagree*, 2=*disagree somewhat*, 3=*uncertain*, 4=*agree somewhat*, 5=*strongly agree*)

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