IV. Prison organization and function

CHARACTERISTICS OF CLIENT-ORIENTED WORK

In many occupations in the field of institutional services or care, a remarkable proportion of the work load and stress is due to the cooperation of the employees with the object population. Therefore the recognition of only the relations among co-workers and between subordinates and their superiors is not sufficient in the evaluation of stress related to interindividual relations in service occupations.

In the evaluation of the interindividual relations between the employee and the client, attention must be paid to both the number and quality of the contacts. The differences in these aspects are remarkable between individuals in various occupations and tasks. The number of contacts is rather easily definable by the frequency of situations including interaction.

To aid the analysis of the quality of the interaction, an attempt to determine the basic dimensions applicable to the various types of client-oriented work follows (fig 4). The following dimensions are suggested: the selected or unselected character of the object population compared to the general population and the duration, either short- or long-term, of the contact with the object population. A third dimension is added to dichotomize the work among unselected object populations, ie, the variable noncritical versus critical nature of the situations in which the work is usually done.

Various occupational fields are located in the figure according to these characteristics. It is naturally obvious that these types of structures are crude, and many important characteristics of work specific to a certain field of work remain outside this model.

In client-oriented work the interrelations with other people are generally considered as one of the most central aspects producing job satisfaction. However, paradoxically, these relations are also the sources of occupational stress. It is thus important to view client relations in work from the point of view of both qualitative and quantitative mental load and ensuing stress.

In work with temporary contacts of short duration a common problem is periodic or continuous quantitative overload. For example, during daily rush peaks the employees in various service occupations are in a constant interrelation with the clients. The work pace becomes almost comparable to a forced speed, as it is determined by other people (3, 266). The feedback from clients, which is often the most common type of feedback in service work, is at these times the most negative (147). The qualitative load, embedded in the work content, is usually less in these types of tasks. In the model in fig 4 the upper left square presents these jobs. Qualitative work load increases in client-oriented work even if it is of short duration and done among the general population in critical situations, in which a part of the short-term client-oriented work is generally done. The same could be said about the work done during a short-term contact with selected people, often with personal problems (upper right square).

Long-term contacts are typical of work in the field of education and in health and social care (lower left square). In these intensive relations of long duration there is often a risk of qualitative work overload. Especially those occupational groups which work in continuous contact with patients are subject to this stressor, as they see the suffering of the patients closely and cannot withdraw to formal, administrative tasks or to the remote role of a specialist (84). Responsibility for other people and the often dependent role of the object population is another important aspect of these jobs.

Work demands related to contacts with the clients are especially prominent in the work done among mentally and/or socially deviating people (lower right square). In work among deviating people a risk of personal security in relation to the clients is often exaggerated. This type of work is mostly done in various institutions in which the inmates are often kept against their will, a factor causing conflicts between the clients and the employees with controversial goals.

Human communication is a basic component in client-oriented work. This communication is one of the possible sources of stress in prison work. A schematic presentation of the mechanism of human communication is given in fig 5. The figure illustrates the components of human communication which may be critical to the development of interpersonal stress.

The behavioral output of one person is the information and stimulus for another individual. The perception and cognitive evaluation of the information or the input

OBJECT POPULATION

DURATION OF CONTACT	Unselected		Selected
	non-critical situation	critical situation	
short-term, superficial	sales-persons traffic ambulatory health care hair-dressing bank	fireman police (part) ambulance service ambulatory medical care	police (part) employment service
long-term, intensive	army (during peace) education nursing	army (during war) intensive care	care of prisoners psychiatric care corrective education care of chronically disabled

Fig 4. Schematic representation of service occupations according to three basic determinants of work (object population of work, type of service situation, and duration of contact).

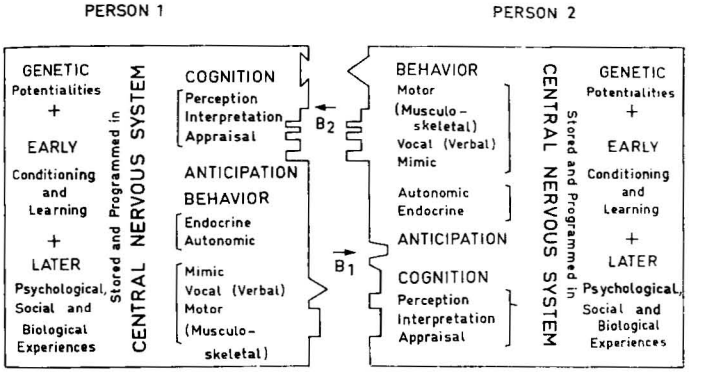

Fig 5. Model of human communication. A slightly modified version of Groen & Bastiaans' model (92).

into the central nervous system is the first function of the other individual. This input gives rise to changes inside the organism ("internalized behavior") and externally directed behavior. Human contact thus includes continuous communicative interchange. The behavior of other individuals in a person's environment continuously stimulates, inhibits, or modifies his own behavior. Experience acquired of the behavior of others modifies one's anticipation of the others' future behavior.

GENERAL GOALS OF PRISONS

The main function of the prison administration is to execute imprisonments. The purposes of imprisonment have been defined as a special preventive effect and a general preventive effect. The first refers to the effect of the imprisonment on a single prisoner, which (hopefully) leads him to abandon his criminal behavior after release from the institution. The general preventive function refers to all such effects on society that, either through deterring function or otherwise, prevent its members from criminal behavior (10). On this basis prisons have the following practical goals: (i) the punishment of offenders, (ii) the safeguarding of society through the isolation of criminals, and (iii) the provision of rehabilitative environments where remedial activities can be attempted.

The relative importance of the aforementioned functions is usually not defined. The cure and socialization of the offenders has not proved successful in prisons. If the social situation of a person is as difficult after release from the institution as it was before, it is sometimes considered as just the same whatever happened in the institution (196). The prisons have largely abandoned the ideology of cure due to the lack of success with socialization (25, 117, 263).

PRISONS AS INSTITUTIONS

Prisons as coercive total institutions

The goals of a prison predetermine that the people under its control, the prisoners, are there against their will. As the prison organization often uses physical means of control (mainly isolation), it can be considered a coercive organization.

In some other organizations different means of influencing the object population are used. In so-called profit organizations (eg, commercial) mainly material rewards (mostly salary) are used as a means of affecting the members. In those organizations an individual gets material profit from his function. In normative organizations, eg, religious and political associations, symbolic rewards are used. Such rewards can be, eg, the acceptance by and appreciation of the other members. Through these rewards an individual can receive pleasure for his behavior (psychological and social rewards).

Varying means of effect are often used for different members, which means that the organizations are not always one of the pure types just described. In the prison coercive power is applied on the prisoners generally, while in regard to the personnel mostly material means of effect are used; they receive a certain salary and perhaps other material profits (eg, lodging) for their work. The less an organization applies coercive means the better possibilities it usually has to affect the identification of its members with its goals (67).

Prisons are typical examples of the total institutions found necessary by all societies for, eg, controlling the dangerous members of society, caring for the disabled, or protecting the country against enemies. The prisons represent total institutions with a social control policy. A primary characteristic of total institutions is that they take care of all the functions in the life of their members. All the activities take place in the same environment and under the same leadership, which differs greatly in its role and position from the inhabitants of the institution. The same types of demands are put on each of the members, and all the daily activities are strictly planned beforehand (80, 88). The prison mostly regulates the life and functions of the prisoners, of course, although the staff is also exposed to the effects of the institution. The institution often controls the behavior of its inhabitants as strictly as possible and minimizes

the communication between the institution and society (256).

Typical of all total institutions is a conflict and division between the staff and the inhabitants. This difference is much smaller in institutions that do not act as control policy executors. The inhabitants in such institutions are not norm breakers, but are usually unable to take care of themselves. Hospitals or homes for old people and for the mentally retarded represent this type of institution.

Hierarchy and power

The organization of total institutions is generally hierarchical. A rather small group of directors has the administrative power and the technical expertise. The organizations resemble a pyramid in which the lower groups of staff are great in number.

The lower level personnel does not have any considerable power in the hierarchy. Instead it is in daily contact with the people enclosed in the institution and is responsible for carrying out the orders of the directors. This method of decision making makes it possible to reach decisions quickly when necessary. At the same time, it insures that the same principles of operation can at best be followed in making decisions on different matters.

In addition to the official hierarchy an unofficial organization often develops in total institutions. The power in these systems falls to the leaders elected by the coworkers on the basis of the personal characteristics of the individuals.

The basis of unofficial power hierarchies in total institutions evolves from the lack of applicable practical rules for each situation. Thus there have to be more or less accepted routines according to which the work can be done.

There is also another unofficial system in prisons, that of the prisoners (67, 165). The daily practice in total institutions is defined by the continuous relationship of the official and the unofficial organizations.

Roles of prison staff

Officially the prison staff has to be objective and neutral. Galtung (79) describes the roles of the prison guards by five basic principles, which can be generalized also to cover other occupational roles in prisons. According to Galtung the behavior of a guard has to be:

(a) universal, taking into account all the objective aspects of evaluating prisoners and avoiding personal sympathies and antipathies;
(b) behavior-oriented, considering the overt behavior of the prisoner and not making any inferences as to the basis of a hypothetical "basic nature" of the prisoner;
(c) specific, referring only to those characteristics of the prisoners which are relevant in the prison;
(d) neutral, not taking any actions in an aggressive condition but thinking things through first;
(e) collectivistic, acting for the benefit of the prisoner and not his own.

The idealistic role does not actualize itself very often in practice. According to Galtung the role of the prison guard has a tendency to change in a more unofficial direction in respect to each of the aforementioned principles.

Another type of deviation from the official role is a "custodial attitude." The custodial attitude is characterized by a strengthened tendency to maintain discipline and stress the punishment function of the prison (258). Typical of a custodial staff member is also a pessimistic view in regard to the possibilities of a prisoner to manage outside the prison.

The three types of roles of prison staff members, custodial, official and unofficial, are not usually mutually exclusive. In practice pure types are rare. Instead, most members of a prison staff apply varying principles depending on the situation.

Central feature of work — Interpersonal relation

The general atmosphere in the prisons is usually negative. Behind this is the unsuccess, both on the individual and the social level, which has lead to criminal behavior and imprisonment. Prison personnel meet the negative phenomena of society and their effects on the individuals constantly in their work.

Prison staff members also receive feedback from their work generally in a negative form; the staff meets again only those prisoners who have not managed outside the prison and thus return (30).

Prisons, like many other organizations of social and health care, deal with multiproblem people. The unwilling stay of the prisoners in the institution and the coercive actions of the organization easily create conflicts between the personnel and the prisoners. Situations are often anger provoking (198) and therefore jeopardize the possibilities to set common goals for working together. A wide social distance separates the staff from the prisoners. This situation is often even strengthened by various rules restricting communication. Up to now prisoners have had very little possibility to affect solutions concerning themselves. The wide social distance between the different groups in prison easily leads to a situation in which a member from the other group is seen as a hostile stereotype (165).

Conflicts in interpersonal relations with the prisoners are among the most important problems in the work of prison personnel. The various reactions to these conflicts have been classified as collective and individual (224). The labor unions usually accomplish the collective reactions. Individual ways of handling the situation, especially by the guards, have been described by Rosenstock (224) as follows:

1. A stand towards the prisoner such as he deserves punishment, and no corrections are necessary in his position. A guard adopting this attitude remains in a secondary relation with the prisoner.

2. "I only do my job." The guard considers society responsible for condemning the prisoners, and he himself only fulfills his responsibility to his work. This stand also leads to a secondary relationship with the prisoners.

3. "I do not want to be cheated." A guard may overemphasize the untrustworthiness or dangerousness of the prisoners and stress the importance of being continuously on one's guard.

4. Apathy, or work so routinized that, eg, closing a prisoner in his cell does not cause any problems. The guard stops thinking too deeply about the situation.

5. Role modification. A guard may superficially accept his official role but act in practice in a different way.

6. Adoption of the "good Samaritan" role. A guard that adopts this role establishes a continuous primary relationship with the prisoner and tries to help him. This attitude is not very successful if one wants to save oneself from mental pressure, as the results of the work remain quite unimpressive.

7. Psychosomatic reactions. If no way can be found to protect oneself on an attitudinal or behavioral level, the result may be the development of various symptoms and illnesses or the use of medicines.

8. Withdrawal. One solution to the problem situation is sometimes also withdrawal from one's role, either into another place of work or to such tasks that do not involve continuous contact with the prisoners.

The conflicts in the various occupations, except for the prison guards, are much the same, and thus the same principles can be applied in solving them. The occupational groups are, however, in somewhat different positions, especially in their relation to the prisoners. The work of some groups of the staff does not include as much immediate contact with the prisoners as others. There are differences both in the nature of the work and in its goals. The guarding staff mainly takes care of the maintenance of order and control. The educational and nursing staff on the other hand tries primarily to rehabilitate the prisoners socially. In the field of labor activity one of the most important goals is the productivity of prison labor. These differences in the goals easily lead to conflicts between occupational groups (eg, on the relative importance of various goals). There are still many unclear aspects of the goals and of the means of caring for the prisoners, and these aspects are reflected in the function of the institution and in the cooperation between occupational groups.

The different means of adaptation seem to lead to a situation in which some staff members have mainly a primary relation and others a secondary relation with the prisoners (80).

ORGANIZATION OF PRISONS AND THEIR FUNCTION IN FINLAND

Introduction

In the following section those characteristic features of the organization of the care of prisoners and its functions are described which regulate the work of the prison personnel and have an effect on work characteristics. Information is based on the following sources: the report, made in 1975, of the committee on imprisonment stipulations, the 1974 report of the administrative commission of the Prison Administration, and some unpublished sources of the Prison Department of the Ministry of Justice.

Central organization

The supreme state organs in Finland are Parliament, the Presidency, and the Cabinet, which carries parliamentary responsibility. Parliament directs the activity of the Prison Administration by deciding on its annual budget and passing relevant legislation. The Prison Administration is a direct subordinate of the Prison Department of the Ministry of Justice.

The Prison Department of the Ministry of Justice is responsible for the direction of the Prison Administration under the parliamentary supervision of political leadership. The head of the Prison Department is also the Director General of the Prison Administration.

The function of the Prison Department is to oversee and direct the activity of the institutions under it. It deals with the matters that pertain to administrative aspects of the Prison Administration, the execution of prison sentences, pretrial detention, and the after care of released prisoners.

Subordinates of the Prison Department are the prisons and their special divisions, ie, central, provincial, subsidiary and youth prisons, labor colonies, special security units, a mental hospital for prisoners and a training center. Where health care is concerned, the mental hospital is subordinated to the National Board of Health. Also the registered Criminal Welfare Association is under the control of the Prison Department.

The department head directs the department and has authority over a large number of matters. Part of the authority has been delegated to some officials in the Department on the basis of legislation.

The Prison Department deals with and decides matters concerning the general administration. The goal is that the central agency does not handle individual cases, but lays down the general principles. The prisons have to follow these principles and are responsible for the results.

Because of its executive function the Prison Administration is dependent on decisions made elsewhere. Differing from many other organizations — asylums, vocational schools, etc, — the Prison Administration cannot at all affect the selection of the people coming into its field of action. The number and selection of prisoners is defined by the law, the function of the police and the prosecutor, and the decisions of the courts. The Administration has to adapt its functions to changes in the number and type of prisoners. Such changes are age, sex, occupational skills, ability to work, need of physical, social and psychological rehabilitation, etc. The legal framework of the care of prisoners defines the scope of the decision making of the organization itself.

The Prison Administration has to take care of the necessary maintenance functions within the institutions, eg, nutrition, living, health care, nursing, and clothing of the prisoners. In addition its task is to arrange work, education, and leisure-time activities for the prisoners and prepare them for freedom. The care of prisoners covers many functions which in society would fall under the responsibility of other branches of public administration.

According to present views imprisonment is, as such, sufficient punishment and includes a generally preventive frightening effect. It is thought unnecessary to add any additional actions inside the prison to this preventive function.

The emphasis on the care of prisoners