

TE TAIPITOPI TO UNDERSTANDING PRISON VIOLENCE IN AOTEAROA III

SYMPOSIUM PROCEEDINGS
28 NOVEMBER 2022



EDITOR: ARMON TAMATEA



NGA TŪMANAKOTANGA
Turning the tide on prison violence



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INTRODUCTION

ARMON TAMATEA

Kāhore te ngahere, ka mate te whenua

(Without the forest, the land dies)

Prisons are complex places – and violence is an all-too common aspect of prison life. In this sense, prisons exact a toll on those who are held within these spaces, those who work there, as well as the broader community that interface with these sites. Nga Tūmanakotanga is an MBIE-funded project that seeks to understand and reduce prison violence in Aotearoa and has the expressed aim to (1) understand violence in the contexts in which it occurs, and to (2) develop localised, place-based interventions to reduce violence and improve safety for prisoners and staff in these settings. Nga Tūmanakotanga is the guiding principle of the research programme. Together with the logo, this *tohu*¹

reflects tidal movements and energies as an analogy of the nature of violence in New Zealand prisons – Periods of relative calm interspersed with volatility. The nature of this research journey recognises the ebb and flow of people who live and work in prisons, examines the practices – visible and hidden – that contribute to the causes, the control, and the prevention of violence within these environments, and works in harmony with these elements – these ecosystems – to facilitate optimal conditions for the safety and wellbeing of mauhere and kaimahi.

These proceedings capture korero that comprised an online symposium held in late November 2022. *Te Taipitopito* is the third public symposium hosted by Nga Tūmanakotanga. The theme for this event involved presentations and discussions that focused on

¹ Kindly gifted to the project by Mr Mate Webb.

detailed examinations of the understanding of the many drivers of institutional aggression as well as the relationship between this behaviour and wider institutional and social systems. As before, the symposium was an opportunity to continue to create a space to bring together voices that speak from different positions across the *prison ecology*, to share their māramatanga – their insights and reflections – with us, and to inform and provoke our collective thinking about the issue of prison violence in Aotearoa.

The increased public and industrial interest in these symposia indicates the need for a critical public conversation about the important issue of real world violence, albeit violence that is all too invisible in Aotearoa New Zealand. This year we had the privilege of the Chief Ombudsman, **Peter Boshier**, open the event and discuss recurring (and new) issues across our prisons in his role as a National Preventive Mechanism of the Optional

Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT). Professor **Lorraine Johnstone** and Dr **Nick Wilson** gave complementary talks about the PRISM as an assessment and evaluation protocol designed to facilitate violence prevention initiatives in secure settings and its successful use in Aotearoa, Scotland and elsewhere. Dr **Robert Henry** dissected the connections between institutional violence, street gangs, prison codes and notions of masculinity in a Canadian context before **Harry Tam** delivered an oral history of New Zealand gangs and their interface with the government – in particular, the policy responses that have shaped these decades-long interactions. Last year, we were very fortunate to have heard from the Governor of Macquarie Correctional Centre, who manages the holy grail of carceral work: an open-plan maximum security prison with a near-zero record of violence. This year, we were joined by **Jennifer Galouzis**, Assistant Commissioner, Offender Management and Programs,

Corrective Services New South Wales who discussed an impressively ecological approach to managing prisons and violence in that state. Senior Sergeant **Damian White** rounded off the day with a conversation about his pioneering work in reducing gang harm in the community, the interface with prisons, and the points of connection between these communities and prison violence. Last and certainly not least, we were able to proudly showcase some of the student-based research projects that have developed in conjunction with Nga Tūmanakotanga that canvassed critical areas of inquiry that ranged from abuse reported by custodial staff (**Abi Clarke**), a qualitative model of gang-related prison violence (**Nicola Brennan-Tupara**), an examination of media discourses about large-scale riots in Aotearoa (**Liam Membery**), and exploring self-harm in NZ prisons (**Abby Rhodes**).

As the whakatauki reminds us, to busy ourselves with the task

of improving safety in our prisons requires resources, but more importantly, it's about *people* first and foremost. Prisons are a vivid example of the nexus between people and resources. Prisons are solely designed and built for human purposes, but require adequate budgets, natural spaces, and access to legal and cultural resources to be humane places of encounter and change. As with our prior symposia, these proceedings are not the final word on the issue of prison violence, and are offered as an invitation for korero/dialogue in your space – whether with stakeholders in the criminal justice sector, academic colleagues, mauhere and their whānau (past and current), or even on the street. Prison violence is everyone's business, and it is the mission of Nga Tūmanakotanga to listen and be advised of the issues, concerns, priorities, and possibilities that are offered.

Mauri ora.

OPENING ADDRESS

PETER BOSHIER

Kia ora tātou,

I am very pleased to open this third symposium on 'Understanding and reducing prison violence in Aotearoa New Zealand' and value this opportunity to highlight the *preventive* work the Ombudsman does to contribute to this. My address builds on the presentation given to the second symposium last year by Emma Roebuck from my office.

The very first New Zealand Ombudsman, Sir Guy Powles, was appointed 60 years ago and I am proud to carry his torch forward, shining a light on unfairness and injustice so wrongs can be put right. The Office of the Ombudsman stands for 'fairness to all' or 'Tuia kia ōrite' which, to me, means upholding people's mana. This includes the mana of people in prisons. I want to make the point upfront that the fundamentals of dignity need

to be safeguarded for all New Zealanders – because you are in prison doesn't mean dignity should be taken away from you.

OPCAT

This year marks the 15th anniversary of New Zealand ratifying the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, known as OPCAT. This international human rights agreement aims to help ensure that people who are deprived of their liberty, and cannot leave at will, are treated humanely, and their rights are respected and protected.

Under OPCAT, I have the power to monitor and examine places of detention, including prisons, and make recommendations to improve the welfare and treatment of detainees. These places are not visible to many

New Zealanders. My role is to monitor whether conditions and treatment are appropriate and set up in a way that prevents the possibility of torture or other ill treatment.

The Ombudsman is one of New Zealand's National Preventive Mechanisms, or NPMs, along with the Children's Commissioner, Independent Police Conduct Authority and the Inspector of Service Penal Establishments. The work of the NPMs is coordinated by the Human Rights Commission, which also liaises with the United Nations.

The NPM role is about prevention. This preventive approach is unique within the international law regime. Rather than reacting to breaches, or awaiting allegations of abuse, it is proactive, aimed at identifying potential vulnerabilities which can be attended to before any harm occurs.

NPMs are required to report to Parliament at least once a year and, if necessary, make

recommendations for improvement.

My OPCAT inspection team conducts announced and unannounced visits and inspections of prisons – about a third of inspections are unannounced. In prisons, I look at things such as:

- how people are treated, including the use of isolation, force or restraint;
- security and protective measures, such as information sharing and consent processes;
- living conditions, including privacy, and access to a decent environment in a good state of repair, washing facilities, clean clothing and bedding;
- purposeful activity and transition into the community including contact with whānau and the outside world, outdoor exercise, education and leisure activities – time spent out of the cells;
- provision of appropriate cultural activity and rehabilitation for Māori prisoners;

- access to healthcare; and
- staff conduct and training, and staffing levels.

I consider how prisons uphold decency, dignity and respect: meeting the needs of all prisoner groups irrespective of age, disability, gender and sexual orientation, race and religion.

During full prison inspections, my OPCAT inspection team can visit any area and talk to anyone, as well as access any relevant data and documentation. The team is multidisciplinary and makes use of experts, such as cultural advisors and people with lived experience.

Inspections in 2021/22

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, my Office has maintained a programme of prison inspections, due to the greater risk of restrictions on prisoners' already limited rights. These targeted inspections were announced and shorter than usual. This is because the principle of 'first do no harm' and prisoner

safety continued to be a critical area of focus. I ensured that we had robust health and safety procedures in place.

I firmly believe that independent monitoring was essential during those unprecedented times. Human rights are inalienable; people should expect to be treated with care and respect, always. I needed to make sure that the use of extraordinary measures by the Government did not override my mandate to report independently to Parliament.

In my OPCAT role in 2021/22, I inspected nine of the 19 prisons across Aotearoa New Zealand. These visits allowed for a view of ongoing and emerging issues across the prison system. My Office is the only agency in New Zealand that comprehensively surveys prisoners and, therefore, we have a unique perspective on prison safety and important insights to share. Confidential surveys are distributed to each prisoner, inquiring about treatment and conditions. They give prisoners an anonymous

way to report to an independent watchdog. It's an opportunity to have their voices heard.

Otago Correctional Facility

Today I want to share my findings on Otago Correctional Facility, the subject of my most recently published report (released in August this year), and two follow-up inspections to Whanganui and Christchurch Men's Prisons.

Otago was a full inspection, conducted in October 2020 and I provided Ara Poutama, the Department of Corrections, with my findings five months later. It has some good processes and programmes in place, but there were still issues that concerned me. These include prisoners not being afforded privacy for washing and going to the toilet. In my opinion this may breach of the Convention against Torture. I also remain

concerned about use of force incidents, the use of pepper-spray, and record-keeping.

While the *Making Shifts Work*² programme has had positive outcomes in this prison, I still had concerns that men in the management unit did not have enough purposeful activity. Unfortunately, these are not issues only Otago faces.

I'll also give you the examples of the Ombudsman's inspections of Whanganui and Christchurch Men's Prisons – my reports were released in June 2021. The previous inspections were in 2018. Two years later, yes, I did find some improvements at each site, but, overall:

- Only 43% of my recommendations at Whanganui had been implemented, at Christchurch: 44%.
- Conditions were frankly desolate and barren:

² Signalled as a priority area for Ara Poutama's strategic direction, *Making Shifts Work* is a Departmental project that is investigating alternatives to an eight-hour shift in New Zealand prisons in order to keep staff safe, allow improved work-life balance for staff, continue the delivery of effective operations in prison facilities, and enable increased unlock hours for people in prison to improve engagement in meaningful activity (see www.corrections.govt.nz).

overheated cells, lack of ventilation, lack of privacy for prisoners in the Intervention and Support Unit.

- At Christchurch Men's, I was particularly concerned by the use of dry rooms as seclusion cells for at-risk prisoners; and the ongoing use of force.

I'm singling out these three facilities purely because they are the most recently published reports.

Time and again, my monitoring and inspections find similar issues in prisons – long lock-up hours, lack of constructive activity, lack of access to clean bedding and clothes, lack of appropriate cultural provision, and a concerning use of force, seclusion, and restraint. I am not alone in this. Many other reports on prisons in New Zealand reveal similar concerns.

Recurring Issues

These are issues that have been repeatedly raised by New Zealand's other oversight

entities. But the welfare and treatment of prisoners is not improving fast enough.

The Department of Corrections had progressed some issues previously identified in my inspections, and I noted positive and innovative practice in discrete areas at a number of prisons. However, I identified a few common themes of concern, including:

- poor physical environments, including the use of segregation;
- lack of robust oversight of use of force, including pepper spray; and
- limited access to rehabilitation and reintegration activities, in part due to managing the risk of COVID-19.

Impact of COVID on Prisoners

COVID-19 has presented special challenges for prisoners, with extended periods of lockdowns and curtailed rights. Due to the pandemic, prisoners are being quarantined and isolated in a number of ways, and are being confined to their cells longer than usual. I am aware that in-

person visits have been suspended at some prisons since August 2021. Contact with the outside world has been reduced significantly. Rehabilitation programmes, as well as *Release to Work*, have been suspended. These increased restrictions on the ability to socialise, exercise and engage in meaningful activity must be putting pressure on prisoners' welfare; pressure that may well escalate to explosions of violence.

It is frustrating to me that staff shortages in prisons have seen severe restrictions persist longer than necessary and resulted in prisoners being moved to facilities distant from whanau, making family visits well-nigh impossible. This isn't good enough. We're a civilised society that should be treating prisoners better. It is imperative that their human rights are respected, and to deny these rights is a breach of OPCAT – the United Nations Convention we have signed up to. I have written to Corrections to express my concerns about the proportionality of some

COVID-19 related restrictions and how they may be affecting the human rights of people in custody.

Let's be real. Prisoners are vulnerable to violence. We are dealing with a group of people who are more likely than others to have had a violent past or been victims of violence. Unless we're careful, the prison setting will be a catalyst for further trauma and violence. There have to be outlets, family contact, and programmes to provide a vent for pressure. Purposeful activity and transition to the community, including unlock hours, access to rehab programmes and the support of whanau and community connections, including in-person visits, are vital.

Corrections Systemic Review

Conditions for and treatment of prisoners have been the focus of my attention for many years and I have yet to see widespread systemic change in areas where I have raised concerns. Although the prison population is reducing, there

hasn't been a marked improvement in conditions and it is very worrying that the remand population appears to be rising. Consequently, in May last year I announced a systemic investigation, under the Ombudsmen Act, into what factors may be preventing the Department of Corrections, from making significant and sustained change. Once my investigation has been completed I expect to publish my findings around April next year. I hope they will trigger long-term and meaningful change in the system.

A Question of Restraint

I know Corrections can change. In 2016 I published a *Question of Restraint*, into the use of mechanical restraints such as tie-down beds on prisoners at risk of self-harm or suicide. I found that the use of tie-down beds or waist restraints on five prisoners amounted to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment under the Convention Against Torture. I called for the elimination of tie-down beds in our prisons completely. In the years

following the publication of this report, tie-down beds were phased-out and are no longer used in prisons.

Forward View

To me, persuasion is the most effective way of achieving positive, long-term change. I am now meeting regularly with the Chief Executive of the Department of Corrections to raise my concerns and maintain a robust dialogue.

Most of my prison reports are tabled in Parliament and, judging by recent Hansard reports of question time, MPs are reading my reports and using them to hold the Government to account. I am routinely asked to appear before select committees to answer questions about my OPCAT work. To add further transparency, I have recently developed my expectations regarding the treatment and conditions of detainees – including prisoners. These are intended to provide detainees, their whānau, those responsible for or working in places of detention, Parliament,

and the public, with an understanding of some of the matters I consider as part of my monitoring and examination programme.

I am in the process of considering feedback from responsible agencies on these and expect to be in a position to publish them early next year. I am also currently in the process of establishing a pool of experts – people with lived experience of places of detention and people with professional specialist skills – to support my National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) role in examining places of detention, such as prisons.

This morning I have shared with you what I am seeing in our prisons and preventive steps I have recommended in my OPCAT role to promote compliance with the

Convention and reduce violence in prisons.

I commend you Armon and your team of researchers on Nga Tūmanakotanga – your project to *Turn the Tide on Prison Violence*. I will follow its progress with interest.

I hope that my māramatanga or insights will inform today's korero on the issue of prison violence in Aotearoa and shine a light on what might be done to reduce it.

E te whānau

Whaia te mātauranga kia mārama

Kia whai take ngā mahi katoa

Tū māia, tū kaha

Aroha atu, aroha mai

For this gathering, seek knowledge for understanding.

Have purpose in all that you do.

Stand tall, be strong.

Let us show respect for each other.

USING THE PRISM PARADIGM TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES AND CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MANAGING PRISON VIOLENCE

LORRAINE JOHNSTONE

PRISM (Promoting Risk Interventions by Situational Management) provides a systematic approach for evaluating a broad range of situational risk factors known to influence violence in prisons, hospital, secure and community settings. Across the last decade and a half, PRISM has been used across many different settings and in different jurisdictions. It has proven to have significant utility and when organisations invest in the process, transformational change can occur. Of course, in real world settings, that buy-in isn't always easy to achieve. Resistance can be overt, or covert and organisations, like individuals, are at different stages of change and have similar defense mechanisms. In this presentation, the PRISM protocol will be described and then, with reference to some case examples, the author will share some reflections on how the process can be used to overcome obstacles and create opportunities for managing violence.

Let me begin by expressing my gratitude and thanks to you all for inviting me along to speak about the PRISM. It feels like something that's been around for a very long time, so it's nice to get the opportunity to speak about how it all came about. I would also like to acknowledge my co-author on the PRISM, Professor David Cooke. This has

been a joint endeavor that we've engaged in across the last few decades. So, what I intend to do today is speak about The PRISM paradigm, explain what it is, and how it can overcome obstacles and create opportunities for managing prison violence.

Prison Violence: What Is It?

There are so many barriers and obstacles to managing prison violence, not least the fact that we lack a definitive definition of what prison violence actually is. In general terms though, we know that it comes in many, many forms, whether it's bullying, verbal intimidation, verbal threats, sexual violence, group protests, hostage taking, riots, mass disturbance, physical assault, or gang violence and organised crime. Even when you simplify it down to these categories though, it really doesn't do justice to the complexity of what we're actually dealing with, because violence differs across the victim-perpetrator types, the motivation, the intent, the severity, and obviously the outcomes and the frequency of which we see harm occur.

Prison Violence: A Perennial Problem

Some might think prison violence is a perennial problem. That violence just seems to be everywhere. And, you would be forgiven, in a way, for adopting a sense of learned helplessness.

There is the notion that “of course prisons are violent, they house vulnerable people who have histories of violence, and who have lots of difficulties”, but it really doesn't have to be like that. But even when it does occur, and even if it's just a single, high impact incident, prisons will suffer, and you will perhaps be shaped by that legacy.

Prison Violence: The Consequences

We know that violence creates a domino effect. It really rips through the institution on so many levels. Its most basic outcome is injury and illness, whether that's physical illness, physical injury, psychological illness, short term, long term. In and of itself that is a major issue. However, what you do tend to see within prisons where there's high incidents of violence, is an ethos and a culture evolves where violence becomes the norm. It's expected, it's the way of life here, and a tolerance can arise and almost accommodate that as the norm.

But we see buildings become in states of disrepair, we see structural damage, and everything really about the environment tells you that this is an unsafe place to be, and it's dangerous. Organisations and prisons can – and quite rightly should be – held to account when they do fail in their duty of care. They do have a duty of care to keep people who live in their environment safe, and those who work there and visit there. However, the reality is that resources are tight, and you certainly do not want to be re-routing large sums of money to litigation where violence has taken place. Also, with the presence of violence in an organisation, you will see low staff morale, typically associated with high staff absences, and for staff who are thinking about their safety, and they're in threat mode, then their ability to perform, to meet the objectives of the role, to deliver a high standard of care and rehabilitation really becomes reduced.

All of these things together result in a loss of confidence in

the prisons, in the establishment, and sometimes that can result in quite significant outcomes as well. Minimally, that might be the staff just leave, and then further reduce the options for promoting good positive prisons, or it can result in real significant political challenges, and issues that significantly undermine what the intention of a prison actually is.

Prison Violence: Frequency

I like to do research, I like numbers, I quite like data. For me, I think it is a little bit of a red herring when it comes to frequency of prison violence, because I think that one single, low frequency, high impact incident in a prison can shape what that prison might be for many years to come, whether that's riots, a murder, inmates killing other inmates or staff. So whether it's a low-frequency/high-impact, or high-frequency/lower-impact, in a way, all violence is something that we should aspire to eradicate.

In terms of trends, we do need to monitor where things are at, and what we can see is that violence is pretty common; within a prison setting in England last year, 169 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults per 1000 prisoners, 97 assaults on staff per 1000 prisoners. Some data I managed to get from New Zealand reports is that the assaults on staff have tripled in the last decade. These are quite alarming statistics in and of themselves. However, what we also need to know is there's a very dark figure of crime, in general terms, but particularly in prisons. It is not the done thing to report violence, these things are typically buried.

What I would say though, irrespective of the frequency, we have to be really mindful of this notion that prisons are violent places, and we absolutely must caution ourselves and reflect on our own thoughts and beliefs about how we approach our work. You'll often see and hear, not only people, members of the public, but staff members, managers, senior officials

within prison settings, develop a tolerance. We all do that because we have to survive in these environments too.

I would like to just take a moment to illustrate: I'm sure some of you, if not all of you, will have sat in a meeting perhaps and listen to somebody say, "Well, there was a violent incident at the weekend. Thankfully there were no weapons and it was less than a minute." Many of us will go "Oof", breathe a sigh of relief: "that couldn't have been too bad". But let me just illustrate what that *actually* involves; This [*referring to video footage*] is an assault that lasts for less than a minute. There are no weapons, it's in a corridor, and as you're able to watch this clip, what you see is probably 20, 30, maybe even 40 punches being rained down on a prison guard. Dazed, confused, clearly quite injured by that assault, he finally manages to pull out his pepper spray whilst the cavalry arrive, if you like. Although it lasted less than a minute, it actually can result in extremely serious

outcomes as well. So we must be really, really cautious around ensuring that we don't drift into tolerance for violence ourselves.

Obstacles to Managing Prison Violence

We don't have a theory of violence. We don't really know what causes violence. There are lots of different approaches and thoughts around that. The criminologists might speak about the deprivation model. You remove things from people, they become frustrated and angry, or you import violent people with violent attitudes and violent behaviours, and that causes a problem. Obviously, I'm a psychologist by trade, the psychopathology model was something that I was very married to, certainly early on in my career, where I thought, "Well, if we find the people who scored highly in a personality disorder, or we find people with high impulsivity, we might manage them better, and have safer prisons". So violence, in and of itself, is a

problem. We don't really know what causes the problem.

We also have significant challenges and obstacles, because some people, or many people, have very different ideas about how we should respond. In 2006, when England was suffering another spate of riots, our then Home Secretary thought the solution should be that we just call in the army and machine gun the prisoners... I'll leave you to come to your own conclusion about that. Obviously the previous solution is not one that I would support, but neither is doing *nothing* and the need to accept that the threat of violence plagues all forensic institutions, not just prisons, but all forensic institutions.

Those of us who have a role for either managing or working or influencing what happens in these environments, need to have a range of interventions. So let's just accept there isn't a panacea, there isn't a perfect theory about it. So let's just

work with that complexity and do what we can.

Reflecting on this, David Cooke and I, took this on board, and thought about the contextual environment – the situational factors that impact in a prison – thinking about the fact that behaviours don't occur in a vacuum. Of course, individual factors are relevant, but it is highly likely that the situation is a significant determinant of how people behave.

Barlinnie

Professor Cooke worked in one of our most notorious prisons in Scotland. I'm glad to say it doesn't look like this anymore. It has been rebuilt. But Barlinnie was, in the 1980s, a notoriously difficult regime. It was a very violent prison, and often people who were known to have committed serious crimes, murders, would be “ghosted”, the term we used to transport and transfer people around the prison system to manage them from one prison to another prison to another prison. When they were in Barlinnie, you would see lots of

violent incidents, assaults and staff assaults in one or other, and ultimately what happened is, it led to riots and significant protests, you had prisoners on the roof, we had prison staff taken hostage, being paraded across these old Victorian buildings, and the demands were not about: "I want treatment for my personality disorder", or "I want my substance use therapy." They were around, "I want staff to treat us fairly. I want access to my family and friends, and I want access to meaningful activities in life."

Consequently, the Prisons had a radical rethink about how they manage these very highly violent prisoners, and they created an environment where they had a completely different regime. To put it simply, staff had a different approach and attitude with these men. They were given more autonomy, they were allowed to influence the regime and the activities: what happened and when. There was proactive conflict management, there was an ethos of no violence, and a

quality of life emphasis. This small unit, called the Barlinnie Special Unit, was built around these principles.

What happened is, this small number of highly violent men, who were responsible for around about 200 incidents prior to going into the special unit, serious incidents, violence and disruption. When they went into the Barlinnie special unit, the violence was negligible – and so too were the significant and disruptive incidents.

Now, with the best will in the world, and the best treatment available, it was not the psychological therapy that did that. We didn't eradicate the personality disorder. The reason that changed, and the reason that these men became manageable and settled, was because of the regime factors. They were *safe* and so were the staff. That was a really profound, naturalistic experiment, if you like, that

was able to track the impact of the situation.

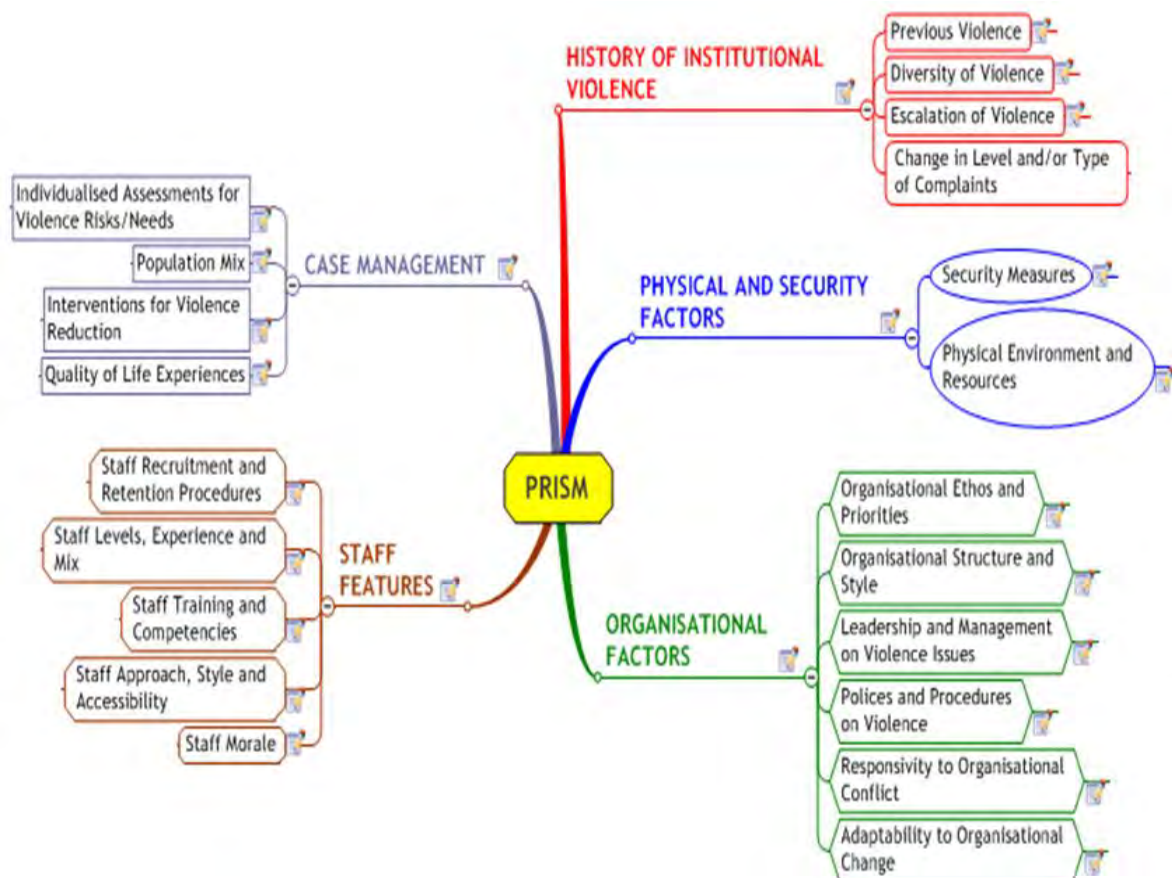
Development of the PRISM

What it is that actually contributes to violence in enclosed settings? We were thinking about risk factors, and we were thinking about keeping hospitals and prisons safe. So we decided to do a systematic review³, and look at the situational determinants of violence. We (David, Lisa Gadon and I) gathered lots of research, and tried to pull out themes that would tell us what it is about the prison itself, not necessarily about the people in the prison, but the prison itself, that might contribute to violence. We operationalised indicators and risk factors across a number of domains. We field-tested a tool that we came up with, and across time we labeled it the PRISM – Promoting Risk Intervention by Situational Management. Figure 1 gives a very quick snapshot of what the PRISM looks like and what it involves.

³ Gadon, L., Johnstone, L., & Cooke, D. (2006). Situational variables and institutional violence: A systematic review of the literature. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 26(5), 515-534.

Figure 1

PRISM Domains and Items (from Johnstone & Cooke, 2008).



The PRISM has these five different domains: history of violence, physical and security factors, organisational factors, staff features, and case management. These domains emerged from this systematic review as the most important situational determinants for violence in a closed setting.

We manualised this knowledge⁴, this research, and

we put it into set of guidelines. I can only say that it is a bit like the tip of the iceberg, this sort of manual, because it's such a complex process to understand and intervene for prison violence. But nonetheless, what we tried to do was really distill a lot of all the literature into something that could be applied, that had some utility. The tool and protocol itself tells you how to administer. The

⁴ Johnstone, L., & Cooke, D. J. (2008). *PRISM: Promoting Risk Intervention by Situational Management. Structured professional guidelines for assessing situational risk factors for violence in institutions.* Northern Networking.

evaluation typically involves a team of staff – It's a huge commitment, and you do need to really commit to it. You consider lots of different information, lots of different sources. I think one of the really important things that was very deliberate in what we did here was we didn't just identify areas that were problematic. We also identify areas that were *good*.

Part of the thinking about that was, because through our work in developing PRISM, we often listened to staff tell us about interventions that were really, really good, but that got taken away, or funding got pulled. So as much as it's important to identify problems, it's extremely important to keep what's working as well.

The protocol also tells you about why risk might be emerging. It also talks about different scenarios, and help you think about different scenarios that the prison might observe with the overarching and primary aim of giving you recommendations on how to

manage the risk that might be there. I'll just briefly summarise the domains:

1. The ***history of institutional violence*** is very much concerned with what has happened in the past two years. What level of violence you have, what type of violence you have. Do you actually know what level of violence? Is it recorded? Do you have reliable data? Do you have lots of hidden violence? But also, other indicators like the change in level of complaints as well, because we were very mindful of the fact that violence is only part of an indicator of an organisation's distress. When you see people withdraw and refuse to communicate what their distress is, so stop making complaints, that's an indicator for concern. Alternatively, for them making many, many, many, many complaints as well. That's an indicator of concern. So it's quite a sophisticated way of marking signs of institutional violence and distress.

2. ***Physical and security factors***, very much chiming with the

previous speaker's⁵ observations. You have to provide an appropriate physical environment, and an appropriate level of security. It has to be matched, it has to be well thought out, it has to be proportionate, it has to be fair, it has to be necessary. You can imagine within prisons, that sometimes it can be quite different views about what is proportionate, and what is necessary, and what is adequate. We're very clear about what good security would look like, and what a good physical environment and resources might look like. We talk about the need for balance, I suppose that's one of my mantras. I always think polarised views are never helpful. Pretty much everything is always better if it's balanced, and you walk the middle line. So when it comes to having a safe prison environment, a safe setting, you want a good balance between *security*, *control* and *regime*. Where you have too much regime, you have too lax control. Where you have too much security and

control, you have a very frustrated population. In the PRISM, we articulate this, we explain it, we try to encourage people to think about what balance looks like in their particular setting. Some places, and for me, I think the Scottish prison service is probably pretty well advanced in terms of its security. But in Barbados, for example, some prisoners after the fire were housed in sea boxes, no heating, no air conditioning, just kept in a metal container in the temperatures in Barbados, or threatened and intimidated with large guard dogs, or even prisoners who couldn't move and who were immobile, were still shackled. Security has to be matched to the needs of the population. A brief comment on prison architecture. Think about the way that prisons are designed, the way that they are presented, how they're integrated into the community. So an old prison design, like a penitentiary can be very imposing, segregated; this is a very clear statement about what this building is about, who

⁵ See chapter (Boshier), this volume.

it's for, and what it does. Contrast that with a prison in Norway, which is, frankly, beautiful from the outside, and it's very nice in the inside as well. Norway has a far lower recidivism rate than probably any other country. They make a statement, they take people to prisons, and they provide them with a good environment, and they work hard to rehabilitate them.

3. The next domain is about **organisational factors**. For me, this is absolutely critical. If an organisation is committed to reducing violence, really invests in it, that's absolutely fundamental. They're open minded, they're reflective, they're curious. It's got a good structure, it's clear. Decision-making is clear, accountability is clear, governance is clear, and also the adaptability to change. Change management is evident and so is the responsiveness to conflict, absolutely critical to ensuring the organisations are safe, and often quite invisible, for frontline staff and also for prisoners, and sometimes

visitors as well. But this is absolutely key in the literature to maintaining safety. This isn't that old a quote, but we were speaking to a senior staff member in a prison, and he said, "People are a bit too quick to call something violence these days. One of the female staff got her bum grabbed the other day." And he chortled. "She made a big thing of it. In my day, that wouldn't have been considered violence, that's just banter". I can tell you that when you're doing a prison evaluation, and you uncover comments and quotes like that, it opens a door for you to go off and explore lots of other contributory factors to violence. It tells you a lot about ethos and culture.

4. The fourth domain, **staff**. Staff can mitigate against most problems, I would say, in a prison. Even if you've got the most dreadful environment, if you've got really good staff, it will buy you some time for safety. It's absolutely essential that you bring in good staff, and when you get them, that you keep them, you invest in

them, you train them, you have the right people in the right place at the right time with the right mix of training and competencies, and that they know what to do, when to do it, how to do it, and that they're given the tools to deliver in the role. It's absolutely vital as well that staff morale is maintained and it's kept high, because if you're really down, and preoccupied with problems at your work, you can't really deliver on the job to your optimum level. So this isn't new, bizarrely enough, but what we see internationally is a real issue about workforce retention, capacity and development. What I would say is, if you invest in your staff, then your violence levels will reduce. In 1847, an Inspector of Prisons for Scotland found some prisons had an unusual degree of good conduct was induced. The number of punishments was kept low by the personal influence of the officers, and their care and reasoning with prisoners was exercised before resorting to punishment. I would say, this is something that resonates with

me across just my job as a clinician, and one young boy I worked with, and he will stick in my mind until I stop working, who talked to me about the prison officer who gave him a KitKat. Not just one KitKat, but two KitKats. That gesture from that prison officer enabled a relationship to develop, that carried that young boy who was described as a one man crime spree, actually beyond the prison and back into the community. So these things are really important. We know from the trauma literature that when you go into fight, flight or freeze mode, your ability to problem solve reduces. So give your staff the skills to do their job in safety as well. Regular training, lots of development, and keep them engaged in their role. I've talked about staff morale already, where you have staff who are disengaged, you'll get poor performance, distraction, high absenteeism, increased accidents, increased errors, and ultimately the loss of staff. Often it's your employable, good staff that go away, and you definitely don't want that.

5. The final domain is around **case management**. I'm a huge advocate of doing things right, even if it takes a little bit longer, and I also think spending to save is quite a good approach too. When we talk about the case management in the PRISM, we recommend strongly that prisoners are assessed for their own violence risks and needs. That there is a profile, we get to know what their vulnerabilities are, and we help not only just in the short term, in terms of placement and population mix, but also how to rehabilitate them, and intervene in a meaningful way. Across this domain, we recommend the high-level, individualised risk assessments, to ensure that our prisoners are rehabilitated in a meaningful way, that their risk is understood in a meaningful way, not really the quick and dirty checklist, because it doesn't necessarily help you an awful lot. We also give very clear recommendations about how to manage populations – I understand in New Zealand that gang issues are particularly prevalent. They are too in

Scotland, but probably in a very different way. But this is a significant issue too, around about making informed decisions about where you put people, why you put them where you do, who you put them alongside, and then you manage that. It's not about segregating, or creating a sort of “mini-gang” environment within your prison. It's about informed decisions so that you can intervene. An example I can give you from Scotland involves religious and sectarian issues in the prison. If you come from Glasgow or Edinburgh, if you support Rangers or Celtic football, these can be significant issues. So one of the PRISM evaluations we did with young people recommended that the prison had to manage that population, but also deliver interventions to break down the risk. The PRISM emphasises meaningful interventions. It's incredibly difficult and expensive to deliver interventions. There's no denying that. But when people come into prison with hugely complex histories, massive need, then you want to

have access to interventions that are more likely than not to succeed. You want to have evidence-based interventions that are accessible as well. Sometimes we encounter issues where people need to be sentenced to four years or more before they access particular programmes. I don't think that's particularly helpful. You want to have people accessing evidence-based interventions as well. Absolutely chiming with what was said in the opening address⁶, prisoners need to be kept busy. They need to have meaning in their life, they need to have access to health, vocational, occupational and spiritual experiences as well. It is absolutely fundamental that they have a purpose, and a sense of purpose that is not just about violence. You need to have a prison that offers all of these opportunities to promote and engage prisoners to a non-offending, non-violent way of life.

Many of you who are researchers might recognise

⁶ See chapter (Boshier), this volume.

that feeling when you think you've got a great idea, but you're not really sure. So, David and myself put the PRISM to the test. We sent it out for field-testing. We tried it out in pilot sites, and we gave it to John Monahan and others for peer review. Monahan came back and said that he thought it was pretty good, which was very exciting, and a protocol that should be implemented in a variety of institutional settings, and in many countries.

Utility of the PRISM

At this time, PRISM has been used internationally. It's been used in the Scandic countries, Norway, Sweden, Denmark. It's been used in Barbados, and it's currently being used in America, it's been used in New Zealand and Australia, as well as obviously Scotland and England. It's been used across a whole range of different settings: prisons, forensic hospitals, residential units, secure children's homes. It's also been used in inpatient wards as well. I think, generally, we have had really positive and

enlightening experiences with applying PRISM.

In general, the themes are, from all of the different places that we have administered PRISM, that we have an approach that helps you understand and formulate prison violence from a multi-theoretical approach. That's absolutely ideal when you have conflicting perspectives and theories and modalities. It just bridges the gaps. It manages risks using a multi-level response. Because of the way it's designed, you can pretty much involve everyone in a PRISM evaluation, and it can be anything from the security manager to the chief executive that you need to make changes, and it really enables you to have a toolbox to manage the risk.

When you intervene at the situational level, you do it to the whole organisation. So that means you can affect very rapid change, it can be very cost effective, and it can be useful for prisons where there are high levels of non-compliance. I

don't just mean non-compliance from inmates, I mean non-compliance from staff as well.

The PRISM gives you a common foundation and a language for understanding and managing violence. It can, when you go through the process, promote team cohesion, and an overall commitment to safety. The way that I do these evaluations is pretty open and transparent. The data is there for people to see, so that there is no U-turn, that's not possible. It can inform service development and provision, it can give you a method of addressing high risk. You can use it internally as a method of governance and audit, for yourself or externally. You bring people in to help you move things forward. It can be used to identify and keep good practice. We are terrible at keeping what works. We're really good at identifying problems, and risk sometimes is all about problems, but actually we need to be focused on what's working as well. Through this process, we believe that PRISM works

across other settings, and for other risks like suicide, self-harm and significant disruption.

I guess the proof really is in the pudding, because what people want to know is, does it reduce violence? The data that we have says yes it does. So obviously, the pilot sites that we've used, the real life evaluations are highly sensitive and confidential. But one of the places where I did the evaluation, in the NHS (in one of our hospital wards), PRISM was a very arduous journey. The staff, effectively, had refused to work, because the violence was so high in the ward. The managers were at their wits end, and so they brought in myself to work alongside a colleague, Dr Jana De Villiers, to do a PRISM evaluation.

The PRISM evaluation was quite critical, to the point that we gave them a sort of six-month lifeline to say, "you need to do all of these recommendations, and if you don't do that, you'd need to probably consider closing the

ward." So it was pretty serious. Initially they did not want to share the report, and there were a lot of politics involved, but eventually they brought the report to the surface and implemented the recommendations. As you will see from that graph (figure 2), the arrow was when the implementation began, and the radical reduction in violent incidents was really marked.

Now, according to Dr De Villiers, they talk about PRISM as being the best thing that happened to that particular ward setting.

Final Thoughts

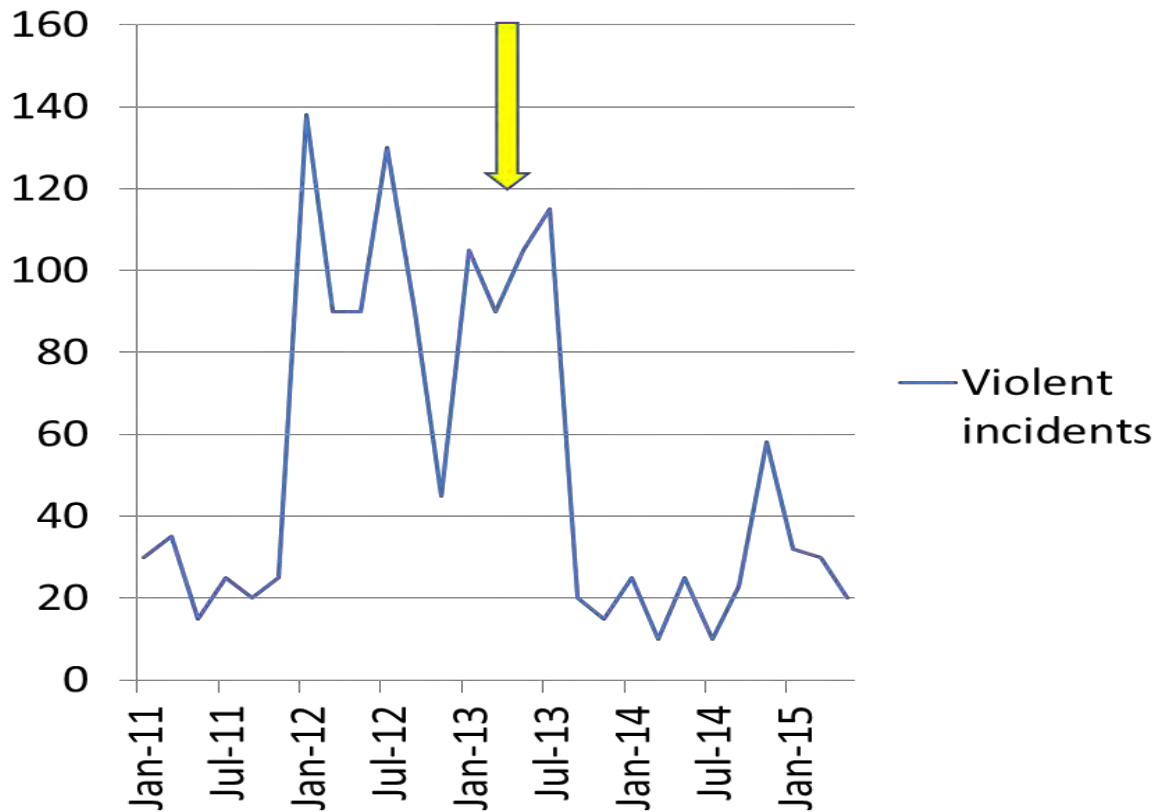
You need to have really significant commitment, you need a champion, you need to persevere, you need to be open, transparent, you need to prepare for resistance, you need to keep working with the resistance. It's all about change management, and again, echoing what was said in opening address, it's persistence and persuasion. Ultimately, what we have learned with PRISM is, if you

use that framework, you are really committed to the process, adopt the principles of

change-management, and you can see radical reductions in violence in the prison setting.

Figure 2

Reported Violent Incidents at ward: NHS (January 2011 to January 2015) graph provided by Dr Jana De Villiers



PRISM: AN EXERCISE IN PERSEVERANCE SINCE 2008 IN NEW ZEALAND – REFLECTIONS AND INSIGHTS ON ITS VALUE AND BARRIERS TO APPLICATION

NICK J. WILSON

The excitement and interest in PRISM from custody when Corrections first looked into the measure to help with understanding and intervening for prison violence in 2008 unfortunately did not last. This then turned the use of the measure into an exercise in perseverance and promotion by a few psychologists with experience and belief in its approach. This meant instead of regular use and a spread of knowledge and expertise in the measure, it became an exercise in waiting for the right moment, usually when urgent concerns were raised about violence in a particular prison or unit. While it has been possible to use these opportunities to apply PRISM across a variety of prison settings and populations, and to refine the administration and reporting of the measure, we are still looking for an enduring relationship and home for its use. I will share some of my insights and experiences with PRISM and hopes for the future because my experience in Ara Poutama is timing is everything and the complex problem of prison violence continues.

*Kotahi anō te kaupapa, ko te orange o te iwi.
There is only one purpose to our work, the wellness and wellbeing of our people.*

I thought that this whakataukī was very appropriate for this

mahi that we're doing today. I didn't want to talk about many of the many institutional violence incidents that we've experienced in Ara Poutama, but I did want to mention the Spring Hill facility riot in June, 2013. I know we've had others

since, but it was a very serious incident: 23 people in our care were charged with over 40 offenses. Three staff and two prisoners were injured. The Corrections Chief Executive at the time said in the media that the inquiry had concluded into this very large riot that there was two key triggers, the availability and the consumption of home brew by the prisoners, and fighting between them, which led to staff being assaulted.

The reason that I mentioned that is that there was an oversimplification of what was a very complex incident, but also, it was particularly pertinent to me because I was actually on site in that prison in another unit actually applying the PRISM measure. While I was there doing that task, I was asked if, once I had finished that assessment, if I could go to the unit and carry out a PRISM assessment on the unit which was later involved in the riot. Obviously, events took over and that wasn't possible, but it told me that there was an awareness that pressure was

building, and I do think, if only I'd had an opportunity, we might have been able to actually prevent this very serious violent incident. Therefore, while there is an awareness that violence was building in the unit, unfortunately, there was an oversimplification of why this occurred, preventing an informed future approach to managing prison violence. Similar to crime, where crime is like a piece of Swiss cheese rule: the holes have to all line up, but we focus in on the last events, those immediately preceding the violence. We know that there's a whole lot of things that go before an event, and that just focusing on the acute factors rather than those maintaining violence, doesn't necessarily help us to prevent it.

Experience with PRISM in Ara Poutama

The experience of myself and others (including Dr Armon Tamatea) with the PRISM in Aotearoa was that it started with a 'hiss and a roar' in 2008.

We invited Professor Cooke⁷ out to New Zealand, and there was a great deal of excitement about the PRISM as potentially a tool for regular use across prison settings... and then this interest all ‘petered’ out.

Unfortunately, right from the beginning it was seen as a *psychological* measure. It was thus unfortunately seen as too complex and time-consuming. The Prison Service wanted something that could be done quickly, and of course the other thing that became apparent is that it was seen as something that could not be operated solely by custody. It needed, in custody's point of view, the input from psychologists. Some aspects of the structured professional judgment approach that underpins PRISM and the use of risk scenarios as part of developing a risk formulation seemed quite alien to them at that time.

I actually think, and this is part of the theme with

‘perseverance’, is that maybe PRISM's time has come again, that in fact, many other measures have now been introduced within the custodial environment, including the SDAC-21⁸, which uses a similar approach, and the use of risk scenarios are in place. I think increasingly there's an understanding of that structured assessment approach.

Over the years since 2009, PRISM has been applied across many male prison settings, at Auckland, Mount Eden correctional facility, Spring Hill, as mentioned, Waikeria, Hawke's Bay, Tongariro, Christchurch, and it's been applied in both maximum security, medium high, low security settings, under 25 units, Youth Units, and including the intervention support unit space (managing at risk prisoners). We have actually planned to do it – but unfortunately haven't been able to at this stage – apply it in

⁷ See chapter (Johnstone), this volume.

⁸ Serin, R. C., & Wilson, N. J. (2012). *Practice manual for use with Structured Dynamic Assessment Case-management-21 item (SDAC-21)* [Unpublished manuscript]. Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada & Department of Corrections, New Zealand.

a women's prison space. We've got some experience of applying it and seeing its ability to actually assess different risks, and with those 21 items and five domains, seeing differences across those often very challenging spaces.

Insights

PRISM is actually listed by Ara Poutama as one of the available tools for use in prison management, but unfortunately, is not in regular use. So, what we're finding is that it's only applied in response to concerns, and over elevated violence and risk, and comes from a mixture of some site awareness, but usually the requests come from a higher-level management in the prison. Thus, there is a degree, when you come in to do the PRISM assessment, of being "parachuted in", which never goes down well and sometimes there is a lack of perhaps acceptance of the need for the assessment at the actual site level, or indeed the unit level.

We've got a lot better at doing our PRISM assessment reports. We've made them shorter, we do them quicker. I think the fastest I've been able to do a complete PRISM assessment is two weeks, to get a draft report to the site for feedback, and I think that's really providing information and a user-friendly focus. Still, the reports that we do disappear into 'black holes'. There's little feedback on actions taken as a result, nor have we actually been invited to reapply the PRISM, to provide evidence on the impact of changes made on the ratings. It is a dynamic measure, but at this stage, at this time in Ara Poutama, we haven't utilised it as such. I think as Lorraine⁹ before me talked about, the measure picks up not just on areas of need but also areas that are going well, and so it actually shouldn't be something to be feared but something that actually can show some of the good work that is being done.

Realistic hope continues in part because, in my applied use of

⁹ See chapter (Johnstone), this volume.

the PRISM measure, prison staff and prisoners when introduced to it understand and endorse the approach. When you use the analogy of the 'frying pan' and the heat going into the pan and pulling the heat out, and showing the breadth of information that we look at rather than just focusing on violence happening just because they're a bad prisoner, they all see it as having great face validity. Custody have liked the wide scope of the measure, recognising that a focus on single aspects is often not realistic, and that the 21 items and five domains provide some areas that could be a target for short, medium, and long-term intervention strategies. Sometimes they'll say, "Well actually, it's an old building," or, "This can't be changed," but the beauty of having a complex measure is it gives you opportunity. There are always some aspects of PRISM that you can actually start to target to produce change. However, there's still an attraction to explaining prison violence from reference to acute often individual explanatory factors.

If we look at Figure 1, this is actually from one of my reports, and you can see that we go through and for each of the five domains and across the 21 items, we indicate whether a particular aspect of the PRISM needs improvement, is satisfactory, or indeed sometimes problematic. We can also rate items of course as being not known, in cases where we just don't have enough information. This is just giving you some sort of idea of the scope and that not all areas are necessarily going to be an area for intervention. We can actually emphasise what is going well.

Again, you've got to make sure that these are transparent and that the ratings for these are actually based on the evidence that you've gained from the review of records, and the interview with prisoners and staff and management of the particular unit. When I write my reports, I provide the ratings and we discuss the ratings and the evidence that it's based on, and then it's finalised with the site.

Figure 1*Example of a PRISM Profile*

<i>Domain</i>	<i>Rating</i>
1. History of Violence	
1. Previous Violence	Needs Improvement
2. Diversity in Violence	Satisfactory
3. Escalation in Violence	Satisfactory
4. Change in level/type of complaint	Needs Improvement
Overall: Satisfactory/Needs Improvement	
2. Physical Environment	
1. Physical Layout & Resources	Needs Improvement/ Problematic
2. Security measures	Satisfactory
Overall: Needs improvement	
3. Organisational Features	
1. Organisational Ethos and Priorities	Needs Improvement
2. Organisational Structure and Style	Needs Improvement
3. Leadership & Management on Violence	Needs Improvement
4. Policies & Procedures on Violence	Satisfactory
5. Responsivity to Organisational Conflict	Satisfactory
6. Adaptability to Organisation Change	Needs Improvement
Overall: Needs Improvement	
4. Staff Features	
1. Staff Recruitment & Retention Procedures	Needs Improvement
2. Staff Levels, experience and mix	Satisfactory
3. Staff training and competencies	Satisfactory/Needs Improvement
4. Staff approach, style and accessibility	Needs Improvement
5. Staff Morale	Needs Improvement
Overall: Needs Improvement	
Domain 5. Case Management	
1. Case Formulation: Violence Risk/Needs	Needs Improvement
2. Population Mix	Satisfactory
3. Interventions & Incentives for Violence Reduction	Problematic/Needs Improvement
4. Quality of Life Experiences	Needs Improvement
Overall: Needs Improvement	

It is a very transparent process where the evidence is actually listed. This is an anonymised report to show you the sources of information and of course the comments that the ratings are based on (see Figure 2).

Of course, the key thing about all this is to gather this information for the purpose of addressing violence. A number of risk scenarios are developed which help you to formalise what is happening in terms of violence, what's actually the behaviour that you're actually trying to target. You can see here (Figure 3) we've got three scenarios: the most likely, worst, and best case scenario. In this particular case, we can see that the worst, sort of the most likely scenario, is threats and intimidation by a prisoner towards a staff member. The worst case is a physical manual assault involving blows to the head. That's what happens when you wear a vest. They target your head, and if we look at the best-case scenario, you can see there's still displays of negative attitudes and anger, but this would be less frequent

and monthly rather than weekly. We're realistic about what we're trying to address and then we go through and unpack the scenarios in terms of who would be involved, the impact, et cetera. Also, what is not shown on this sheet is what you can actually start to do about that possible risk based on your data that you've gathered from the PRISM items.

Ara Poutama PRISM Reports

The reports that we provide start with a summary detailing the reasons for the referral, the sources, the purpose of the unit or the prison that we are looking at, the operating model for that particular setting, the prisoner mix in the cells, et cetera, how many cells, and a bit of the history. It's really important to do that, and especially the next bit of the assessment on the review of violence. The reviews of the last two years are really important. What we've often found when you go in is the staff, and indeed the prisoners, have a distorted view of the level of violence, and that's

Figure 2

Example of Evidence for PRISM Ratings of Domain 1: History of Institutional Violence

<p>Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 1.1 Previous violence: NI <input type="checkbox"/> 1.2 Diversity of violence: S <input type="checkbox"/> 1.3 Escalation of violence: S <input type="checkbox"/> 1.4 Change in type/level of complaints NI <p>Rating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Problematic (P) <input type="checkbox"/> Needs improvement (NI) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Satisf./Needs Improv. (S/NI) <input type="checkbox"/> Not known (NK) 	<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Analysis of IOMS data for violence related incidents for XXX for the last two years (June '11 to June '13) found 43 incidents in total, 29 in the last year and 14 in the preceding year. The difference for the last year to the preceding was statistically significant. Further analysis of the last 12 months showed a reduction in violence incidents for the last six months (19 vs 10 last six months).</i> ○ <i>Prisoners report a low level of manual violence mainly in cells but some had occurred in the yard.</i> ○ <i>Staff report variable violence, pushing by prisoners and of other prisoners and attacks by prisoners. Violence mainly 'handbags' one on one, with prisoners looking for staff to stop it going further. More use of intimidation, stand over's to gain goods such as shoes or P119 purchases.</i> ○ <i>Staff had the belief that violence is reducing slightly especially over the last few months.</i> ○ <i>Gang related violence reported mainly within gang</i> ○ <i>No report of actual violence in segregation wing although some threats (verbal)</i> ○ <i>Zero tolerance sparring by staff</i> ○ <i>Prisoner's report everyday abuse of staff (i.e., "you are a f---g liar"). Also, some evidence of passive-aggressive behaviour by staff to prisoners requests and abuse.</i> ○ <i>Reports from prisoners that staff use threats of placement in mob wing locations to get obedience.</i> ○ <i>Moderate level of complaints by prisoners- often over property requests and also regarding classification issues. However, staff and prisoners confirm reliable belief by prisoners in utility of complaints system.</i>
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- *Review of recorded incidents for last two years found 43 violence related incident reports in IOMS, observation is that observed violence (unobserved cell violence higher), especially assault is recorded along with some minor order related behaviour but that observation and prisoner interview would indicate low seriousness violence especially verbal violence is not typically recorded in IOMS.*
- *Prisoners also spoke of things being better in the last two months but they were unsure why*

Sources of information:

- Interviews: Management
- Interviews: Staff
- Interviews: Prisoners
- IOMS/CARS review
- Data analysis
- Other:

because we tend to naturally base our assessment of violence on the most recent incidents and just as often on our particular experience of violence.

If you've only been in the unit for two months, you're basing your assessment of violence on those two months, and that gives you a restricted period. We detail all of those incidents over two years, and we look at what's the actual violence, including the most severe and likely, and often I'll actually do different graphs for those so

we can actually see, perhaps what's the most frequent and what's the most serious. We also make a reference to the New Zealand corrections custody tool, which measures unit tension (PTAT; Prison Tension Assessment Tool). I'd have to say often that tension tool isn't necessarily picking up on that pattern of violence.

Regarding PRISM ratings and indications – whether they're problematic, needs improvement, satisfactory, or not – we detail the worst and most likely and best scenarios,

Figure 3

Example PRISM Risk Scenarios: Prisoner Violence towards Staff

	Most Likely Scenario	Worst Case Scenario	Best Case Scenario
<i>Description of Risk Event</i>	Threat/intimidation by prisoner to staff member	Physical manual assault of staff member involving blows to the head	Display of negative attitudes and anger to staff. This would be infrequent, monthly rather than weekly
<i>Who would be involved</i>	Mainstream prisoners undergoing classification or placed in unit due to overflow. More likely to be over 25 years	Mainstream prisoners undergoing classification or placed in unit due to overflow. More likely to be over 25 years. More likely to involve a prisoner not well known to staff	Mainstream prisoners undergoing classification or placed in unit due to overflow. More likely to be over 25 years
<i>Impact of Risk on Victims</i>	Staff may feel unsafe on the unit - staff may request to leave unit or be reluctant to engage fully in unit responsibilities such as going into the wing areas. Could also result overtime in increased sickness and a loss of unit staff morale Threats may also lead to actual physical assault	May lead to serious medical consequences – i.e., unconsciousness and require urgent medical intervention. Could lead to serious and ongoing medical issues. Staff may opt to resign following such serious assaults. Staff may also request transfer or seek alternative work given the high stress experienced.	Low-level but may bring out, or reinforce, negative attitudes or anger towards these prisoners. Could also be viewed as acceptable (part of the job) due to its low level and not addressed

again, in consultation with the staff on the floor. We then have an overall PRISM priority rating of whether the unit is operating at a green, amber or red level. That's the traffic light system, and then we develop with the site, risk intervention strategies that are short term (i.e., next month or so) that could be done, and this is often interventions that are under the control of the unit, the PCO¹⁰ or above. Then, we often will identify things that are more medium in terms of strategy. They may take longer, and so that could be the next six months. We don't shy away from putting down perhaps longer-term interventions which may involve reconstruction of parts of the prison, et cetera. Like I said, it's all developed in consultation.

Domain 1. History of Violence

The history of violence really does set the stage, and it gives you a degree of gravitas and validity by, when you come in to do the assessment, you've already got an idea of some of that when you start to

interview. Looking back over the previous two years of the violent incidents is pretty key, provides that evidence base to challenge misconceptions. Staff and prisoner perceptions allow consideration of a balance between a very concerning incident that people will often remember, and actually what is BAU. It's understandable that the most serious incident becomes the focus, but often that incident may have happened even longer than two years before. The danger is that severe violence becomes the defining incident for everybody in the unit or the prison. If the staff are driving to the prison, that's what they think about, and when a prisoner comes into the unit, that's what they're told about. It often becomes a skewing incident and defining experience for the culture of the unit.

The history of violence assessment also gives you a background and insights to ground your interviews and to engage the staff and prisoners,

¹⁰ Principal Corrections Officer: A senior custodial role in Ara Poutama.

and you start to actually look at the diversity of violence.

There's a need to examine official records with some rigor as sometimes the records are not labeled as violence. It could be just recorded as an incident or a case note, and in some cases, are indicative of very low-level violence, throwing warm or cold water. It might be indicated as an assault, but you've got to go and dive into it and then be able to actually accurately classify it in terms of its seriousness. Reports of violence change, of course, as the security level changes. You get minimisation and low recording of verbal violence and threats in higher security settings compared to lower, so you've actually got to realize that the setting can determine the reporting.

In terms of diversity of violence and escalation, and gathering it in practice, we found a need to add into the violence assessment questionnaire that's provided with the PRISM manual questions on sexual violence, as well as how gang activity may be related to the

violence. This we felt was a gap when we were looking at violence in New Zealand. There was also a need to attend to the so-called 'sparring', which is often hiding violence and standover. Indeed, during one assessment that I was involved with, a young prisoner that we were interviewing told us that the so-called sparring he was frequently being reported as involved with was certainly not something he agreed to and was actually a standover, and so we had to get that young man out of that unit immediately because of the violence he was facing.

In terms of the escalation of gang tension in the community, it's useful to assess possible escalation in prison, but keep in mind the complexity of this, that gang activity in the prison can actually be on separate contingencies to those in the community. Sometimes they'll be collaborating in the prison for various reasons, such as to distribute drugs or just because the gang leaders in the prison want to have a quiet sentence. It's good to keep in mind the

recording of low levels of violence in a particular unit and what might be behind that. Importantly, when you're asking staff about the last two years, to recognise that most staff and prisoners won't have been there for two years, and so you have to very much adjust the timeframe you're asking about. You want to look at the last two years, but recognise that they may not be accurate reporters for that period.

Change in level and type of complaints is a really important item. It's often affected by the culture of the unit being assessed. Prisoners and staff will be open about the use of the complaint system coming down to local practices, and often with their confidence in the system. Often a drop in complaints may just be a loss of confidence, not necessarily a lack of issues to complain about. Some PCOs will pride themselves on dealing with complaints rather than have them recorded, and thus, if they feel that they're getting ahead of the complaints, this

actually may reduce the recorded complaints, but in fact sometimes the concerns keep coming up. One aspect that improves confidence for prisoners is seeing whether staff actually make a note of the issue. I had one prisoner tell me, "If I see them write it down, I know something will be done. Otherwise, it's highly likely that they'll just forget." Also, that prisoners will note the particular staff that are prepared to deal with issues, and others they will avoid because every time you ask them, nothing happens.

Finally, in regards to the previous violence, graphing it is a powerful tool to share with the staff about periods of time when violence was not apparent, because people start to confound, "this is always a violent place" but we would often find gaps where nothing is happening.

Domain 2. Physical Environment

The physical environment, the area of most resistance and limitations. It really pays to get

a full tour of the unit or the prison before engaging. I often observe for hours just to get that credibility with staff and prisoners that I know how the unit functions. I like to draw a diagram of the facility, get locations of cameras. Prisoners are great at telling you all the blind spots in the units, and also identifying which cells are preferred because they're quieter, have better ventilation, etc.

Often with aged facilities, this is an area that's seen as not open to change. You just get this, "Oh well, until they build a new prison there's nothing we can do". I'm also often amazed by the acceptance of facilities that are noisy, cold, hot, or decaying by both prisoners and staff, so there tends to be this, "Oh, it's what I expected", and so there's an unfortunate acceptance of conditions that should be changed. I also found as a rule of thumb that the flashier the facility, the worse the culture, which seems to be a bit contradictory, but I've often found that when a new prison is built, then often the

environment, just because it's flashier, is expected to do all the work, when in fact it's often what happens *within* that facility that's the important thing. You can have unintended consequences of newer prison designs, which can often reduce the quality contact between prisoners and staff. Staff can wander up and down corridors and not even communicate or talk to prisoners, and so while old designs we would see as terrible, sometimes they had the consequence of more open grills, of encouraging communication.

Domain 3. Organisational Features

This is where we are looking at those organisational ethos, structure, and management on violence. In the past, very much driven by custodial priorities, with staff well aware that static security and corrections rules were the highest priority for *ō* their workday. I'm still unsure at this stage if *Hōkai Rangi* has impacted beyond an aspirational level. There's little scope for critical thinking or

dynamic decision-making, and what we've found applying the PRISM is that it's very hierarchical in structure. Any advancement and indeed even the move from the green to the blue uniforms and lots of 'bling' on the uniforms and emphasis on ranks has had an impact in terms of distancing the staff from the prisoners, and indeed, their ability to move beyond a rule-governed governance.

The focus on safety from management has, at least for officers in terms of zero tolerance, improved levels of training and attention to behaviours of concern. I have found in applying the PRISM that the feedback from staff and indeed prisoners is that they're very well aware of the zero tolerance for violence against staff, but they're not so sure whether that is actually, the zero tolerance is applied to the prisoners. When this is matched of course by good PCO leadership, this has resulted in the staff feeling

safer and able to make often dynamic decisions and actually practice relational security, but only under that particular leadership.

Typically, policies and procedures are well known. They're actually advertised. You can see them on the wall. Prisoners know about the policies, and these are often attended to, but there were local differences noted in terms of the acceptance of the so-called sparring, or indeed wearing a vest, and the reporting of violence. No surprises that prisons across the motu in Aotearoa operate very differently and often appear as 'fiefdoms'. While they're all following the same POM¹¹, the same prisoner offender management regime, there's very different interpretations, and when you apply PRISM, you can actually start to see these differences. I know that under COVID these have become more apparent, but they existed before. In

¹¹ *Prison Operations Manual*. The purpose of the POM is to provide instructions to Corrections employees on the day-to-day activities relating to managing a prison (see www.corrections.govt.nz).

terms of differences in response to organisational conflict, this again applied across a prison, even down to a unit level, and even down to different PCOs operating in the same unit.

Applying it, the PRISM increased my knowledge as a psychologist of how prisons worked – It improved my awareness, opened my eyes. I'd worked in prisons for many years, but again, I'd just been going in to see a particular prisoner in a particular unit. Actually spending time in those units and actually making the effort to understand the custodial processes really helped me as a psychologist, becoming more aware and indeed fascinated by how resistant some units and cultures were to change. It doesn't matter what the prison director wants or indeed National policies. Sometimes they just keep on trucking on.

Domain 4. Staff Features

Recruitment varies across units. Some had set strategies where they would look for particular staff with the right set of skills and attitude to work in a place. Others relied just upon interest or just plain availability. When Dr Armon Tamatea and I looked at the maximum security units many years ago¹², we found that you could be sent there directly from training college or you could have actually been there because you've actually got 10 or 20 year's experience, so it was quite a mix.

Assessments found typically not enough staff, but that experienced staff were more able to cope with the multitasking and manage the stressful incidents. Some units appeared to lack a mix and to attract a certain mindset, which was unfortunate because you then got group thinking going on in terms of what they did about violence.

In terms of training and competencies, at least early on, there was a reliance on control

¹² Wilson, N., & Tamatea, A., (2010). Beyond punishment: Applying PRISM in a New Zealand maximum security prison. *International Journal of Forensic Mental Health*, 9(3), 192-204.

and restraint rather than de-escalation. Also, staff felt under-prepared. They often talked about how they would like to have been able to come back for more training after they'd actually experienced what it was like to work in the prison for a period, and then perhaps look at some of the training and have a better understanding of the need for it.

The staff approach to morale was all down to key staff, in the Senior Corrections Officers (SCO) and PCOs. High stress wasn't an issue when there was good leadership. The prisoners were very clear on who they would seek out as more accessible, and morale, although it was sometimes maintained, by a "them and us" split between the unit staff and prison management. While I can understand how that works, it often set up an artificial divide. Finally, of course, I'm just aware when I'm going out there – and maybe

it's my own age! – but many of the custodial offices are ageing and I wonder whether that's changing our abilities, our style, accessibility and morale.

Domain 5. Case Management

Case management is an area that is typically lacking. In terms of individualised assessment, all the measures that Dr Lorraine Johnston put up are fine measures, and sometimes there will be the availability of psychological assessments on violence on prisoners available to staff. What I found in the main is that the staff in the unit relied on knowledge of the prisoner from previous management, which might be good or bad, or verbal information briefings from other staff where they would make a phone call to a previous unit and get a quick debrief on what a particular prisoner was really like to manage. The DASA, the dynamic assessment situational aggression¹³, while piloted and validated, typically is not used. That was an area

¹³ Ogloff, J.R.P., & Daffern, M. (2009). *The Dynamic Appraisal of Situational Aggression: Inpatient version - Adult*. Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science, Monash University, Victoria, Australia.

that often I talked to staff about and they'd go, "What the hell's that?" It could be quite useful for when you've got somebody you don't know coming into the unit. It can help you to track perhaps the particular elevation for that individual so that you're not believing all people in your care are risky. Right Track¹⁴, started out with an awareness of the need for multi-professional input, but that has not continued. Population mix is an issue with difficulties managing gang numbers, and of course the need for custodial staff to resist the blandishments of gangs wanting their own wings or units. There are problems with younger prisoners mixing with older, and of course the longer sentenced prisoners. We're now up to around 19% of New Zealand's prison population now are on indeterminate sentences.

In terms of quality of life and interventions, this is also highly variable. Some units have programmes with psychological therapeutic input, but not in higher security. There's a need for intervention services to follow the person as in health rather than treatment becoming a destination. Some people get stuck in higher security. We've had some successful interventions such as the high-risk personality programme¹⁵, but there's this ethos about treatment – it cannot be a destination, it needs to be a pathway, so you can't kick it down the road and say, "Wait until you get to lower security," which is when all treatment is suddenly delivered in one setting. We actually need to see it as a pathway of treatment opportunities.

Most sad across the PRISM applications was the lack of

¹⁴ Right Track was a Departmental framework implemented to assist frontline staff to make informed decisions and take timely and appropriate action to support offender decisions and actions. See Ryan, J., & Jones, R. (2016). Innovations in reducing re-offending. *Practice: The New Zealand Corrections Journal*, 4(2), 9-15.

¹⁵ See: Wilson, N. J., & Tamatea, A. (2013). Challenging the 'urban myth' of psychopathy untreatability: The High-Risk Personality Programme. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 19(5-6), 493–510; Wilson, N., & Kilgour, G. (2015). The High Risk Personality Programme - Revised: An evaluation report. *Practice: The New Zealand Corrections Journal*, 3(2), 10-18.

quality of life experiences, leading to boredom and frustration. This can range from big areas like contact with family and work, but also small things like access to board games and books. It's really often reliant on individual staff members doing the right thing rather than the site. I always had in mind that one prisoner of maximum security saying to me, "In here, Nick, a glass of water looks like an oasis." You've got to realise that small things have great import. Thank you for attention.

Armon: What do you think is the role of culture in terms of PRISM items or even how to conduct an assessment like the PRISM in Aotearoa? Any thoughts?

Nick: I think it's a really important aspect. We know that our Māori Focus Units¹⁶ have been able to bring about a lower level of tension, and so it's clear from their success that

when the prisoners are able to buy into a kaupapa which doesn't involve violence, that there is a change. That's not to say there's no violence in those units, it's not a clean slate, but I think it's definitely a factor that can drop the temperature.

Armon: I think that's a good start, and certainly with the complexities around culture, mātauranga Māori, for example, and Māori ways of *being* within prison sites... there's lots to unpack there.

Nick: I also think, just like we've found within our therapy when we bring in cultural concepts, it allows the person to be seen as more than their crime. If staff and prisoners are able to see themselves as a more of a human being and as a whole human being, that's a great start.

¹⁶ Māori Focus Units (MFUs) are low security prison units intended as a form of therapeutic community, within which Māori cultural principles and practices form the basis of daily interaction. The purpose of a MFU placement is to encourage the person to embrace Māori cultural values, identity and affiliations to facilitate positive outcomes within the institution and in preparation for released and reintegration.

BUILDING A DESCRIPTIVE MODEL OF INSTITUTIONAL GANG VIOLENCE IN NEW ZEALAND PRISONS

NICOLA BRENNAN-TUPARA

Incidents of serious violence in Aotearoa's prisons have quadrupled since 2010, which has a major impact on the wellbeing of both the staff and prisoners. Therefore, it's crucial that we seek to understand ways we could help reduce such violence. While past theories and empirical research have highlighted several risk factors implicated in prison violence, we continue to have a limited understanding of what happens, and why it happens, during a prison violence event (PVE). Furthermore, we have even less of an understanding about the involvement of gangs in prison violence despite research suggesting that gang members are over-represented when it comes to involvement in such incidents. This is in part due to the way such research has been conducted in the past.

We decided to take a different approach to the topic to try and get a deeper understanding of why gang members are overrepresented in the statistics by examining the offence process itself, from the perspective of gang members involved in the violence. This approach allowed us to get a better understanding of the temporal outline of how violent events unfold by exploring the

cognitive, behavioural, contextual, and environmental components of the event at different stages. Primarily we wanted to know when and why do gang members commit violence in New Zealand prisons? We were also interested in the extent to which violence by gang members is actually “gang violence” – that is violence committed for and on behalf of

the gang, and if events done on behalf of the gang were different to those that were not?

Method

Participants for the study were recruited from two separate correctional facilities: Waikeria Prison and the Tai Aroha Residential Treatment Programme in Huntly. The event narratives of 12 participants were used in the analyses. The interviews were collected and analysed in several stages, over several months, as Grounded Theory dictates. Using this method allowed codes and concepts to be developed and strengthened during the data gathering process. We continued the interview process until no new concepts emerged and the data was saturated.

Findings

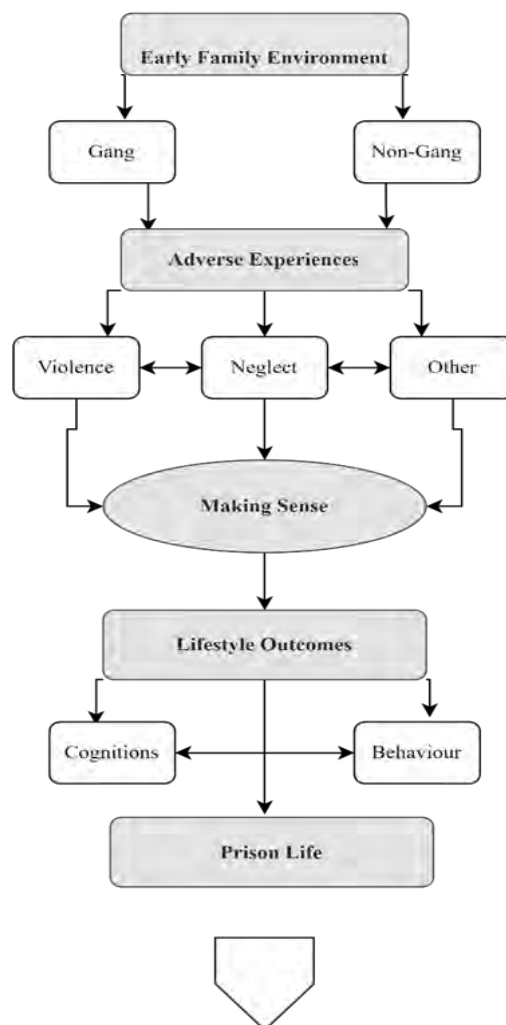
Our resulting Descriptive Model of Institutional Gang Violence has four distinct phases arranged temporally from the most distal to the most proximal.

The first phase of the model (see figure 1) contains data relevant to background (distal) factors that distally influenced the event mainly via early belief formation and normalisation of violence. As you can see, men all described *Adverse Experiences* in their childhood which led to a process of *Making Sense* of what was occurring in their life and why. Constant exposure to violence, and their inability to escape it, led them to develop ways of perceiving and acting in the world to protect themselves both physically and emotionally. They describe learning that: they needed to “be feared or live in fear” and that violence is a normal and necessary way to communicate with others and solve problems. Those who grew up in gang homes describe being taught that they (their gang) must “*be number one, the best and the greatest*”, and if they had to use violence to achieve that, they should. All but one of the men in our study also described entering prison very young.

Once inside, the prison environment and the culture – namely due to the concentration of gangs and their inability to escape interactions with rivals – perpetuated their beliefs around the normalisation of and need for violence. The behaviour of prison staff also

perpetuated these beliefs with many men disclosing that they felt that prison staff didn't care about them or turned a blind eye to violence, which led to beliefs that staff would not keep them safe. They thus formed the view that they had to rely on themselves or the gang for protection.

Figure 1
Distal Factors Impacting Prison Violence

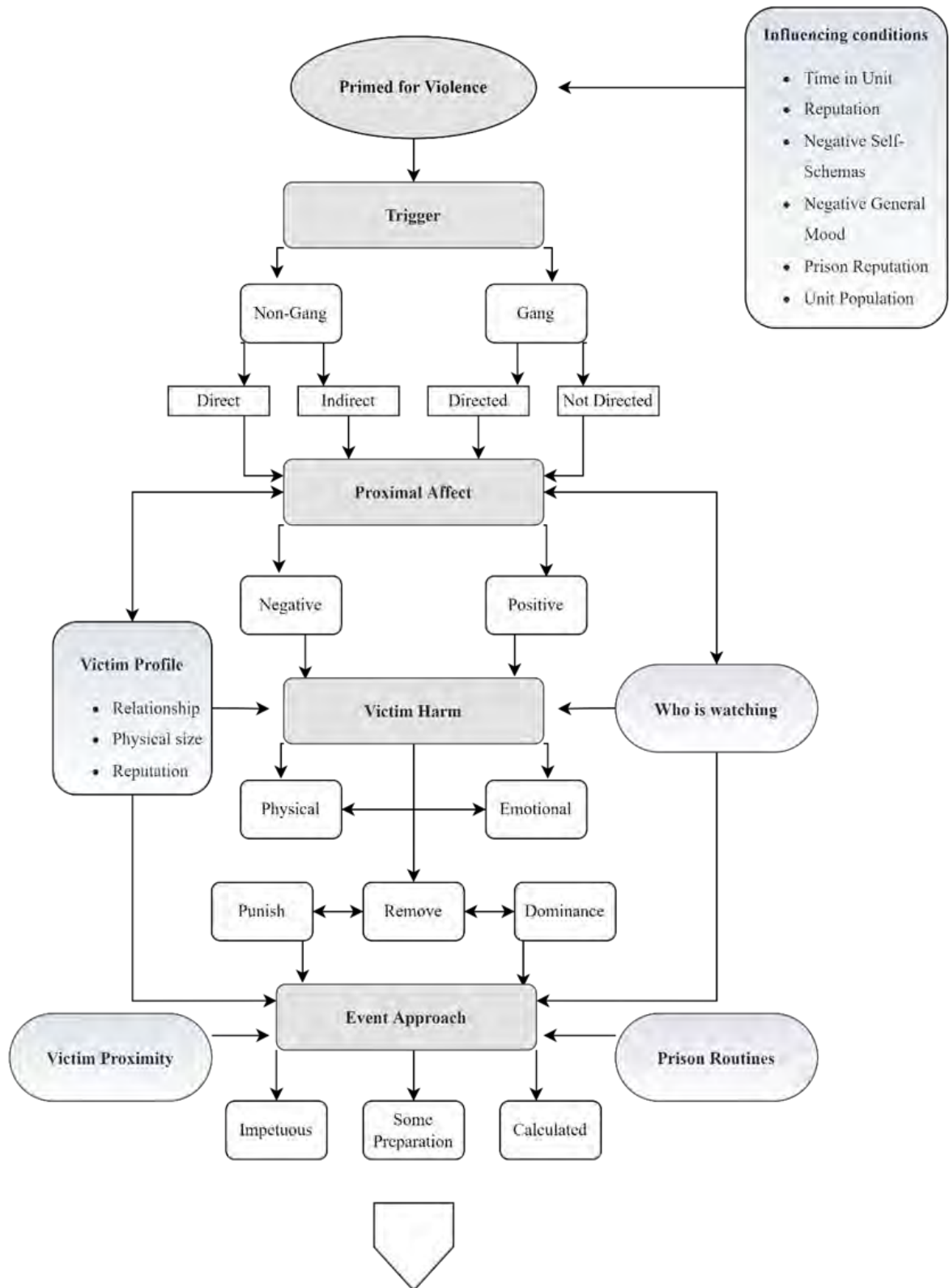


The next phase describes the thoughts, actions and events that leading up to the event (figure 2). Men described being *Primed for Violence* early in this period: hyper-alert to any threat to themselves or their gang. On the right see a few *Influencing Conditions* that influenced them being “primed”. *Triggers* for the events were separated into two key types - *Non-Gang* and *Gang*. These triggers are important because they impact how the rest of the event plays out. *Non-Gang* events were generally more Impetuous, with less thought or care given to the violence that was going to occur or the consequences of before it happened. On the other hand, *Gang-Related* triggers generally involve more thought or calculation. Participants were either being given a direct order to cause harm from another gang member or took it upon themselves to act on behalf of the gang due to a perceived harm or threat to the gang. They also perceived this as a

personal threat because their self-identity was so ingrained in being a gang member. For example, perpetrators regularly used the term “we” when referring to something they were thinking, feeling, or doing personally.

In this phase gang members also described themselves as having “no choice but to act”, which was emphasised by who was watching and the victim’s profile. Interestingly the ‘who was watching’ refers to other gang members, not Corrections staff who on most occasions they gave little thought to. Participants generally described three distinct aims of their *Victim Harm*: to *Punish* (e.g., seek retribution, send a message), *Remove* (e.g., emotional release of negative emotion, removing a threat to power or person), *Dominance* (e.g., gain power or influence over others usually for the purposes of the criminal economy). Sometimes it was a combination.

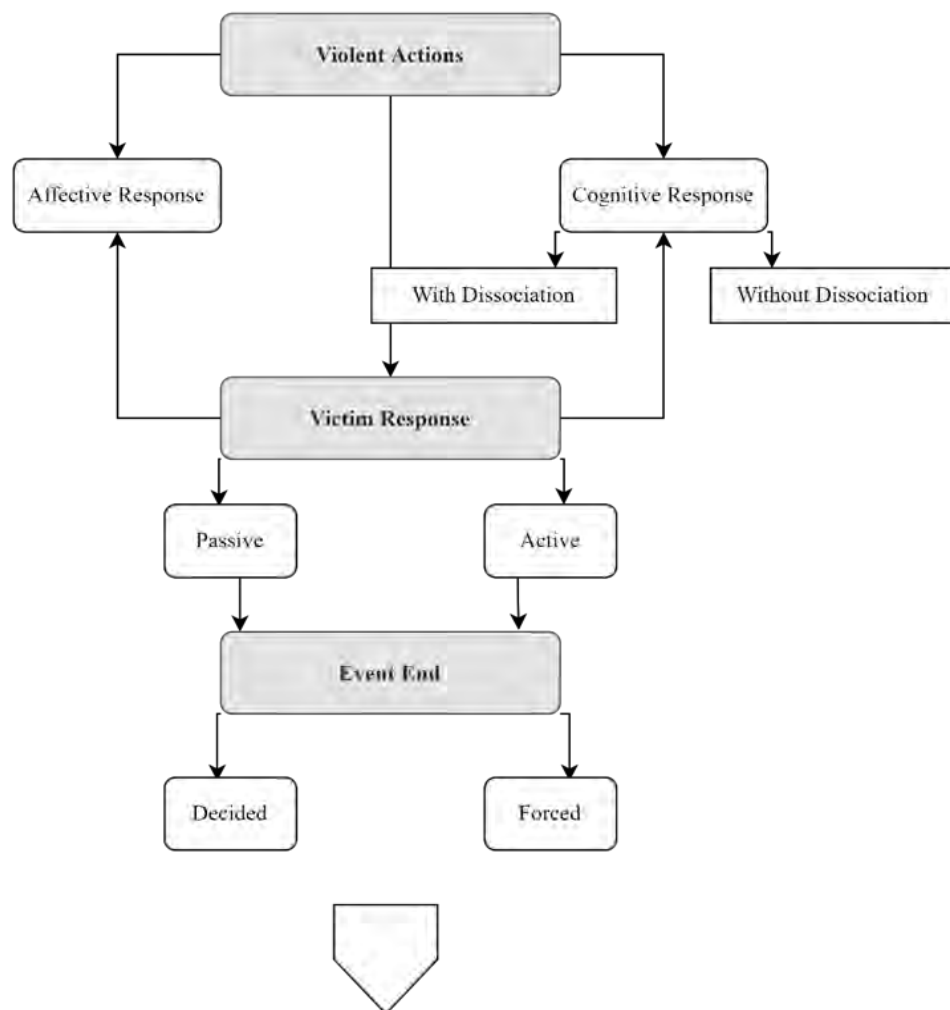
Figure 2
Antecedent Factors of Prison Violence



Phase 3 of the model (figure 3) refers specifically to the violent event itself. One of the main points of interest here is the dissociation that occurred, with half the men describing dissociation during the event. They described periods in which they “blacked out”, sometimes causing more harm

than initially intended because they “couldn’t stop”. During these periods, they lost the concept of time, space, and control over their actions. Some described it as though someone else was doing the violence, and they were watching it like a movie.

Figure 3
Situational Factors of Prison Violence



Another interesting behaviour to come up during gang-related events was the involvement of other gang members - this was either via a planned "pack-attack" due to the size of the victim or else others joining in after the event started to "back-up a brother". Something they had been taught.

The final phase, Phase 4, covers the period after the event (figure 4). As seen in the model, perpetrators either thought they had *Achieved* or had *Not Achieved* their initial goal. How they felt about this then led to different affective and behavioural responses. For example, those who thought they had *achieved* their intended goal more often reported a *Satisfied Affective Response* in which the perpetrator felt positively (e.g., joyous, relieved, content) about their actions and gave little thought to the victim afterwards. In terms of *Immediate Consequences*, participants describe either being *Rewarded* or *Punished*. It is important to note that while some perpetrators received a

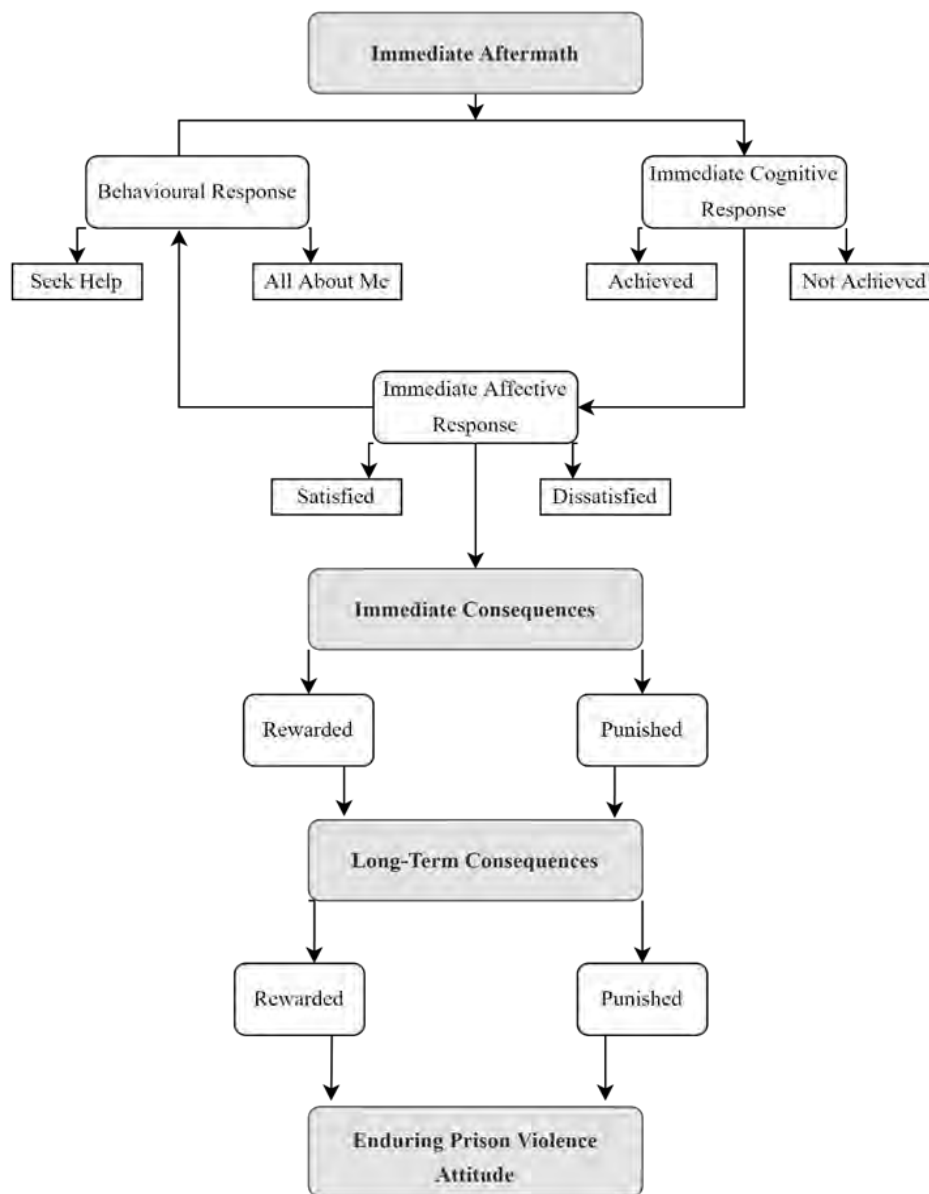
formal punishment Ara Poutama (e.g., isolation in the "pound" or shifted to another unit or jail) during this period, many did not perceive this as a major punishment because other rewards (e.g., mana from their gang peers, membership to the gang, removal of a threat) outweighed it.

The last category is the *Enduring Prison Violence Attitudes* that all the men interviewed held. Every one of them expressed a view that prison violence would always exist. The main reason for this view was due to the presence of gang members in prison. They describe a core belief that gang members should and would always be more violent than other prisoners because it was not only their right, but also their duty to be.

Conclusions

Our research highlights that there are some key differences when events "gang-directed" and when they are not. It also gives some insight into why gang members might be overrepresented in prison

Figure 4
Post-Event Consequences of Prison Violence



violence statistics. Because gang members view themselves as a collective unit whose needs as a group come first, perceived triggers for violence may be more frequent for them than for other prisoners. This is because an act of harm against

one of their brothers or the gang is also perceived as a direct threat to themselves and one they need to act on. Furthermore, gang-related events often involve “pack-attack” thus increasing the numbers of gang members

involved in a single event, leading them to become overrepresented in the statistics. This research also highlights the role of intergenerational violence and trauma, which can be seen in the dissociation that's showing up, but also on the men's core belief systems. Having this knowledge may help in the development of more trauma informed interventions. Finally, the presence of corrections staff was not as big of a deterrent for violence as some may have thought it would be. This has implications for how prison management may want to think about punishment and how they interact with gang members in prison.

I end this presentation with some final acknowledgments.

Firstly, thank you to the men who shared their stories with me. I will forever be grateful for your cooperation and openness during the interview process. Your willingness to open yourself up to a stranger like that is something I held with me during analyses and writing of this piece of research. Secondly thank-you to my supervisors, Devon Polaschek and Armon Tamatea for your support. Further thanks must go to Department of Corrections: Ara Poutama Aotearoa, thank you for supporting this project, particularly during a global pandemic. And finally, thank-you also to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and Māori Psychology Research Unit (MPRU) for funding my work.

EXPLORING VERBAL ABUSE, THREATS AND ASSAULTS ON PRISON STAFF

ABI CLARKE

Prison violence remains a significant issue around the world, with prison officer victimisation being at the forefront. Prison violence can be predicted using a variety of variables at a prisoner level and a prison level. For prison officer's physical victimisation by prisoner has gained all the attention, although experiencing verbal victimisation is much more common and seems to be regarded as part of the job.

Consequences of verbal victimisation in the workplace can include burnout, emotional exhaustion and job dissatisfaction, leading to increased levels of absenteeism and staff turnover. On top of these consequences, verbal aggression may indicate increased levels of aggression in certain individuals or situations, leading us to hypothesize that verbal

aggression from prisoners will predict physical violence towards staff. As part of Nga Tūmanakotanga, Ara Poutama Aotearoa (New Zealand Department of Corrections) supplied us with a verbal incident database, of which we extracted a sample for analysis. For our sample of prisoners ($N=361$) with a recorded verbal aggression incident reported in their current prison term, we categorised these incidents as verbal abuse (e.g., name calling) or a verbal threat (e.g., indication of intent to cause harm) to investigate if different types of verbal aggression predicted physical harm on staff. We also investigated whether the number of days since arriving in prison to the first verbal aggression episode predicted subsequent physical assault towards staff. After controlling for several other common predictors (e.g., security level and ethnicity), we

found that verbal aggression predicted physical assault towards staff later in the imprisonment period, but the type of aggression made no difference. We concluded that verbal aggression from prisoner needs more attention as a sign of escalated risk for staff,

rather than being considered part of the job. Considerations should be given to the causes of verbal aggression and interventions that can help reduce it may prevent further prison violence and officer victimisation.

“THIS IS NOT A RIOT, IT IS A PROTEST”: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF PRISON VIOLENCE IN NEW ZEALAND NEWS MEDIA

LIAM MEMBERY

This presentation is a summary of my Master’s thesis, which investigated how prison violence is talked about publicly in the New Zealand news media¹⁷. The research aimed to enhance and broaden the understanding of prison violence in a New Zealand context by examining the discourses of prison violence in the news media reporting of the Spring Hill (2013) and Waikeria (2020–2021) prison riots.

Background

Prison violence constitutes a significant social issue that prevents the prison from functioning adequately, and is responsible for incurring physical, psychological, economic and social harm^{18 19}. Prison riots, specifically, often involve acts of collective,

interpersonal violence which have historically resulted in cases of hospitalisation, premature mortality, and permeating social costs to governments and taxpayers globally^{20, 21}. Furthermore, owing to their violent and captivating nature, prison riots often generate large social

¹⁷ Membery, L. (2022). *“This is not a riot, it is a protest”: A discourse analysis of prison violence in New Zealand news media*. [Master’s thesis, University of Waikato].

¹⁸ Bottoms, A. (1999). Interpersonal Violence and Social Order in Prisons. *Crime & Justice*, 26, 205–281.

¹⁹ McGuire, J. (2018). *Understanding prison violence: A rapid evidence assessment*. HM Prison & Probation Service.

²⁰ Levan, K. (2012). *Prison Violence* (1st ed.). Routledge.

²¹ Modvig, J. (2014). Violence, sexual abuse and torture in prisons. In S. Enggist, L. Møller, G. Gauden, & C. Udesen (Eds.), *Prisons and Health* (pp. 19–27). World Health Organization.

responses, typically in the form of frequent news media coverage.

The social response to prison riots was of significant interest for this research for two reasons; Firstly, the large social response meant there was a large body of discursive data pertaining to New Zealand prison violence readily available for analysis. Secondly, the extensive news media coverage of the Spring Hill and Waikeria prison riots, transformed the private issue of prison violence into a pressing public issue. The discourses of prison violence in the New Zealand news media generated political and public discussions, influenced the ways in which the public perceive prison violence, and had the potential to provoke changes to penal policy and practice.

The research questions for this research are as follows:

- How do the discourses in the news media reports of the unrest at the Spring Hill Corrections Facility (2013) and Waikeria Prison (2020-

2021) discursively construct prison violence?

- What are the consequences for these discourses being received in public opinion, with specific reference to public attitudes, public policy, and penal practice?

Methodology

In adopting a non-traditional approach to prison violence research, this research, through discourse analysis, aimed to fill the gap in the literature on how prison violence is talked about and promoted in the New Zealand news media. As the scope of this paper was limited, the decision was made to examine the social response of the two most recent instances of large-scale prison violence in New Zealand: the prison riots at the Spring Hill Corrections Facility in 2013 and Waikeria in 2020-2021. These two prison riots generated substantial social responses involving large quantities of news media coverage, giving us a significant amount of data to analyse.

Why Discourse Analysis?

Discourse analysis was deemed

by the researchers as a fitting methodology to satisfy the research questions for several reasons. Firstly, discourse analysis involves interpreting the meaning, actions, and consequences of how language²², Secondly, discourse analysis has been deemed by scholars as a viable and reflexive tool suited to investigate social constructions of violence^{23, 24} and has been used to investigate a plethora of violent behaviours (e.g., IPV, gender-based violence, child abuse, school violence, hospital violence). Moreover, due to the high quantity of news media coverage that accompanied the Spring Hill (2013) and Waikeria (2020-2021) prison riots, there was a large corpus of discursive data pertaining to New Zealand prison violence readily available for analysis.

Due to qualitative analyses being deemed subjective by scholars, the epistemological orientation and researcher reflexivity are detailed in detail

in the methodology chapter of this research¹⁹.

Main Findings

In this section, the three significant discourses that were uncovered by our analysis will be discussed.

The 'Riot' Discourse

- Dominant
- Constructed prison violence as an individualised issue of and between inherently violent prisoners

The prevailing sentiment in the examined news media reports constructed the events at Spring Hill and Waikeria as violent riots perpetrated by inherently violent prisoners. Rioting prisoners were positioned by the discourse as perpetrators of violence, and custodial officers, non-rioting prisoners, and the New Zealand public are positioned as the subsequent victims. Established through the recurrent espousing of violent terminology and authoritative

²² Parker, I. (2013). *Discourse Dynamics*. Routledge.

²³ O'Connor, P. E. (1995). Discourse of Violence. *Discourse & Society*, 6(3), 309–318.

²⁴ van Dijk, T. A. (1995). The Violence of Text and Talk. *Discourse & Society*, 6(3), 307-308.

legitimation, the news media promoted the narrative that the unrest at both facilities were “riots” (as opposed to “protests”) and further, that prison violence is an out-group issue perpetrated by inherently violent prisoners with violent tendencies¹⁹.

To uphold the narrative that the unrest at Spring Hill and Waikeria were riots, the riot discourse was promoted by a range of authoritative subjects (including Department of Corrections officials, government officials, etc.) who used a range of discursive devices to cement their perception of the unrest in public opinion. For example, [CANZ] said commentators who called the unrest a protest had left Corrections staff aghast. *“They’re disgusted by it, to be perfectly honest. They were put at risk. The risk continued for the full six days.” He said unruly inmates repeatedly escalated tensions. “They were being violent towards anybody who was getting near them.” “It*

*wasn’t a protest. It was a riot.”*²⁵

Positioning subjects as experts or officials give these discursive subjects an unrelenting power to construct the “true” nature of public events. The discursive power attributed to penal, legislative, and government officials, gives them the institutional jurisdiction to inform public opinion about events and issues relating to their area of expertise or authority. As elucidated by these excerpts, these authoritative subjects recurrently promote the riot discourse, strengthening the narrative that the unrest at Spring Hill and Waikeria were violent riots perpetrated by inherently violent prisoners.

Consequences

Firstly, framing prison violence as an issue of and between inherently violent prisoners minimises the complexity of prison violence. For if the public perceive prison violence as an issue of prisoners, then attention is redirected from

²⁵ Weekes, J. (2013, June 9). Jailers blamed for riot. *Herald on Sunday*, p. A008

systemic issues. This research argues that simplifying the complexity of prison violence produces several negative implications for public opinion, policy, and ultimately, prisoners themselves. Rather than the public being informed about the complex nature of prison violence, the public are guided to morally disengage with and condemn prisoners. In turn, the negative image presented by news media is likely to bolster public support for harsher penal conditions and result in negative attitudes being directed toward those incarcerated^{26 27}.

Secondly, by promoting the narrative that the issue is prisoner-oriented, the fix must also be. If the public are led to believe prison violence is simply an issue of violent prisoners, public scrutiny is redirected from the prison as an institution (e.g., its systemic issues, dehumanising architecture, etc.) to its constituents. In turn, the public

are exposed to the “bad apple” ideology that promotes the idea that prison violence is an inevitable out-group issue, that arises from having a large group of deviant individuals confined to a small space. Thus, holistic approaches to prison violence are pushed aside, to accommodate for public demands for penal crackdowns and harsher penal policy and practice.

The ‘Gang’ Discourse

- Dominant
- Constructed prison violence as an issue of and between gang members

Analysis revealed that gang culture was foregrounded as an integral part of prison violence. In line with how the riot discourse constructed prison violence to the public, “expert” and “official” discursive subjects attested to and promoted the narrative that the unrest at Spring Hill and Waikeria resulted from gang

²⁶ Roberts, J., & Doob, A. N. (1990). News Media Influences on Public Views of Sentencing. *Law and Human Behavior*, 14(5), 451–468.

²⁷ Roberts, J., & Hough, M. (2005). Sentencing young offenders: Public opinion in England and Wales. *Criminal Justice*, 5(3), 211–232.

tensions and “politics within the gangs”²⁷.

Due to the ubiquity of negative gang stories over the past 50 years, the public have been positioned to perceive gangs as a social plague that breeds violence. Consequently, gangs and their members have been the victims of intense and negative stereotyping²⁸. Which, in turn, has meant that gang-related terms hold an inherent power to prime negative and stereotypical imagery in public consciousness, manipulating the public perception of an event. In the reporting of the Spring Hill and Waikeria unrests, gang-related terminology, the process of othering, and by positioning all involved prisoners as gang-affiliated²⁹, the discourse worked to guide the public to perceive the unrests as absolute gang issues. In doing so, public attitudes were likely negative and punitive, and further, reinforced the negative image of gangs that a long-

standings discursive system has upheld¹⁹.

The gang discourse worked in conjunction with the riot discourse, framing the unrest at Spring Hill and Waikeria as “riots” rather than “protests”. In a simple yet effective manner, the stereotypical imagery of “gang members” (e.g., perpetrating crime or *being deviant*) is more than enough to manipulate the public perception of these events, which were contested. On the one hand, the unrests were constructed as riots – spontaneous acts of collective violence. On the other hand, the unrests were constructed as protests – prisoners rising up against poor living conditions and systemic injustices. It is not farfetched to suppose that after the public are informed that many (if not *all*) of the involved prisoners are “gang members,” that they immediately dismiss any narratives constructing the events as protests against living

²⁸ Green, A. (1997). *Public Perceptions, Gang ‘Reality’ and the Influence of the Media* [Master’s Thesis]. Massey Research.

²⁹ Lines-MacKenzie, J. (2021b, February 18). Waikeria prison rioters have international gang links, Corrections CEO confirms. *Stuff*.

conditions. For it is easier to rationalise the narrative that “gang members are being violent *again*,” than to go against cognitive schemata and common sense.

Consequences

The gang discourse has many negative consequences for prisoners, social injustices in and out of prison, public policy, and gangs and their place in New Zealand prisons and the wider community.

The gang discourse has permeating negative consequences for gang members firstly, while also incurring implicit auxiliary repercussions for Māori. Due to the overrepresentation of Māori in all avenues of the criminal justice system, prison violence statistics, and gang populations, the gang discourse may perpetuate social inequalities and prejudice toward Māori.

In previous work on gang representation in New Zealand

news media in 1997, research revealed that the rising rates of crime were attributed to “Māori criminals”³⁰. While times have changed and the public condemnation of Māori is less overt, it could be argued that these historical discourses still hold power in gang-related news stories, especially to those generations who were exposed to them. Through prolonged exposure to these news stories that construct gang members in this light, the public have become conditioned to perceive a large portion, if not all, gang members to be prone to violence or criminal activity.

The ‘Protest’ Discourse

- Counter-discourse
- Framed the unrest as a protest against living conditions

The protest discourse constructed the events at Spring Hill and Waikeria as protests against living conditions and inhumane treatment. The living conditions

³⁰ Green, A. (1997). *Public Perceptions, Gang ‘Reality’ and the Influence of the Media* [Master’s Thesis] p.44. Massey University.

and inhumane treatment were emphasised as causing the protests, and the discourse employed protest-related terminology and the talk of activists, ex-prisoners, politicians and whānau to reinforce and legitimise this narrative.

In comparison to the riot discourse, which is promoted by penal, legislative, and government officials, the protest discourse is promoted by ex-prisoners, activists, and minor political subjects. The latter subject positions hold a significantly lesser discursive power, and the public are, in turn, positioned to believe the narrative that is promoted by those with more authority over the subject matter¹⁹.

The protest discourse positioned involved and uninvolved prisoners as victims of oppression, inhuman treatment, and cultural negligence. This is a very interesting point of contention, as in the dominant riot and gang discourses, involved prisoners were positioned as

perpetrators rather than victims. By framing involved prisoners as victims, the public are positioned to condone rather than condemn their unruly behaviour and perceive their actions as a protest rather than a violent riot¹⁹.

Moreover, the subjects in the protest discourse referred to external reports and anecdotes in which attention was given to the poor living conditions at Waikeria (including dirty drinking water, inability to access to sanitary equipment, access new clothes, bedding, and even toilet paper).

The discourse speaks to the complexity of prison violence and provides the public with insight into the deep-seated systemic issues that are engendered in prison facilities, which have, until this point, been largely omitted from public discussion¹⁹. Rather than contributing to the dominant individualised narrative, the protest discourse provides the public with a more holistic view of prison violence and emphasises the role of the

institution in precipitating large-scale unrest. This is profound, as academic discussions of large-scale prison unrest, relative to deprivation and breakdown theory, have concluded that the institution plays a role in creating the circumstances for large-scale prison unrest to manifest^{31,32,33}.

Consequences

Firstly, if the dominant discourse has resulted in calls for harsher penal policy and negative public attitudes toward prisoners, this counter-discourse could theoretically lead to more humanising penal reform and constructive public attitudes toward prisoners. Secondly, if the protest discourse were legitimated,

involved prisoners, who claimed to be protesting, would have likely received public support for their courage in standing up against an oppressive system and inhumane living conditions. This may have, in turn, resulted in these prisoners avoiding proper punishment for perpetrating interpersonal, collective, and property violence. The problem with this outcome is relative to the fifth factor in Useem and Goldstone's (2002) conceptualisation of prison riot aetiology, which postulates that "poorly implemented responses to inmate complaints or actions may further legitimise rebellion"¹⁷.

³¹ Boin, A., & Rattray, W. (2004). Understanding Prison Riots: Towards a Threshold Theory. *Punishment & Society*, 6(1), 47–65.

³² Goldstone, J. A., & Useem, B. (1999). Prison riots as microrevolutions: An extension of state-centered theories of revolution. *American Journal of Sociology*, 104(4), 985–1029.

³³ Useem, B., & Piehl, A. M. (2006). Prison buildup and disorder. *Punishment and Society*, 8(1), 87-115.

SELF-HARM IN NEW ZEALAND PRISONS: PREVALENCE RATES AND RISK FACTORS

ABBY RHODES

Self-harm is a serious public health concern in New Zealand and overseas due to its association with suicide and increasing prevalence rates. The prison population is particularly vulnerable to self-harm, with prisoners being 2-5 times more likely to self-harm compared to the general population^{34 35}. Prior research has found that approx. 4-5% of the overall population self-harm compared to 5-6% of incarcerated males and 20-24% of incarcerated females, as well as recurrent rates of self-harm being higher for those in prison^{36 37}. However, there is limited research available on

how to identify those at-risk for self-harm in prison.

The current study aimed to provide up-to-date prevalence rates of self-harm incidents across New Zealand prisons and highlight significant individual- and unit-level risk factors. Previous research has found that rates of violence varied more substantially across units within NZ prisons than across prisons, underscoring the importance of assessing the predictive validity of individual- and situational (unit) level factors^{36 37}. Our study used administrative data on incidents in NZ prisons between

³⁴ Hawton, K., Linsell, L., Adeniji, T., Sariaslan, A., & Fazel, S. (2014). Self-harm in prisons in England and Wales: an epidemiological study of prevalence, risk factors, clustering, and subsequent suicide. *The Lancet*, 383(9923), 1147–1154.

³⁵ Klonsky, E. D. (2011). Non-suicidal self-injury in United States adults: prevalence, sociodemographics, topography and functions. *Psychological Medicine*, 41(9), 1981–1986.

³⁶ Brabyn, L., & Grace, R. C. (2021, December 7). *Prison violence: What the data are telling us*. Te Whanake: Understanding prison violence in Aotearoa II. New Zealand (online). <https://www.waikato.ac.nz/turning-the-tide/symposium/2021>

³⁷ Perry, A., & Grace, R. C. (2022). *Individual and situational risk factors for prison violence in women and men: A New Zealand study* [Manuscript submitted for publication.].

2016-2020 from the database maintained by Ara Poutama Corrections (COBRA).

This study is the first to use mixed-effects modelling to identify both individual- and unit-level risk factors that increase the likelihood of prisoners engaging in self-harm and its subcategories: threatening self-harm, non-life-threatening self-harm, life-threatening self-harm, and suicide. Two models were developed, the first included individual-level factors and unit as a random effect, the second also included unit-level fixed effects.

Of the 39,020 individuals incarcerated between 2016 and 2020, 8.65% (n = 3,374) had at least one self-harm incident. Mixed-effects modelling showed that individuals were at greater risk of self-harm the longer they spend in prison, if they are in isolation, of NZ European ethnicity, younger, have previous violent offences, placed in a high security unit and if that unit has a high proportion of different gangs within it. Those housed in units

with a high percentage of individuals with gang affiliations (the same gang) were significantly less likely to self-harm. These variables can now be used as targets for risk assessments and treatment programmes to help reduce self-harm rates within NZ prisons and protect those in the NZ correctional system from harming others and themselves.

There were also a few limitations of the current study. The accuracy of the models in identifying predictive factors of suicide was reduced due to the overall small number of suicides across the prisons (n=24). Future research that has access to a larger number of suicides in prison could investigate potential individual and unit-level risk factors. However, it is a positive that there are so few suicides occurring in NZ prisons.

Another limitation to the study was how remand was coded for as a unit-level variable and the way the statistical analyses were carried out, it was difficult

to ascertain if those who self-harmed did so while on remand. Future research could investigate when self-harm is more likely to occur, across different periods of a prison sentence or after particular events, for example, whether self-harm might be more likely to occur early in a sentence or after a difficult event such as receiving bad news or being victimized.

There are various strengths of the study, including that it is the first study using mixed-effects modelling, using the situational variable of unit, to predict self-harm in NZ prisons using administrative data. The developed models also had a

good degree of predictive validity of self-harm, this was shown by reasonable marginal R^2 and conditional R^2 due to minimal base rate of self-harm. The dataset itself was also a strength of the study. The dataset sourced from the Department of Corrections was informative and large enough for comparisons to be drawn and conclusions to be reached. The dataset provided information on both the incarcerated persons and incidents they were involved in. The data was collected between 2016 and 2020 and therefore results reflect current trends of self-harming behaviour in NZ prisons.

CODIFYING THE PRISON: THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN VIOLENCE, GANGS, PRISON CODES, AND MASCULINITY

ROBERT HENRY

Prisons are seen to be designed both structurally and behaviourally to control those who society deems as violent or in need of reform. The need to control behaviours and actions, specifically if those actions lead to violence are important, and that it is up to the state and its actors to enact that control. However, with the growing number of prison gangs and gang members, the impetus on control has become that much more, as gangs are seen to increase violence within prisons due to their codes of conduct to control members and the broader prison population. However, what is missing from the discussions of violence, control and prison gangs is a specific prison masculinity that privileges those who can embrace violence to gain power, control, and respect. This presentation focuses on the Canadian context of Indigenous men and women who have been incarcerated and are also members of street gangs to highlight how they used a hyper-masculine performance as a shield within prison settings. Their narratives also highlight how this performance is not just regulated to those who are incarcerated, but to the prison guards and officials as well.

Today, I'm going to be talking about codifying the prison and the connection between violence, gangs, prison codes, and masculinity. First, I'm just going to introduce myself in the Canadian context, studying gangs in prison, prison and

street codes, gender, masculinity, and inclusion. Throughout the years, there's been a lot of connections that I've been starting to see through what the individuals are talking about, trying to analyse everything that's

happening, and trying to relate it back into the context of prison literature, street gang literature, and street lifestyle literature overall.

So, a quick background, my name's Robert Henry, and I'm Métis from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan Canada, which means I'm one of the three Indigenous groups recognized within Canada. My background is in education, so I have a Bachelor of Education, a Masters of Education, and a PhD in Indigenous Studies. I see myself as is an arts-based community-engaged researcher, where I utilise arts-based qualitative research methods to examine lived experiences, life worlds and the life histories of those who've engage in street gangs and street lifestyles. I want to recognise that a lot of the work that I've been able to do has come from community partners and those involved in street lifestyles who've trusted me over the years to start working with members of their community to try and tell the stories in a different way, one

that does not continue pathologizing narratives, but highlights their survivance.

Violence and Indigenous Peoples

To begin, I'm going to try and situate this because I'm not sure how many people are familiar with the Canadian context: Indigenous peoples within prisons. In Canada, we see that Indigenous Peoples are overly represented within the state and when we look at this, we see that Indigenous Peoples are overly represented in violent statistics and basically all poor health statistics in all categories.

Canada continues to have inquiries that that examine issues such as murder and missing Indigenous women. We have the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that finished in 2015 that examined the impacts of residential schools on Indigenous, primarily First Nations peoples. We currently have what's considered the stolen children, where children were buried outside of these residential

schools and unmarked graves are continuing to be across the country, and the tally continues to grow.

When I say Indigenous in Canada it includes First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Peoples. Each Indigenous group has its own unique history to the colonisation formulas of Canada. Although there are similarities, there are differences. I do want to highlight that, because a lot of times what's happening is that everything gets molded into one pan-Indigenous experience, and that's just not the case.

There is a long history of colonisation and settler colonialism here in Canada that has come to construct Indigenous peoples as violent. This is a history of the idea of the culture of terror, leading to a culture of fear. For example, Indigenous peoples are often constructed within a dichotomy that allows settler spaces, or

institutions to understand Indigenous as being closer to nature that can be controlled. Through this, violence can be enacted onto Indigenous bodies and spaces that would not be allowed to occur to non-Indigenous bodies.

Through a culture of terror³⁸, settler states and peoples need to be continuously afraid of Indigenous bodies, and any slight active resistance, challenge, even that of a whisper of challenge can allow for a hyper-violent reaction from the state to subdue the Indigenous person(s). When we look at this, we understand the multiple of ways in which violence is constructed onto Indigenous bodies. For instance, the young speaker³⁹ who was speaking a little bit before within the media, and the way in which media representation of Māori constructs them as gang members and associated to violence. So, we see that there's the idea of a space

³⁸ Taussig, M. (2008). *Shamanism, colonialism, and the wild man: A study in terror and healing*. University of Chicago Press.

³⁹ See chapter (Brennan-Tupara), this volume.

where the Indigenous body and just the presence of Indigenous peoples within these spaces becomes *de facto* status.⁴⁰ Within that, we see individuals who, simply by being or looking a specific way or acting a specific way, their actions can be understood as being violent, which would then take a violent space from the state to try and to do it. Therefore, colonisation and colonialism are violent acts in themselves, where settler colonialism continues to erase Indigenous peoples from spaces.⁴¹ This is ever more present today, but in a different form. Rather than removing Indigenous peoples through overt violence, through war, and the use of genocide, if we will, through health modes such as smallpox and so forth, we see a different form beginning to occur. What I mean by this is that we're beginning to see Indigenous bodies no longer as being something that needs to be taken control of or totally

eradicated, but their bodies become a commodity that is now used within the state to provide an economic capital for the working class.

What I mean by this is that entire communities have become dependent on the violent Indigenous body or the construction of the violent Indigenous body to support economic capital through the carceral system. When we look at this and we start going through all of this, we begin to see that the state constructs Indigenous people and their actions as violent or that they actions have the potential of violence. Thus the state can increase surveillance onto Indigenous bodies, to watch for the *readying violence* because it is bound to happen. Increased surveillance where crime is *supposed to happen*, alleviates surveillance in areas where crime is not supposed to happen. However, surveillance techniques focus on

⁴⁰ See Cacho, L. M. (2012). *Social death: Racialized rightlessness and the criminalization of the unprotected*. NYU Press.

⁴¹ See Dorries, H., Henry, R., Hugill, D., McCreary, T., & Tomiak, J. (Eds.). (2019). *Settler city limits: Indigenous resurgence and colonial violence in the urban Prairie West*. University of Manitoba Press.

communities of racialized poverty, ignoring the same actions in communities of privilege⁴².

Highlights from the Office of the Correctional Investigator Report: 2022

Shifting slightly, I'm going to highlight a little bit here from the Office of the Correctional Investigator Report of 2022.⁴³ Why I want to highlight this is because in 2009 the Office of the Correctional Investigator released a report titled *Spirit Matters*⁴⁴, with the intention to try and shift the trajectory of Indigenous incarceration in Canada. However, what we're seeing from 2009 to now is that nothing is working. Indigenous incarceration continues to have the fastest rates of incarceration, specifically Indigenous women. So, despite only encompassing 5% of the total Canadian population, Indigenous Peoples who are incarcerated is upwards of 33% who are in federal custody. This is even more so on the Prairie

Provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba when provincial incarceration rates are included.

When we look at the individuals who are also put into provincial institutions, we're seeing that in Saskatchewan, Indigenous women who are incarcerated at the federal level is about 95% of the incarceration rate of all women. When we look at the male prison population, Indigenous males in Saskatchewan are looking anywhere between 80, 85% on any given day. When we look at youth incarceration rates, Indigenous youth make upwards of 90, 95%. And this is holds true into Alberta and Manitoba. Manitoba is more similar to Saskatchewan. Alberta is a little bit less, where we're seeing closer to 70, 75%. But when we're looking at this, we also must understand that Indigenous Peoples also construct a lot less of the total population. And so we need to

⁴² See Wacquant, L. (2009). *Prisons of poverty*. University of Minnesota Press.

⁴³ See <https://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/rpt/annrpt/annrpt20212022-eng.aspx>

⁴⁴ See <https://publications.gc.ca>

really start analysing these sort of constructions. Why is it that we can incarcerate Indigenous Peoples at this rate? And what does it allow? And how do we move forward in these sort of spaces?

When we look at the individuals as well who are being incarcerated, we don't have a lot of information here in Canada in relation to prison gangs or what's happening within the gang itself. But what we are using is security threat groups (STG), and this is where we see that 22% of those at the federal level are Indigenous, whereas only 9% of those who are non-Indigenous have an STG affiliation to them within the institution.⁴⁵ So, we see, even within the institution, that the term 'gang' becomes synonymous to Indigenous bodies, and as a result, they can be watched differently, they can be put in different programs, and so forth.

Studying Gangs in Prison

Despite a long history of research with gangs and/or street gangs which began with Thrasher's⁴⁶ work in Chicago in the 1920s and accelerating in the 1950s and sixties, has exploded over the last 20 years. Even though gang research has accelerated there is a fundamental gap in understanding gangs behind prison walls.⁴⁷ Much of the gang research is driven by American experiences within and primarily focuses with street context and not actually behind the prison walls. Pyrooz and Decker (2019) have stated that every 25 research projects that are focusing on street gangs outside of the prison, there's one that's focusing within the prison itself. There has been some work specifically out of Pyrooz and Decker in the US that examines the role of gangs and the social order of prisons. However, outside of the work by Pyrooz and Decker, much of the prison

⁴⁵ See <https://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/rpt/annrpt/annrpt20212022-eng.aspx>

⁴⁶ Thrasher, F. M. (1927). *The gang: A study of 1,313 gangs in Chicago*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

⁴⁷ Pyrooz, D. C., & Decker, S. H. (2019). *Competing for control: Gangs and the social order of prisons*. Cambridge University Press.

gang research focuses more on activities and behaviours to increase surveillance to control movement related to potential violence. What is missing in these perspectives is the role of the gang behind bars, the connection of the prison gangs to street gangs, and how gangs are supported within the institution by members and other prisoners.

Gaining access to work within prisons is often difficult. What we're seeing here with the project here in New Zealand, but also with what's happening in Canada. When we look at this, there's a lot of paperwork that must get through a lot of red tape, and relationships that must be built in order to get into authentic research about gangs within prison walls. This is why a lot of the work that I do focuses on those who have been actively involved in gangs within prison, but are currently back out in the community to talk about their experiences and what it was behind the bars; the role of the gang with

what happened behind bars; the ways in which they constructed and understood violence when they were within prison; and the connection of that violence to their involvement in street gangs and street lifestyles post-incarceration.

When we look at this, much like the idea with street gangs, there is no definitive definition of what is a gang or what constitutes a gang.⁴⁸ When we look at this within Canada specifically, we see that security threat groups can include any group, gang, organisation or association consisting of three or more members in one of the following street or prison gangs, motorcycle gangs, organised crime groups, Indigenous gangs, white supremacy groups, subverse groups, terrorist organisations and hate groups.⁴⁹ Because of the huge variance of who or what can be included the collection of data and how we've come to interpret the

⁴⁸ Pyrooz & Decker (2019).

⁴⁹ See <https://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/rpt/annrpt/annrpt20212022-eng.aspx>

information that we do have is extremely soft. What we do know, when focused on Indigenous street gangs in Canada is that there is more cohesiveness or fluidity between Indigenous street gangs and Indigenous prison gangs.

Pyrooz and Decker have noticed in the United States that there is a more hierarchical connection of prison and street gangs, where the prison gang is the top of the hierarchy. For example, in the United States the Mexican Mafia is a primary prison gang, where street gangs filter into the Mexican Mafia, once they get into prison. Upon leaving the prison they go back into their street gang, which is then connected to the Mexican Mafia, whereby they will adhere to orders or directions that come from the prison to the street. This isn't really the case with what we're seeing in Canada. What happens is that if you're a part of a gang out on the streets, for example a member of the Indian Posse, when you go inside the

institution, you are Indian Posse within the institution. It's the same thing with Sask Warriors, Terror Squad, and so forth. So, what we must understand is, unlike the American experience, the gang or the prison is not so much a total institution, but that Indigenous street gangs are showing how permeable the walls are. That what happens on the street is really connected to what can happen behind prison wall and vice versa. When we look at this, there's an importance of understanding relationships between policy, practice, outcomes, and the need for collaborative approaches across community and carceral agencies.

Street gangs and prison gangs are a very recent phenomenon, as we know them today, in Canada and specifically the province of Saskatchewan. It isn't until about the late 1990s that we really begin to see Indigenous prison gangs or Indigenous street gangs becoming of any concern within the Canadian context.

The late eighties and early nineties is when Indigenous street gangs began to truly form and take hold within urban settings on the streets of Winnipeg. It was the Wolfe brothers and their cousins and friends who they built relationships within in the child welfare system and later part of the youth criminal justice system.⁵⁰ They started to come together because they were getting pushed around on the street, saw economic opportunities with the street economy, and began to protect their investment and their community. Together they formed the Indian Posse – the first solidified Indigenous street gang in Canada⁵¹.

There were other gangs that formed across Canada, and I don't want to ignore that history, but they never really had longevity, as they would quickly form and then disappear as individuals moved away, aged out, etc. The Indian

Posse is still running today and is still one of the more prominent prison gangs, less so out on the street. But what is important to understand about all of this between policy and practice is that a lot of times, Indigenous street gangs have been ignored resulting in their exponential growth compared to other gangs across Canada. For example, Canadian prison policies focused on housing Indigenous street gangs within one institution to control their movement and power within the prison. By housing both the Indian Posse and the Sask Warrior, two rival gangs on the streets at the same institution, resulted in a riot.⁵² After the riot administrators didn't know what to do with individuals anymore, so they took the leaders and put them into different institutions across the country. This had a detrimental effect, because provided individuals who began to learn about what was happening behind the bars the

⁵⁰ Comack, E., Deane, L., Morrisette, L., & Silver, J. (2020). *Indians wear red: Colonialism, resistance, and Aboriginal street gangs*. Fernwood.

⁵¹ Friesen, J. (2016). *The ballad of Danny Wolfe: Life of a modern outlaw*. Signal.

⁵² See <https://www.unionbug.ca/read/article/1395/headingley-riot-still-has-lessons-for-us-twenty-years-later#sthash.dhUzXxV2.dpbs>

opportunity to recruit others. They understood the shifting codes of the prison, were connected to the politics on the streets themselves, and so they had a high level of influence. In short, they began to understand how to utilise violence for their benefit behind bars to gain power. So, what the institution did was, rather than securing or limiting Indigenous gang involvement in the country to specific locations where we saw people come to, we saw an explosion of Indigenous street gangs. The Indian Posse for example, was the first gang, Hell's Angels, Biker Gang or anything else that actually went coast to coast. It was through the prison system that they were able to go coast to coast⁵³.

As a result of that, what happened was the policy, and I shift here to the province of Saskatchewan, began to reshape, and say, okay, we can't have this happen. They began to create specific gang

units with police and correctional centres, which had been occurring nationally. Because of the growth of gangs and the way in which they exploded, Saskatchewan, which up until 2000 denied having an issue with gangs, now has upwards of 12 to 13 different gangs that are running behind prison walls alone. There are three provincial correctional institutions, wherein individuals are now placed based on their gang affiliation. This not only has an impact on individuals trying to get out of their gang, but also with family and family being able to see or to go and meet with individuals behind bars because of the distances between communities⁵⁴.

When we look at gang members and most often the focus is on the concept or construct of violence. We see that gang members often face higher rates of violence and therefore have higher rates of victimisation. Violence though is more than just physical.

⁵³ Henry, R. (2015) *Through an Indigenous lens: Understanding Indigenous masculinity and street gang involvement*. University of Saskatchewan.

⁵⁴ For comparison, the province of Saskatchewan is approximately 2.4 times larger than New Zealand.

Gangs themselves understand this and utilise not just physical violence, but the idea of potential violence or the performance of violence within these spaces for a sense of power to control activities. Most often it is to control economic opportunities within and across spaces. When we see the existence of gangs within prisons, it's unsurprising since prisons are threatening environments likely to promote a fear of being victimised. Membership to a gang is expected to confer to a range of protective benefits, and that's arguably adaptive, which is very similar to what has been understood within violent street spaces, where a lot of individuals join gangs because it's a protective factor, or a place to belong. There's also a lot more with social identity, social status, and economic advantage that we need to explore. But this becomes the question with Indigenous street

gangs and Indigenous prison gangs and so forth. When we look at this, we see a history or a trajectory of involvement, that being Indigenous connects one to family or kinship that is found behind bars. Like I said before, the Indian Posse were created on the streets of Winnipeg, and because of that, it was a kinship form bond that helped to solidify the gang in its early phases. When we look at the idea of colonisation within Canada, it was a violent act that continues to this day. For example, the last residential school closed in the late 1990s; however in the 1960s, there was the development and uptake of the child welfare system that began to take Indigenous children and place them in non-Indigenous homes nationally and globally.⁵⁵ Today, the child welfare system now has more Indigenous children in care than at the height of residential schools⁵⁶.

⁵⁵ Stevenson, A. (2020). *Intimate integration: A history of the sixties scoop and the colonization of Indigenous kinship*. University of Toronto Press.

⁵⁶ Tait, C. L., Henry, R., & Walker, R. L. (2018). Child welfare: A social determinant of health for Canadian First Nations and Métis children. In R. Henry, A. LaVallee, N. Van Styvendale, & R. A. Innes Eds.), *Global Indigenous health: Reconciling the past, engaging the present, animating the future*. University of Arizona Press.

Therefore when I speak with individuals and ask them how they began to create their kinship or their understanding of how they created their relationships, they explain that it was primarily through these state spaces, as they found other individuals who were like them and had similar experience, or life histories that allowed them to say, "Okay, well, this person understands what I'm going through and this is how I belong." But a lot of times too, through an Indigenous lens, kinship is very extended within all of this, so it becomes complex. Thus, when it comes to understanding the gang, individuals understand the violence and life that they are getting into. However, there's one individual in all the research that I've done, interviewing over 55 people between the ages of 17 and 45 over the past 10 years, who said that they never knew the violence that they were going to get into. Other than that, every other individual understood the violence that they were becoming involved in

or what was going to be happening with it.

The Importance of Examining Gangs Behind Bars

The question that I want to try to understand is why would individuals engage in these groups if it increases their victimisation? The other part that we, and I, want to understand behind bars is if gangs are seen as this protective factor, that people must join these groups and be a part of it, then why is it that not everybody will become a gang member behind prison walls? Just like on the streets, why is it that not every single Indigenous youth will become involved in a gang who live in high-risk gang neighborhoods? I think part of it is the reason that like the street, in that not everyone who is in the space has the capacity to engage in the levels of violence and activities that they have to undertake. Secondly is that the gang themselves don't want every inmate because of the cultural capital that an individual carries with them.

Just as there are standards to hiring or becoming a police officer, correctional officer, or to be accepted in other groups, gangs have standards and codes that need to be adhered to belong. What I mean by this is that when you have filed your papers when you go behind bars, if you have a specific crime that you've done and it's not seen as one that has 'clout' but you're seen as a 'skinner' – for those who don't know, a 'skinner' in Canada is somebody who rapes children. Or if you're seen as a 'goof' behind bars, the gang doesn't want you because the gang has an image that it must uphold that. The gang itself is an entity and not everybody can be a part of it.

When I talk with individuals and ask them, "How do you go about finding the selected criteria in order to do this?" Most will state that, "Well, we find individuals who are tough, who are independent, who are

willing to go to the wall or do what's necessary". What they state is connected to the ideas of masculinity and what it means to be a 'real man'. However, what is more important to note is that they state that not everybody can do the job that's necessary. At the same time, those who join, because of the connection to toxic masculinity, there's also a heightened level of violence that leads to addictions because of the heightened violence. Thus street codes⁵⁷ are also used within the prison landscape to influence who can/cannot become a member of a prison gang.

Prison and Street Codes

Gang and prison literature has not really engaged in the convict code much since the 1960s.⁵⁸ The idea of the prison code is a cultural system of beliefs, norms, and values that closely parallels the code of the streets. When we talk about the codes of the street, usually

⁵⁷ Anderson, E. (2000). *Code of the street: Decency, violence, and the moral life of the inner city*. Norton.

⁵⁸ Mitchell, M. M., Fahmy, C., Pyrooz, D. C., & Decker, S. H. (2017). Criminal crews, codes, and contexts: Differences and similarities across the code of the street, convict code, street gangs, and prison gangs. *Deviant Behavior*, 38(10), 1197-1222.

a lot of this is talking about Elijah Anderson's seminal work on the east coast of the United States, that focused on a hyper-masculine system of beliefs that emphasises toughness and the idea of engaging in and being violent. I want to highlight that codes are not static – meaning that once engaged an individual will always live by the 'code' - where an individual can code switch or evaluate the importance of the code in relation to the situation at hand. For example, individuals will not adhere to the street code in all spaces or situations; rather, it is the relationship that individual has to the space and others within the space that will dictate how they adhere to local codes. For Indigenous gangs, both street and prison, this becomes ever more pertinent when we sit and talk with those who have been members of gangs, both in and out of prison.

One individual within my research, Dwayne, told a story about his brother. When we look at the street codes him

and his brother were on, they were an anomaly in a way, where they're on rival gangs that were at war with each other. However, as Dwayne talked about it, they would always go to their grandmother's place every Sunday to go and have a supper with her. When we look at this from the gang literature, when Dwayne and his brother saw each other, they should be fighting one another simply because their gangs were at war. However, they walked into the home, they took their rags off, they hang their rags up. They sat with their grandma and had dinner with her. As soon as they were done with their grandma, they put their rags back on, shook their hands and walked away. What's important to understand about all of this is that the codes themselves, as they were saying, is that the codes aren't specifically so static that there isn't movement within them. This also happens when we look within the institution. Dwayne was part of the Indian Posse, and what happened at the Prince Albert institution was a

riot between two rival gangs. It was between the Native Syndicate and the Terror Squad now. Dwayne, because he was outside of that war, watched while 90 inmates fought with weapons, where one died next to him. However, because he saw himself as solid and upheld the code he kept to himself and did not snitch on anyone. He stayed out of it. Even though he knew what was going to happen, he let it happen because it had nothing to do with his gang. Their gang was outside of this. They were seen as an older, more established gang within the institution, and these were just kind of little guys that are trying to figure out where they fit within everything. So even though he knew the violence and everything else and watched the violence happen in front of him, he pulled back because the code of the prison says, "it's not my business, I stay away from it". Interesting about Dwayne's story, and the idea of validating the idea of truth by gang members is that different individuals: a corrections officer, a member of the Terror

Squad who was involved in the altercation, and Dwayne himself all discussed this incident without any probing.

Adhering to prison codes gets more complicated with individuals who are in the gang when family members are a part of and not a part of a prison gang. I want to use another narrative from Stacy with his uncle:

"So when I went back, I had to make a choice. So I started being a prospector. I started striking, as they call it. You may know them now as Manitoba Warriors. We know in Saskatchewan they're called Sask Warriors; in Alberta we're called, Alberta Warriors. That's who I was striking for. So they put me a number of tasks to do, people to rob. For 18 – 20 months, I did that. Finally, one day, one of my uncles come in the system, brand-new bunnyhug. You could tell it was brand new. Brand new hat. You could tell new clothes from older clothes. Right away one of the brothers that sat in the higher up said see that guy right

there? What's his name wants his stuff, his hat and his bunnyhug. His hoody. All right. So, went walking over. I went walking up to this guy and you, man, what's up? The guy turned around. It was my uncle. Hey what's up? We started talking about back home, how the family was. After about 20 minutes, I told him, hey, man, I need your jacket and your hat. He started laughing at me and he noticed I wasn't laughing. He looked at me; he goes, do what you gotta do, but I'm not gonna give 'em to you for free. I'm not just gonna give 'em up to you. Aright, so I hit him, (makes noise) he went down. I took his hat. He wouldn't give up his jacket, so I beat him up. Finally, let his jacket go. I walked up to my higher ups and threw them on the table. Here's your shit and I walked away. I felt shitty because he was my uncle. For two days, I felt like shit; I didn't want to do anything, didn't want to get high, go work out, play sports, nothin'. Went up to my uncle and I told him I was sorry. He goes, don't worry

about it. I heard, a lot of the other boys told me why you're doing this shit to them."

An examination of the code of the street shows that it is about gaining money, power, and respect. It's important to understand these codes in multiple ways that are both simultaneously fluid and static. What we see here, is that there's a complexity that happens here that we need to understand the importance of them. We need to understand the way in which kinship is also brought into it, the way in which family and so forth, shape and change these codes, and that individuals have choice within. That the codes are not law, but there is a choice in which individuals can do them or not. However, there are also repercussions for not following codes that, if caught, can result in serious violence. So when we look at this, prison and street codes focus and provide an opportunity to analyse violence, not as a sporadic act, but one that is calculated and value laden.

There was an individual talking before where they're looking at the prison statistics examining two years of data that when there's economic opportunity behind bars, violence drops in a lot of spaces because of the increased surveillance. But the question is, is this because of prison actions or policies of surveillance, or that there are economic opportunities that are available and movement is needed to accomplish this? A lot of gangs look at controlling the violence and what happens behind bars because they don't want to be shut down. They don't want to be locked down in lock down as that stops their ability to make money. The more violence within an institution, the more surveillance, the more processes are put in place to limit movement... that's not something the gang wants. The gang wants *movement*. They want to be able to go about doing that. So, the codes begin to help mitigate a lot of the violence behind the bars. The other part too is that we also have to understand that the codes are also supported by

prisoners, and also supported by staff at the same time, specifically through their specific practices of masculinity.

The Importance of Masculinity in Prison Studies

What's missing in a lot of the discussions that I see within prison studies, street gang studies, and the way in which we look at policy and so forth is the role of *masculinity* in the construction of these prison codes, both for inmates and for prison staff themselves. Most often we look at the idea of gender, primarily from a sex perspective, and we analyse it through that, but we miss the idea of gender as a performance. We see the discussion that prisons are spaces of violence and masculinity is promoted through everything, that to go to jail, you must be tough; you must be able to hold your own; you must be independent. There seems to be a lack of connection the role of the hegemonic masculine performance that privileges a

specific hyper-masculine performance⁵⁹.

But what is that performance in the institution that the males and females will try to adhere to, which will give them the most social capital within the institution? This is what we need to start looking at and how an understanding of masculine gender fluidity or how multiple gender performances behind the walls of the prison are reflective of street lifestyles. Street lifestyle and the engagement of the street gang and individuals removing themselves from the gang, they may remove themselves from the gang, but they're still adhering to specific codes of the street that allow for to gain power and respect, to gain economic opportunities, but they may not be a part of the gang anymore. This is where we need to start looking at trying to understand.

How do we begin to examine what this looks like behind the bars? How do we go about

understanding what this looks like? Because when we look at programming, we seem to miss this idea of what does healthy masculinity look like, or how do we begin to shift healthy masculinity within our programmes? A masculinity lens can help to understand how violence is more than a physical aggressive act to one that is in constant flow and is promoted behind prison walls. Simply looking at violence as a physical act ignores the way in which presence and performance, the way in which one sits up and poses, the way in which you must look tough can all be done in violent manners. This is important because what this does is it also allows for us to begin to analyse the way in which staff, and the system itself, also promotes the same sort of hyper-masculine performance as prison staff embody violent masculinity as well.

Participants have stated the ways in which guards are seen as trying to be too violent or

⁵⁹ Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender & Society, 19*(6), 829-859.

too tough, or that they're trying to act tough themselves to intimidate or exert power over inmates. And what does that do? The aggressiveness begins to pit the inmate versus the staff. So, how do you begin to de-escalate violence when the actions between individuals may be violent themselves, simply because of the codes that they're trying to act or enact within everyday interactions? The other factor is that prisons, for some, as well, are seen as a rite of passage for some to become a man.⁶⁰ One participant told me how they see their dad, brothers, cousins, and uncles go to jail looking small, frail, weak, and come out looking healthy, strong and vibrant. Therefore, some do not see prison as a deterrent, but that of actually becoming a man within their community.

At the same time, the prison also holds capital on where one and what times one would be

spending. Specific prisons are seen as being harder, and therefore some people would strive to go there to prove their *manliness*. So, the photograph here, his name is Emil If you really sit and talk to him, he's a very passive individual. You wouldn't see him being a violent or someone who would've been part of a street gang. However, as he was going through the system, it was early on in his life, and he started to find out that he wanted to be and prove to others that he was someone. In his first federal sentence he asked to be sent to one of the hardest institutions in the entire country because that's where he knew he could get up and move through the gang itself. As Emil started to go through the institution, he came out with a reputation of having survived and held his own within the institution, which he carried with him to the street.

⁶⁰ Henry, R. (2015). Social Spaces of Maleness: The Role of Street Gangs in Practicing Indigenous Masculinity. In R. A. Innes & K. Anderson (Eds.), *Indigenous men and masculinities: Legacies, identities, regeneration*. University of Manitoba Press.



So this is why prison programming and policy must focus on what a place means and how that interacts with individuals' reputation when they move back into the streets. How can we start mitigating this or looking at trying to support individuals as they leave an institution to see what the role of masculinity has on the de-escalation of potential violence in the future? The other part is that not only inmates or gang members promote this performance, but also guards and administration also adhere

to this masculinity or these masculine performances, like police officers on the streets. A tough masculine performance is something that we see across society in different areas, but dependent on who and where the performance is being enacted, it is seen as positive or negative.

Women, Gangs and Masculinity

Finally, the last thing I want to talk about here is the idea of Indigenous women gang members and masculinity. Indigenous gangs have a

greater number of female identified members than non-Indigenous gangs. We're starting to see this specifically in research in Canada and the United States, looking at Indigenous youth street gangs, that upwards of both 25%. This far exceeds any other group of the Canadian population.⁶¹ So, we must begin to understand what is happening here and what is the performance of Indigenous women in street gangs and behind bars.

Much of the literature on women and street gangs is constructed through a patriarchal lens, where they are seen as victims and easily taken advantage of. This includes their roles where they are seen as nothing more than *mules* who only transport goods across spaces. However, when we talk to the women themselves – and some of the older generation gang men who have seen the shift in behaviours – we see that their experiences challenge the literature. A lot of the times,

women gangs on the street, for example, are utilising a specific gender performance as well as sex for power, money, and protection. What gang members are observing is that a lot of police officers or criminal justice officials will survey specific bodies simply based on gender and race. And what happens now is that they're finding whiter women, whiter girls to be moving across because they have the ability to move across spaces. So, what's interesting is when we start talking about how individuals move and manipulate the systems themselves, they're utilizing racism and sexism for their own benefits.

Women who are involved in gangs continue to express that their performance is shaped by being tough and independent. For example, Beverly talked to me and said:

"I had to be a hard ass. I had no empathy for nobody. I couldn't have a bad day. I couldn't have an emotional day. I couldn't just say, 'Fuck

⁶¹ Henry, R. (2021). *Indigenous Women and Street Gangs: Survivance Narratives*. University of Alberta.

you, leave me alone.' I couldn't spell my feelings to anybody because it would get twisted or brought back to Kay. It was just I had to walk around with my head up being a boss lady. I was Kay's wife. I had to act a certain way, dress a certain way. I could never just be a mom, or a person. You can't slip because they're so two-faced. They really are. If I'm sitting there and somebody thinks I'm slipping, well, they're going to get this. How do you see this? I'm acting this way, she's not acting the way that I'm supposed to be acting, et cetera. She's making us look bad. So, that's four now, five, six people are all talking how I shouldn't be doing something, and they're going to vote me out, try to get people turn on me, get me stripped, make something up. It's like that on the edge."

What Bev is speaking to here is that when we see individuals who are involved in gangs, prison gangs and street gangs we see that the idea of physical violence on individuals is something easy to mark, but

it's the mental violence, spiritual violence, emotional violence that is a lot more difficult. This is where individuals who engage in gang life must present or create a mask – an alter ego if you will – to protect themselves as well as enact violence onto themselves and others. While that's happening, women and men have no release or ways in which to deal with their trauma. Studies of self-harm and addictions behind bars show an increase, heightened with Indigenous Peoples who are associated with street gangs, because they don't have proper ways in which to express, talk about, or express the ways in which violence has/is impacting them.

This idea of being tough and independent, being on their own, the idea of masculinity behind bars is one that we really need to start looking at to begin to understand effective programming to address violence. How does our programming impact or take into consideration performances? How does

prison administration reshape their understanding so that individuals engage in acts of wellbeing and healing? The violent masculine performance is one that should be examined, especially within prisons, as more and more younger women gang members are incarcerated.

We're seeing far more young women who are being tried for more violent crimes connected to street gangs, who are then being put into the institution. We need to get ahead of this. We need to understand what's happening and get ahead so that we can support individuals to move themselves out.

Conclusion

Finally, gangs will continue to be an issue within and outside of the prison. They're not going to go away. They're here. We just need to learn how to work with them. I think some ways that we can do this is to start working with individuals who have been or are incarcerated and involved in a gang in the co-creation, co-design, or co-developed programming and

research. I think we should be working with gangs and gang members in creating spaces where they can talk about the issues and how to address those issues behind bars in order to look at what does violence mean. How do we limit the potential hyper-violence that could be associated?

Violence associated to gangs is fraught with issues, such as 'what is a gang?' What is 'gang violence' and not individual violence? Or, what constitutes gang violence and the notion of the gang as an organisation versus that of 'swarming'? Talking with individuals who were gang members, a lot of the activities that they did partake in weren't gang activities and were outside of their role as a gang member. But because they were associated or labeled as a gang member, all their activities are viewed through the lens that it was gang involved. This becomes one of the questions. When does a crime become an independent crime, or when does violence become

independent? What happens if an individual is a gang member but enacts violence on another inmate, but it didn't have the go-ahead from the gangs or the top individuals? So, how do we begin to collect this to say that this is actually gang violence, or is it just personal violence, one-on-one violence?

Finally, examining masculinity within prison spaces will help to understand how a specific masculine performance is portrayed by both prison gang members as well as the prison staff.

Thank you.

THE EVOLUTION OF GANGS IN AOTEAROA: TRENDS AND POLICY RESPONSES

HARRY TAM

Gangs have been evolving in New Zealand since the 1950's, from the milk bar cowboys to the 501 outlaw motorcycle gangs. In this presentation, I describe and discuss the changing gang scene, the Government policy responses, and their implications.

First and foremost, I would say that gangs have been in New Zealand probably since the coming of the European. There's documentation in terms of the earlier European gangs of whalers and sealers creating mayhem through Aotearoa with alcohol and firearms and what have you. Then the other period that's more relevant to us now, is post-Second World War, and I think it's important that we recognise some of the economic policies that impacted on the formation of gangs, not only in New Zealand but throughout the developed world.

Post-War Economic Stress and Youth Culture

Through the adoption of Keynesian economics was this growth in the manufacturing sector in New Zealand and thus the need for workers to work the factories. For those that know the New Zealand economy, prior to that was predominantly and still is predominantly a primary producing economy. So, what that means is that, for example, farming, you don't actually need a lot of workers to look after a herd of sheep. So, New Zealand's sort of always had this thing where the main overseas earners, required very few workers, so how do you redistribute that wealth? Part of that sort of Keynesian

economics was growth of manufacturing. So, the farmer sells the sheep or its wool with cheeses, butter, and whatever, and they would buy local products, made in New Zealand factories, such as Holden cars, and Fisher & Paykel, and so forth, and that created jobs in the urban areas.

What happened there is something that is still happening today. Housing is quite an important issue, because for example, we could say that there's been a housing crisis in New Zealand since the coming of the European settlers because the reality is that Māori never built houses for European settlers. So when they came to New Zealand, there weren't houses for them and that has flowed on through to today, so we have this housing shortage, we tend to forget about the history of it.

By the 1930s, I think the Labour Government started building state houses, as a means to address that problem. What came with that was on one hand you had a growth in

manufacturing in the urban areas, you had an influx of people working in those factories and so forth, but no accommodation. So, we saw the growth of state housing areas such as Naenae and Taita. They built those houses, the parents went to work, the kids went to school, and of course there was that period between three o'clock and six o'clock, between school finishing and parents coming home from the school. So you basically had groups of young people hanging around in these concentrated areas, with very little to do and no sort of community amenities for them, and thus the formation of neighbourhood-type gangs. In the Wellington area they were known as the Naenae Boys and the Taita Boys, and they were predominantly working class Pākehā. Whilst that was happening, you had a popular youth culture evolving, like through the United States you had rock and roll and New Zealand youth culture was influenced by that. By the 50s and 60s, we saw of the emergence of what was known

as the bodgies and widgies and so forth, and then by the 60s you had the formation of bikie gangs.

Back in the 50s, there were a couple of things that triggered off some concern with these large groups of young people. One of them was an incident that took place in the Hutt Valley, where a girl had gone missing for some time over the weekend, turned back up, and talked about having a great weekend of fun and sex with boys, and another incident that happened down in, I believe Christchurch, the Parker-Hulme murder, where the two girls murdered their mother, and this triggered basically a moral panic, and an outcome of that was the Mazengarb Report⁶². The Mazengarb Report is your sort of first policy response to these young juvenile delinquent-type gangs and sort identified the lack of morality. One of the more prominent things that came out of it was

religious studies in schools, the government's response to unruly youth.

Into the 60s, where the demand for labour was so intensified, Māori were part of an urban drift process coming into the urban areas. Throughout that period of 60s and 70s, the social amenities weren't there, so housing continued to be a problem, also the support systems for Māori weren't there. By this stage a lot of the young people were dealing with social problems, the lack of housing, the parents were predominantly in low wage, low skilled employment, and at the same time you also had the migration of Pacifica people coming in from the islands to work in the factories and so forth. Thus we started seeing the formation of the Indigenous ethnic gangs, but just remembering at the same time your bikie gangs had also been well and truly established.

⁶² Mazengarb, O. C., et al. (1954). *Report on the special committee on moral delinquency in children and adolescents*. Wellington, NZ: Government Printer.

Patches, Formalization and the Emergence of Indigenous Gangs

Interestingly, in New York at about that same period, the street gangs are forming, and the really interesting point, they were wearing patches and so forth, and the same thing happened in New Zealand. Māori and Indigenous gangs adopted patches, while they didn't ride motorbikes, because they basically didn't have the money to acquire them, they start to imitate what the bikies were doing. At that stage, there were changes, even within the bikies. Like your older bike clubs, like in Wellington here you had the 25 Club and the Saints, they had de-formed and then the new bikies came along, like the Satan Slaves, so you had a whole different generation of bokie gangs evolving out of that.

The Mob, probably being one of the earlier Indigenous ethnic gangs, were predominantly European. In fact, there was a newspaper article that I came across, based in the Hawke's Bay, and the headline was

"Mongrels Fights Māori", and so we can establish that some of the early Mongrel, well before they were known as the Mongrel Mob, were known as the Mongrels, and they were predominantly Europeans.

They originally didn't have any patches. They started to adopt things like swastikas, as a means of identification, and then later adopted patches and were known as the Mongrel Mob. By that stage, the early 70s, they became quite prominent. There was also the formation of the Black Power back in Wellington. I think I recall actually reading some of his memoirs. He referred to them first, that he didn't see a Māori gang in Wellington. He said the closest it came to it was the gear meat workers known as the Bugaloos, and they were originally called the Black Bulls, and later became the Black Power.

By the 70s, we started to see an influx of gang membership and they were predominantly youth. I mean, I can recall back in my day, in fact, my entry into

the mob was as a 'junior', so it wasn't uncommon that the gangs were made up of large groups of young people; there were the Junior Blacks, there were Junior Mob and so forth.

Crime and Disorder

At this time, we started to see brawls, you know public disorders, and then I think in Christchurch we saw the beginning of large congregations of gang members, like at blossom festivals and so forth. But that's not new, because we've got to remember Hastings have always had blossom festivals. In fact, some of the early Evening Post articles would show special trains from Wellington to Hawke's Bay taking young people to these blossom festivals.

From there we started to see an escalation of disorders, and I think by '72, after quite a lot of confrontation, particularly in the South Island, between the Epitaph Riders and the Henchmen, probably for the first time we start to see

firearms being used as weapons in this war. The policy response at that time under the Kirk Government, well prior to them taking office, part of their election campaign was to take the bikes away from the bikies. However, after they came into office and realised that really wasn't possible to legislate that way, so what came out of that was the Unlawful Assemblies legislation⁶³, which then categorised that three or more people with intent to cause violence was an unlawful assembly.

At about the same time was the advent of these special police groups, namely known as the 'task force' led by Gideon Tate. Interesting enough, the task force was initially established to deal with gang disorders, but in the end was used as a political tool for the dawn raids of Pacific Peoples during that period. So there's a lesson there to be learned going forward.

The community response to the growth of these Indigenous

⁶³ Unlawful assembly (Section 86(1)(a) Crimes Act 1961)

ethnic gangs was led by people like James K. Baxter. I think that The Maori Jesus⁶⁴ is a good poem that sort of reflects his concern of young Māori in the urban areas. Here in Wellington, there were people like my mentor, Bill Mong, that were working with Nga Tamatoa, establishing crash pads for these young people, because housing continued to be a problem.

Recession + Unemployment = Growth of Gangs

By the late 70s, after the oil crisis and England joining the EEC, New Zealand basically lost its market and the country was going into recessional depression. We saw unprecedented unemployment. Interestingly enough, so while gangs were forming in the 70s, Indigenous and ethnic gangs were forming, they really grew when there was recessions. From there, we started to see large scale gangs, where it wasn't uncommon to have 20 or more in a chapter. The gangs

got quite big and also unemployment meant that they weren't working and they would cross each other's path, and so the escalation of violence grew from the increase in membership.

By 1979, these problems were starting to come to the fore and we saw in the '79 Select Committee on Violent Offending⁶⁵, it recognised the benefits of the likes of the Work Trusts, which were community initiatives that responded to the needs of these young gang members in the urban areas. The Select Committee recognised the value of those trusts, but they also had the 'stick and carrot' approach. That on one hand they supported gangs to participate in pro-social activities, but at the same time the full wrath law should be brought to bear on those that offend.

You had this dual balanced approach, in terms of managing

⁶⁴ Baxter, J. K. (1966). The Maori Jesus. *Eikon* 2, 18.

⁶⁵ Select Committee of Inquiry into Violent Offending. (1979) *Report of the Select Committee into Violent Offending*. Wellington, NZ: Government Printer.

gangs and gang disorders. Before a lot of the Work Trusts, they initially started off doing private sector work, but as that work dried up because of the state of the economy, local authorities became involved. Here in Wellington, Sir Michael Fowler was very proactive by giving city council contracts to these gang Work Trusts as a means of keeping them employed and out of trouble. However, by the late 70s, it had gotten so bad, that even local authorities could no longer provide that sort of work for the gangs. It was around that time that we saw the government response of utilising outreach as a means of engaging gang members into pro-social activities, and that was known as the Detached Youth Worker scheme, and that came about under Sir Robert Muldoon.

The first two Detached Youth Workers was Dennis O'Riley with Black Power and Cos Jeffreys with Epitaph Riders in Christchurch. This approach

seemed to have worked, but by '81 was known as "the year of the gangs." I think that was pretty much during that period of time when gang membership had sort of reached its peak of over just over 2,000. After a series of very violent incidents, Muldoon commissioned the Ministerial Committee on Gangs. What came out of that was known as 'The Gang Report'66. Prior to the Gang Report coming out, there were the government work schemes. Muldoon was heavily involved in this thing called "job creation," and he had the Think Big Project going and the idea of Think Big was to build on the energy projects to make New Zealand independent of energy, particularly around the oil crisis that we were facing, and he had things like the Motunui Synthetic Oil Plant, and the building of the Clyde Dam.

He had these job creation schemes, some of the better known ones was the PEP, Project Employment Program, and these were fully subsidised,

⁶⁶ Comber, K. (1981). *Report on the Committee on Gangs*. Wellington, NZ: Government Printer.

award rates of pay schemes, for what was known as long-term unemployed. To qualify as long-term unemployed, you had to be six months registered unemployed. The idea was that it would give you six months work, so you can catch up on your debts. The whole idea of this was to buy time until the Think Big projects came on stream and created more employment for people to go into. Of course, it never eventuated like that. But part of that was, how do you engage gangs into those work schemes? The Detached Youth work was one of those approaches.

By the time of the 1981 report, it recognised that there were failures in terms of government agencies responses to gangs, and it identified that employment was key in preventing gang disorders. It also found the Department of Labour performed really poorly in that area of being able to engage gang members into those work schemes and provide funding for them. Out of the '81 Gang Report, one of

the most significant policy outcomes was the establishment of the Group Employment Liaison Scheme, which was established to provide a contact between the bureaucracy and the gangs, and to help them negotiate a system of employment and funding. However, by the mid to late 80s, there was a change in government in '84, and the four police commanders in the South Island got concerned about the growth in gangs and gangs involved in work schemes, and they commissioned a report by Sergeant Mark Penn. Simultaneously what was happening up in Auckland was Black Power had been involved in importing stretch limousines and a whole lot of Harley Davidsons – this attracted police attention.

The Penn report, which was leaked by Tommy Thompson who was the police commander in Invercargill, made the accusation that gangs had been financed by these Work Schemes. I recall one of the newspaper article headlines

was that "Work Schemes is a pipeline to Treasury". This created a whole public debate on gangs ripping off the Work Schemes and so forth. I think the Minister of Police, Ann Hercus, at that time then commissioned a second report, which was actually the official one carried out by Sergeant Mark White, known as the 'White Report'. That report didn't identify any sort of legalities, but there were administrative laxity by the government agencies and the local authorities that we're engaging the gangs and those schemes. By that stage, the Work Schemes were brought into disrepute, and it seemed eventually the Minister of Employment at that time, Kerry Burke, placed a moratorium on those Work Schemes and they were then phased out.

What we need to recognise is that the policies of the Labour Government was to actually do away with those Work Schemes anyway, as their Liberal approach was that basically job

creation was a sole domain of industry and that government had no space in terms of participating in job creation. Consequently, the government axed all fully subsidised schemes, but then implemented what was known as the REACs, the Regional Employment Action Committees, that then provided partially subsidised training schemes, known as the ACCESS Schemes and MACCESS Schemes. ACCESS was for general delivery and MACCESS was a lower level funding, at an entry level, for Māori.

Surveillance and Suppression

By '89, at the time of the ministerial inquiry into prisons⁶⁷, which was the second Roper Report, they recognised that there were some public tension on those Work Schemes and the view that "We shouldn't throw the baby out with the bath water" because they recognised that there was some value in those schemes, in terms of creating pro-social spaces for gangs.

⁶⁷ Ministerial Committee of Inquiry into the Prisons System. (1989). *Prison review: Te Ara Hou – The New Way*. Wellington, NZ: Crown.

From '89 through the 1990s was the time where it was the end of any sort of pro-social responses to gang membership, and New Zealand by that stage had adopted the policy of suppression, which is electronic surveillance and police intelligence – gangs were basically redefined as organised criminal groups.

From the 1990s through to 2020, we now have about three going on to fourth generation gang membership, so once those pro-social activities were stopped, we saw a steady growth of gang membership, and that has continued to today. However, some of the things that we also need to recognise is that while gangs were pretty big during the 70s and the early 80s, that by the late 80s and the 1990s, gang numbers had started to reduce. Probably not so well known is that in reality the dynamics within gangs at that stage is that this growth period brought in a lot of members that came into gangs, they were probably people that exploited their membership of gangs and they

came and caused a lot of problems. Some of them would've gone to prison, they would've done things that wasn't well respected within gangs and they left. So you were then left with a much smaller group. The talk around gangs at that stage was you were referred to "quality over quantity." So we saw a change in gang recruitment practices, where prospecting periods became much longer, they were more selective of their memberships, and so the gang numbers basically shrunk and stabilized. Even though they continued to grow, they never grew at the pace that they have today.

The 'Problem' of Youth

2005 was the beginning of attention on youth gangs, and at that time some of the gang experts are saying, "Well, there's a generation gap between the older gangs, and the younger gang members pretty much can't relate to the older gang members, and so they form their own gangs." There may be some truth in that, but I think the reality of

that was around gang recruitment policies. The established gangs had adopted what I call "passive recruitment." In other words, what that meant was that they didn't go actively recruiting gang members, if people came to the gang and wanted to join, they would then go through a process of prospecting and so forth to get their membership.

In the meantime, young people would've been the sons and the nephews of the established gang members, and a lot of these kids basically grew up without their fathers. Their fathers were in jail, they were doing the gang thing, they pretty much weren't around. So we had this period where a lot of young males were brought up in sole parent situations, and so they didn't really know what their fathers did. So their idea of a gang member is shaped by what they perceived as a gang member, through publicity, whether it's the media, television or newspapers or whatever.

When I was involved with the South Auckland youth gang situation, there was a time when we utilised what we'd done with the national president of the Notorious Chapter and Knockers from the Black Power to go out to do outreach to try and find out what was causing the gang violence in South Auckland. We had a hui at Pukaki Marae, and after the powhiri, the boys separated all of the gangsters into the wharenuī. As we were doing our whakawhanaunga-tanga, there was a young guy in the group, and he was yelling out, "I don't believe this, I don't believe what I'm seeing," and one of the established gang guys said, "Well, what do you mean?" And he just said, "Oh, well I can't believe that you are all sitting here together." There was the Black Power, the Mongrel Mob, the Tribesmen, and the King Cobras. We were all quite miffed, you know, "What do you mean we shouldn't be sitting together?" And his words were, "You should be killing each other. You know, you guys should be killing each other." Someone

said, "Well, where'd you get that from?" He said, "Well, I seen it on TV, I've seen it in the newspaper. You guys shouldn't be sitting here together, you should be killing each other."

So, what that tells us is that these young people's minds of what a gangster should be, has been predominantly shaped by the media, and more recently by social media. I think what we need to recognise is that through that period, where the male gang members went and did their gang things or went to prison or whatever, so they weren't always there.

Whānau, Fathers and 'In-Risk' Kids

There was also another change following on from the 1990s, because what had happened was that after the Labour Government's neo-liberal policies, came the National Party and Ruth Richardson and "the mother all budgets" and that was the benefit cuts. Before the benefit cuts, the typical gang family that I was working with, were mother was on the DPB and the father was

on unemployment. So most of the kids were the domain of the mother. But once the benefit cuts came in, the fathers took the sons, and went on the DPB, because the DPB had a higher rate of benefit than the unemployment. So when Ruth Richardson cut the benefits, it impacted largely on the unemployment benefit, and so what we started to see was that the males would take the young boys with them, and thus the boys became indoctrinated much deeper into gang cultures. So, if Dad went to the pad, he had the boys in the car, if he went and do a deal, the boys are there. So, we start to socialise that gang culture into our kids.

By 2005, you had this disconnection and basically these kids were the kids of gang members. When Helen Clark was the prime minister, she invested \$12.5 million into those communities, and the idea of that was to prevent young people joining gangs. The thing is that most of those organisations that didn't actually work with the real

hardcore kids, they were focused on what I call "at risk kids". Whereas this group that we're talking about is what I refer to as "in risk kids". The whole suppression approach is that you do not recognise gang leadership, you do not engage with gangs, and so by not engaging with gangs, you are not actually engaging with that "in risk group", that's the kids of the gang members. And thus, eventually they all got recruited into the established gangs and now we have this increasing number of young people joining gangs. The rhetoric at the moment is, again, let's prevent young people going to gangs. But what we're not defining is which young people are we talking about?

Trans-Tasman Connections

Other changes that were happening at roughly the same time, 2011, was the establishment of the Rebels Motorcycle Club here in New Zealand. I think this is a significant change that has also contributed to the high influx into gang membership.

Basically, the Rebels came to New Zealand, they started patching over established gang members to form this Rebels gang. We hadn't seen anything like that. Yes – we've had the Hells Angels here since the 1960s, but their membership wasn't through patching over.

When the patching over started to take place, we then started to see the local gangs, the likes of the Head Hunters, for example, spread south of the Bombay. The Head Hunters have been around since the 60s and 70s, but they never really went south of the Bombays, but they started to grow because they saw this other gang coming on the scene, and as these gangs grew into new areas, the established gangs either got patched over or phased out, or they started actively recruiting, so we shifted from passive recruitment to active recruitment.

At the same time, you've also got social media playing a role and also meth contributing to that, because the talk at the

time, when simmerings of the Rebels coming here, was a talk that local gangs would get together and run them out. That didn't happen, of course. The reason why it didn't happen was that a lot of them got patched over, a lot of them got bought-off through meth and so forth.

The shape of gang conflicts was also changing. If you go back to the 60 and 70s, you had public disorders, you had brawls in public places and so forth. Whereas today's conflict and the weaponry has changed, where lethal weapons have become the norm, knives and guns, drive-by shootings is now more prominent than brawls and so forth.

In terms of government policy, we continue down the suppression pathway. Gangs have been defined as our outlaw organised criminal groups, resulting in attempts to ban the patches, and increase penalties and so forth. None of this has actually stemmed the flow of gang membership. Neither has any of this really

changed the behaviours of gangs.

Closing Thoughts

I guess one of the lessons learned is that if we look at some of the trends and patterns of the past, for example, as gangs grew in the 70s, what was predominantly sort of a urban and a provincial phenomenon, went into the rural areas. Through high unemployment, the kids that became gang members in the urban areas, because there was no work, some of them went home, and of course what they took with them was their gang rivalry. So, you start to see, in the rural areas, a growth in gangs and gang membership. At the same time, it had an impact on prisons because prior to that, the predominant culture in prisons involved a hierarchy around a 'kingpin', and prisons were considered to be a neutral space. But by the 80s, prisons became very segregated. Gang turf was brought in there and the gangs started to take control of the prisons, and that is perhaps still pretty much the case now.

What does this mean going forward with the increase in gang membership and are we able to make any difference by continually utilising suppression approaches? I think history would say 'no'. It wouldn't make any difference. If anything, it may even make it worse. In my view, I would like to think that probably over the next five years or so we may see a tapering-off of some of the gang membership. I say that because we learned from the past that you had people that came into gangs that probably should've never have been in gangs. So when gangs actively recruit, their screening process is a lot more relaxed, so people aren't being scrutinised as much as they should be. So you're getting people that are coming to gangs and some of them actually leave quite early, and I know that some of them are what they call "runaways," that they come into the gang and then they realise, "Oh, I don't want to be in a gang," and some of them drop their colours, and disappear and go into hiding.

I think those patterns are likely to repeat themselves. Maybe not so much at the same scale it was in the 1990s, but I think it will happen because of that thing of understanding of why people join gangs and recognizing that they join for different reasons. Some of them aren't always honorary in terms of the gang culture, and those ones will phase themselves out and thus the growth would be slower rather than at the speed that it is now.

If we really want to make change in that area, we cannot do this without engaging the established gangs into pro-social activities. If we think we can do that, then we're really kidding ourselves, and if anything, it would encourage the growth. Unfortunately, the latest things that we hear, that politicians will continue to chant the same mantra of, "Lets prevent kids joining gangs", but of course they're not defining which kids to focus on. It will be a case of shifting their focus. So, the service providers will benefit by having extra resources, they will treat

that risk group, it will have minimal effect in terms of those that actually are

vulnerable to joining gangs, and of course they are the gang kids themselves.

A REHABILITATIVE ENVIRONMENT APPROACH TO REDUCING PRISON VIOLENCE

JENNIFER GALOUZIS

Correctional agencies across Australia are committed to providing prison environments that ensure the safety of staff and incarcerated peoples by minimising the potential for prison violence. The prevalence of prison violence can vary markedly both within and between prisons and a significant amount of this variation can be explained by the characteristics of the prison environment. Within the NSW correctional context, a rehabilitative environment approach has been developed and implemented with the aim of reducing the risk of prison violence and improving reoffending outcomes. In this paper, we articulate the theoretical and operational frameworks that have been used to guide the design and delivery of rehabilitative correctional environments that create the conditions necessary for enhanced safety and also provide an empirical framework that has been used to examine the relationships between the multiple environmental elements and the prevalence of violence.

I'm going to offer my perspective on this topic, which obviously is from a Corrective Services New South Wales perspective, but it's also very much from a strategy, policy and research perspective as opposed to an operational perspective. I'm going to describe how here in New South Wales we are

increasingly applying an ecological framework to every strategy, policy area that we look at. Today I'm going to present on what we've termed the 'rehabilitative environment' approach to prison violence.

Before I do that, I want to acknowledge that I'm joining the symposium today from the

Lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation here in Central Sydney in the CBD. To acknowledge the traditional owners of this land and pay my respects to elders past and present. I also want to acknowledge that this is unceded land. It always was and always will be Aboriginal land. I really want to recognise all Aboriginal people and value their long, rich, cultural and spiritual connection across all the lands in Australia. I also have to recognise in Australia, in New South Wales where I live and work, the incredible over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the criminal justice system and identify that it is the highest on my agenda to change that record and to really improve outcomes, to minimise the damage and the trauma caused by colonization and the ongoing damage caused by the overrepresentation in our criminal justice system.

An Ecological Approach to Violence Prevention

Like many correctional agencies, New South Wales is very much committed to providing prison environments that ensure the safety of staff and of people in custody by minimising the potential for prison violence. As an agency, our thinking about how to do this has really evolved over the past decade or so, and we're now very much engaged with what we refer to as an ecological approach, which I'm sure has been very much a focus of this symposium. We've really adopted this approach to help us to understand how we can improve the lives of people who live and work in prison, which includes minimising or preventing the likelihood of adverse events such as violence and victimisation.

In the past two years, we've framed the use of this ecological approach to develop this concept of a rehabilitative prison environment. We're really working to centre the creation or establishment of these environments in

everything that we do, both strategically and operationally, both in prison and within our community supervision model. One of the interesting things in New South Wales, which I think is probably common in other jurisdictions, is that we have traditionally conflated the term rehabilitation with the outcome of reducing re-offending, and often used the two terms interchangeably. We haven't really recognised that rehabilitation is very much a process that belongs to the person who's going through that process of change. It's a process that very much emerges out of the complex interplay between people and the environment in which they live and work, and the broader social context. For this reason, we've adopted a definition of a rehabilitative environment as a set of conditions that enable or inhibit positive change. This definition has been really nice to work with from a strategic perspective because it really recognises the interconnection and the interdependence of the multiple components and dynamics within these complex

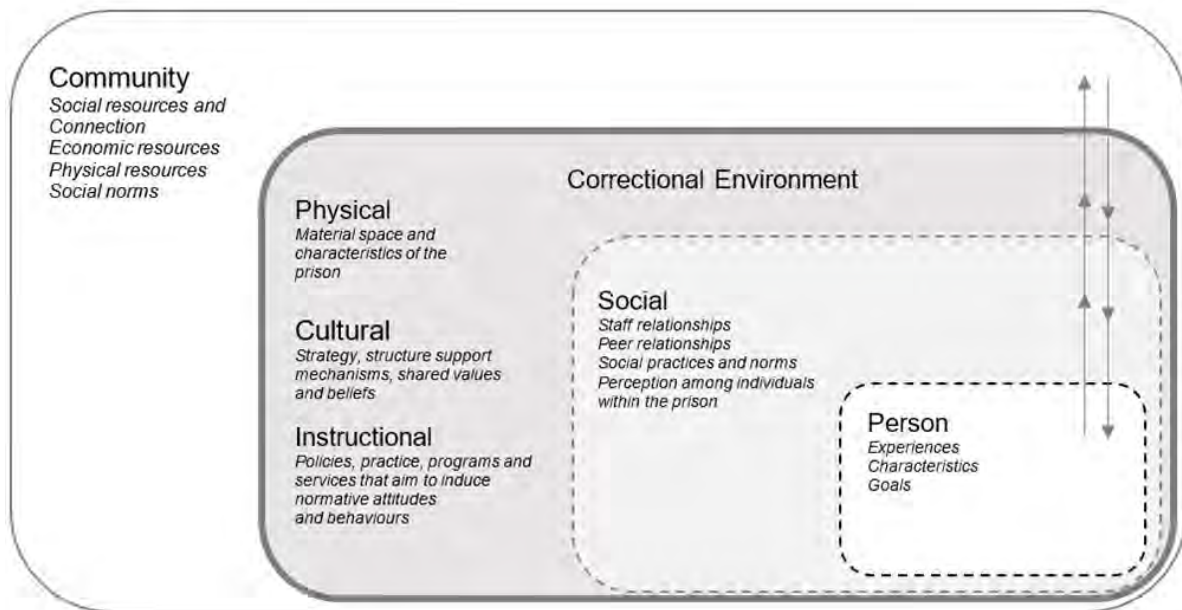
environments in which we work, and it really moves us away from the traditional cause-and-effect, or linear, thinking around why things happen in prison, why things happen the way they do. In terms of re-offending, moving away from this idea that treatment-as-cause, and that if you participate or complete a programme, that you're somehow 'cured' and reductions in re-offending will follow.

The other thing about taking an ecological approach is that it reflects the stratified or the multi-level conceptualisation of the environment, and it really makes us think about mechanisms rather than direct cause-and-effect. So what mechanisms are allowed to occur when the multiple elements of the environment interact to either inhibit or enable people to feel safe, to flourish, and to engage in a process of positive change.

The diagram below (figure 1) is of our most basic representation of what we

Figure 1

An Ecological Representation of a Correctional Environment



mean by an ecological approach and things we consider when we talk about rehabilitative environments. The person is at the centre of that environment and we need to be mindful of people's experiences, their characteristics, their goals, what they want to do, what they want for their life while they're in and when they're out of prison. We also need to think about the correctional environment, which includes the social space, the relationships between staff, between people in custody, the social practices, and the socially

structured spaces within the environment.

We also have to think about the physical, the cultural, and what we refer to as the instructional components of the environment. They include things like the policies, practices, programmes and services that we're applying to try and induce normative attitudes and behaviour changes. How do they interact with the cultural, physical, social, and how do they interact with people in the environment? We also have to be mindful of the broader

community context; the political and social context, but also being mindful of the social resources and connections that people have in the community, and the social norms and expectations of people coming out of custody.

When we apply this model to the prevention of violence and victimisation, the aim is really to facilitate violence prevention whilst also improving the experience of prison and improving the outcomes for people when they get out of custody. We see violence prevention as both a desirable operational outcome and a feature or element of a rehabilitative environment. In a traditional linear or logic model approach, we'd see violence as an intermediate outcome that we need to achieve in order to achieve our impact of improving people's lives. So, in the time that I have today, I'm going to talk about how we in New South Wales arrived at this approach and how we're using it to both inform and

understand the factors that enhance and compromise safety and affect people's experiences of prison.

Towards 'Rehabilitative Environments'

Three events within Corrections New South Wales over the past decade have significantly contributed to our embrace of this ecological approach. The first was a programme that was introduced in 2015 that's referred to as the Better Prisons project⁶⁸, which really aimed to enhance the service delivery of prisons in New South Wales by setting performance frameworks – key performance indicators and performance targets across all public and private prisons – and allow direct comparison of prisons in terms of their outcomes to try and improve the quality of the service that we deliver.

The second, is the construction and operation of our two 'Rapid Build' correctional centres, which for anyone who

⁶⁸ For a description of this project, see <https://correctiveservices.dcj.nsw.gov.au/csnew-home/correctional-centres/better-prisons.html>

attended last year would've heard Brad talk about the really innovative and interesting way that the Macquarie Correctional Centre is operated in a maximum security environment⁶⁹. I'll look at how the build and operation of those prisons has really led us further towards this ecological approach, and then I'll talk about how we started to think about rehabilitative prison environments and how that really became the cornerstone of our re-offending strategy when, in 2019, our then Premier announced one of her key priorities was to reduce the rate of re-offending amongst people coming out of custody. She really challenged us to think differently about the way we deliver our service as she attempted to try and disrupt that trajectory of people coming out of custody.

Before I get onto those three projects, I just thought I'd give you a really quick overview of New South Wales, for anyone

who's not familiar. At the moment, we've got about twelve and a half thousand people in prison in New South Wales. We did experience quite a significant reduction in the prison population when COVID first occurred in 2020. We had a reduction of around 1,500 people and we've really maintained that lower level of people in custody, which has been quite a welcome side effect of COVID in New South Wales. We've got 36 correctional centres across the state, and they vary in size, function and location. They also vary in capacity from really small centres that only accommodate about 55 people, to our largest prison, which can accommodate up to 1,600 people. We also have a number of correctional centres that are multi-classification or multi-security level. So within the one correctional centre, it can include minimum security, medium and maximum security. The majority of our centres are in the region, so in

⁶⁹ Peebles, B. (2022). *Driving a pro-social inmate culture in prison: The Macquarie experience* [invited address]. Te Whanake: Understanding prison violence in Aotearoa II. New Zealand (Online). <https://www.waikato.ac.nz/turning-the-tide/symposium/2021>

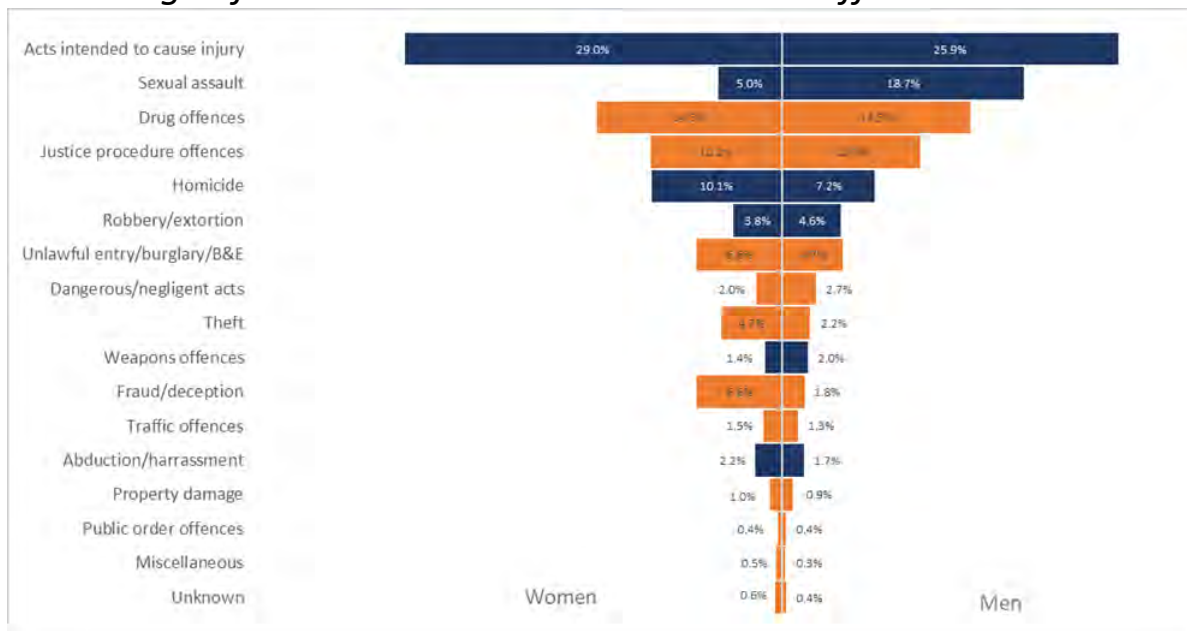
either the inner region or the outer region, and only about a quarter are in our metro area. The majority of people who move through the system coming in and out each year spend time in a maximum security centre. So at any one time in terms of that flow through, just over half are in a maximum security centre, about a third in minimum security, and a small proportion in medium security.

In terms of a statistical profile of people in custody with a current violent offense, the bars in blue are what we'd sort of typically define as an interpersonal violent offense (see figure 2). At any one time, about half of women in custody are in for that type of offense, and about 60% of men. So, you can see the profile differs slightly across men and women, with women more likely to be in for theft or fraud-related offenses, with drug offenses and offenses against justice proceeding orders.

Regarding violence within the custody context, there's the aggregate-level of violence that includes things like riots and major disturbances. Thankfully, we don't have many of those in New South Wales. So when we talk about violence, we tend to be very focused on the sort of individual level violence and looking at rates of victimisation, rates of assault, and also fights within correctional centres. We report on rates of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults within custody, and also rates of prisoner-on-staff assaults in custody as well. In terms of this measure, it is really much a measure of victimisation, so we're counting the number of people that are victims of violence within the correctional context. This chart (figure 3) shows our monthly rate of prisoner on prisoner assaults going back to the last quarter of 2017.

Figure 2

Percentage of Prisoners with a Current Violent Offence



Interestingly in New South Wales, we had quite a dramatic spike in the rate of assaults back towards the end of 2014. That really coincided with the smoking ban that was rolled-out in custody, as well as some changes to our bail laws that saw our prison population increase by about 15% within six months. So, we had a number of factors that were putting quite a lot of pressure on people within the system, and our rate of assault doubled almost overnight. And we really have sustained that high rate of assault until recently, where we've actually been quite

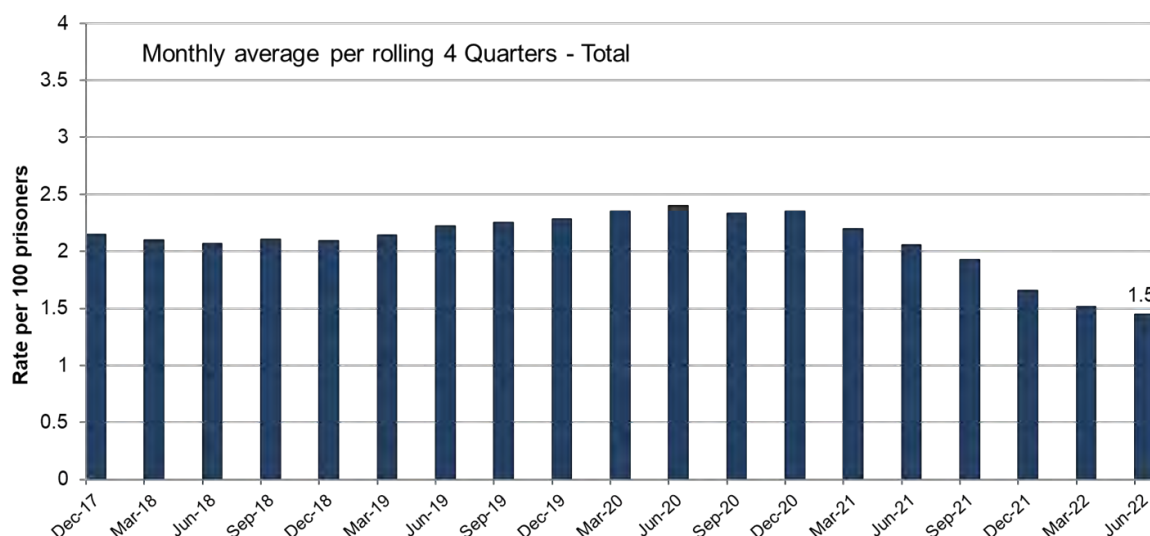
successful in reducing the rate of assault almost to that pre-2014 level. So at the moment, our rate of assault is about 1.5 injuries per 100 people in custody per month across the state.

The Better Prisons Programme

In 2016, the New South Wales Government introduced what was referred to as the Better Prisons programme, which really aimed to enhance the service delivery of prisons in New South Wales by setting key performance targets against particular metrics.

Figure 3

Rate of Prisoner-on-Prisoner Assault



Seventeen indicators were identified, and they were the same indicators across all prisons in New South Wales, public and private. One of those key indicators was the rate of assault; very much trying to capture that prevalence of victimisation within correctional centres, and setting some quite ambitious targets to try and drive down that rate of assault in centres in New South Wales.

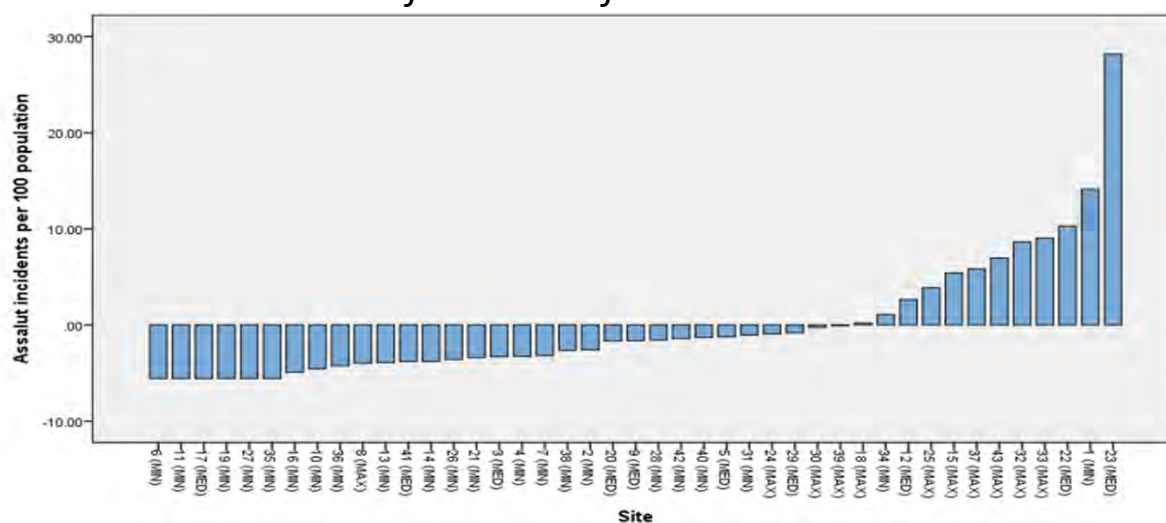
One of the challenges with developing a performance regime like this is that you often observe in correctional centres the clustering of violent incidents, or even *people* with a

history of violence, into particular correctional centres, and that's very much driven by design. So, our classification system and our misconduct or institutional misconduct system is really designed to concentrate people who have got a higher propensity for violence into higher security centres that are in much more restrictive environments.

This chart (figure 4) shows a ranking of the rates of assault in all of the correctional centres in New South Wales, and it shows how much each centre deviates from the state average assault rate. So, those on the left that are in the negative,

Figure 4

Violence as a Measure of Prison Performance



below zero, have a rate of assault that's below the average, and those to the right are the centres that have an average assault rate that is higher than the state average.

You can see there's quite a lot of variation across those centres. So, this really raised the question for us around, how meaningful is it to set a performance target or a performance metric that's universal across centres when we have this design in the system to cluster people and not really taking into account, or not really measuring what we want to measure, which is the capacity of our Governors and our Centre Managers to drive improvements of

correctional centres? We're aware that we were inadvertently measuring something other than what we wanted to measure.

Violence as a measure of prison performance is really affected by the individuals that are within each correctional centre. So, people with particular histories of institutional behaviour, particular propensities for violence, particular vulnerabilities within correctional centre, also by their gender, their age, their offense type; all of these individual characteristics are going to affect the likelihood of somebody perpetrating violence or being the victim of violence.

One of the things we're really interested in is how much of that variance in the re-offending rate can be explained by the characteristics of the correctional centre itself. These are things like the size of the centre, the age, the design, those sorts of structural things, so what's the routine like, what's the security level like, also what is the quality of the management? When we're talking about measuring performance, that's really what we're interested in; how much influence does quality correctional management have on the rate of assault or the rate of violence or the frequency of violence in correctional centres? This is made even more difficult because not only are no two prisons the same, but prisons are constantly changing. There can be changes in staff, there can be changes in the composition of people living in that particular centre. So, they're also changing over time as well.

What we did in response to that was very much influenced

by the Federal Bureau of Prisons in the US and a lot of the work they'd done on measuring prison performance. We wanted to develop a multi-level model of prison violence that could really partition how much of the variance in the rates of assault or the rates of victimisation could be explained at the individual level and how much could be explained at the centre level. The model could be used to derive or construct a much more meaningful measure of prison performance in terms of effectively driving down the rate of assault, but also provide some insights into what are the characteristics of correctional centres that are associated with improved outcomes in rates of violence, even after adjusting for the composition of people living within that facility.

We found that almost 40% of the variance in the rates of victimisation could be explained by the characteristics of the prison, which was much higher than we had anticipated. I guess it reinforced the

importance of developing more sophisticated models of prison performance in terms of understanding what are the drivers of institutional violence, and very much identifying that it's not just about the composition of people in the prisons or the traditional importation model of prison violence, but very much the environment in which people live and work is going to have a substantial impact on the frequency and propensity for violence and victimisation within those locations⁷⁰.

This research really has put us on the path to really wanting to understand more around what are these environmental factors that we need to be thinking about, and giving us a sense of the importance of moving away from the sort of individual responsibility that's really dominated correctional practice in terms of a rehabilitation sense – even moving away from the

situational control management of prison violence and looking at what other elements of the environment can we potentially adapt to try and improve outcomes.

When we had a look at the individual and the site level variables that were significantly associated with higher rates of victimisation within custody, at the site level, we really only found two factors that were significantly associated: (1) security level – people in maximum security locations were associated with higher rates of violence, and (2) longer hours out of cell were also associated with higher rates of violence – the longer that people are out and interacting, the greater the likelihood of victimisation occurring. But in saying that, we were really only able to explain just over half of the variance with those site level variables, so almost half of that variance in outcome was

⁷⁰ I want to acknowledge my colleague, Dr. Mark Howard, who's the manager of the research team within Corrections New South Wales, and also acknowledge his team, whose work I'm going to be referencing a lot in this presentation. We're very fortunate in New South Wales to have a large and incredibly productive and interesting research team that is able to generate a lot of this really quality – and local – evidence for us.

not explained by the selected variables that we could include.

We're very much limited to administrative data. Historically, we have not collected routine survey data from staff or people in custody about their experience or perceptions, so very much limited to those administrative things. We didn't have measures of the social climate or the quality of relationships between staff or between people in prison, which we hypothesised would be strongly associated with rates of violence and victimisation within custody. But still, in terms of our high-level question, it really demonstrated for us unequivocally that environment matters when we're looking at operational outcomes, and we need to be investing in this type of research and moving more towards an ecological approach that incorporates both the structural and individual drivers of these outcomes.

The Rapid Build Correctional Centres

The second project that has really influenced our thinking is the Rapid Build correctional centres. In late 2014, in response to the Lindt Café siege in New South Wales and some changes to our bail laws, we had an incredibly rapid increase in the prison population in New South Wales – by about 1,500 people in less than six months. So, we urgently needed some additional infrastructure to be able to safely and securely accommodate this rising population. So in New South Wales, we commissioned two 400-bed Rapid Build correctional centres, and they were called Rapid Build centres because they were built within 12 months. You can see an aerial shot of the Macquarie Correctional Centre (figure 5), which is a Rapid Build. The second one was built north of Sydney in our Hunter region. It's called the Hunter Correctional Centre. The next photo is the type of accommodation in these maximum security centres (figure 6).

Figure 5
Macquarie Correctional Centre



Figure 6
Rapid Build Dormitory Accommodation Space



So you can see it's not cellular accommodation, which is the traditional style for maximum security. It's much more dormitory style with those pods that have been described as looking like first class airline accommodation(!). They've got an interactive TV in each pod, and there's 25 people in each of the pods with showers and bathrooms in the dorm style. So, Macquarie opened in late 2017 and Hunter opened in early 2018.

There were obvious significant risks associated with these high-security centres, and particular risks around the potential for violence because of the accommodation style; having 25 maximum-security men in these dorm styles is obviously unusual and presents risks in terms of traditional thinking of correctional management. To mitigate these risks, the Rapid Build centres developed tailored operating philosophies and our first real conceptualisation of what we now think of as a 'rehabilitative prison environment'. A lot of thought and consideration

went into how we design these centres in a way where people feel safe, where they've got the capacity to flourish, where they're doing interesting activity and making meaningful connections and relationships with staff and other people within the centre.

The other interesting opportunity with the Rapid Builds is that we had two identical facilities, in terms of their architecture. We really wanted to design an evaluation programme where we could look at the relationship between the architecture, the management style, and the social climate and operational outcomes that were derived from these two centres as they evolved. As part of that process, we developed a logic model of the Rapid Build prisons, which really identified how distinct they were in terms of the way they were designed from an operational perspective. Each centre developed its own tailored philosophy, they developed incentives to try and promote pro-social behaviour for

people, they increased the staff-to-inmate ratio, and they tried to introduce staff ways of working that would ensure there was positive interactions and engagement with people that were living within these rehabilitative environments (even though that's not the language we were using at the time).

They also really increased resources to facilitate family and community engagement. Some of the resources, particularly at Macquarie with their visits area and their cafe, are really like nothing I've seen in a correctional centre. In terms of outputs, really the aim of these operating philosophies and these different ways of doing things was to really improve the social climate of the correctional centre, as well as to really minimise the risk of violence and victimisation, and to increase participation in things that were meaningful to people at the centre. There are lots of opportunities for participation in education and programmes and those sorts of activities, to try and minimise

security incidents and drive engagement. These philosophies were really developed on the assumption that by creating these sorts of cultures and climates, you can create environments that allow people to thrive and to flourish.

In terms of operational effectiveness, we were able to see very quickly that Macquarie in particular was quite distinctive in terms of its outcomes. Across the state, the rate of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults is around 1.5 per 100 prisoners each month. If we're looking just at maximum security centres, that goes up to about 3.5 per 100 prisoners, but at Macquarie, that has a rate of assault that's less than 1, so 0.4 assaults per 100 people at Macquarie, and that was in the 2021-22 financial year. That's an incredibly low prevalence of violence, both against prisoners and against staff. This is in a centre that's delivering 15 or 16 hours out of cell, living in dormitory-style accommodation, which means there are lots of situational opportunities for violence to

occur, yet we were observing these incredibly low incidents of violence and also all other types of operational incidents that might be symptomatic of a dangerous or volatile environment.

We wanted to know if it was the social climate that was distinctive at the Macquarie Correctional Centre, and we also wanted to know how effectively we could create a positive social climate⁷¹. We were interested to see if it is possible to consciously create a positive social climate, and if it can be sustained over time. We designed a longitudinal study to look at the perceptions of the social climate at the two Rapid Build centres. We also selected two equivalent traditional correctional centres, and we measured perceptions of social climate using the EssenCES⁷² over four time periods during

the first two years of operation of the Rapid Builds. This research is available on our website⁷³.

Essentially, what we found was that not only did the two Rapid Builds have significantly better perceptions of social climate amongst staff compared to the traditional centres, but that Macquarie had created a social climate where the perceptions of staff safety, the cohesion and the support, and the overall social climate, were significantly higher than at Hunter. This was evidence that the environment and the social climate that had been created at Macquarie is potentially associated with these impressive operational outcomes that we're observing at the centre.

We also did some qualitative research with the prisoners at

⁷¹ I say we in the royal, but it's certainly Brad Peebles, as the Governor, was driving this centre.

⁷² Initially designed as a quick and easy tool to aid in assessing the essential traits of the social and therapeutic atmosphere in forensic psychiatric settings, the EssenCES was subsequently expanded for use in correctional facilities. See: Schalast, N., & Tonkin, M. (Eds.). (2016). *The Essen Climate Evaluation Schema EssenCES: A manual and more*. Göttingen, Germany: Hogrefe.

⁷³ <https://correctiveservices.dcj.nsw.gov.au/csnsw-home/resources/research-and-reports/corrections-research-evaluation-and-statistics.html>

the Rapid Builds. We compared them to people in more traditional centres (this publication is also available on our website). What the prisoners saw as enhancing the social climate and reducing propensity and violence was the level and type of purposeful activity that was provided at the Rapid Builds, particularly at Macquarie, which alleviated boredom and frustration. They really identified that the contact with the other inmates in the dorm-style accommodation increased a sense of community, and this had really developed quite organically. People did have some control. There was some sort of process where people could select who came into different dorms to try and maintain that social cohesion, but that was very much recognised by inmates. They also felt that the level of turnover at the centre and the composition of people in the dorms was really important to maintaining that positive social climate and minimising the threats of violence. And they also really recognised the

quality and attitudes of staff, and very much described the ideal as an authoritative yet supportive staff, and confident but considerate. And they also recognised the role that surveillance has to play, particularly in the Rapid Builds that has quite sophisticated technology, and people reported feeling quite safe as a result of that technology.

So based on this qualitative research, the researchers concluded that in general, the innovative features of the Rapid Build model operated as an interconnected system rather than as individual drivers of change. So, it's how the features of this unique model come together that's important for understanding the overall perception of the social climate of the centre. There's no direct cause and effect between the environmental elements and the outcomes; that it's very much around the complex interplay between all of the elements of the environment.

Multi-Level Modelling and Intervention

Lastly, in 2019, our then premier announced, as one of her key priorities, was a reduction in re-offending for people coming out of custody. We were set a target to reduce re-offending by 5% over four years, and this was really coming off the back of quite significant growth in our rate of re-offending. Building on what we've learnt from the Better Prisons and Rapid Build projects among others, we developed a multi-level model of change to drive this strategy. This included individual-level factors, so we had a therapeutic framework which was really targeted around the needs of the individual that we were going to work with.

Looking at the institutional level and the prison environment, we had to ask ourselves, how do we create safe environments? What are the features of these prison environments needed to allow people to flourish? To allow them to engage in that process of change to enhance

psychological safety so that people were able to focus on the things that they needed to focus on while they're in custody. We're also focused on the community-level and what's traditionally a reintegration framework, so how do we reduce that psychosocial and economic disadvantage that's created by the process of incarceration?

Based on this model of change, we developed quite a complex logic model that identified all of the different interventions that were going to be delivered at those different levels. So, we really wanted to build or increase the skill and engagement of our workforce. We had a large number of initiatives that were designed around that. We wanted our staff to be engaged and really productive agents of change, have really positive relationships with people in custody. We wanted to create these environments that enabled rehabilitation, and this is where the concept of rehabilitative prison environments really started to

enter the lexicon in New South Wales.

We had a range of initiatives. We introduced tablets, enhanced our technology across the state. Each inmate in New South Wales has or will have access to their own tablet device to increase access to their family, increase access to entertainment resources, contact to the outside, a number of other things we changed at the environmental level to try and create these conditions that allowed people to positively move towards change. Then we also looked at our traditional approaches, increasing interventions to address criminogenic risks and needs, and focus on the reintegration side of things, but very much moving to this stratified view of reality. So, it's not just about addressing people's individual risk factors, it's about changing every element of the environment and the system that we've got the capacity to influence.

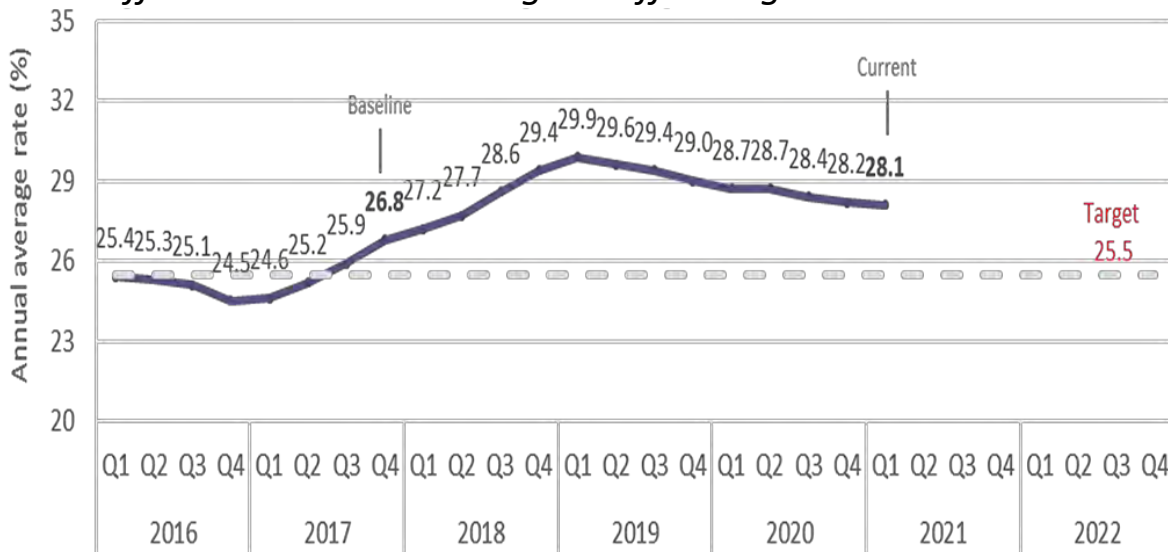
In terms of measures of success, we've been reasonably successful in achieving reductions in the rate of re-offending against a backdrop of a steadily increasing rate of re-offending. These are just unadjusted rates (figure 7). We haven't finished the evaluations to look at the effectiveness of a lot of these things, but certainly, it was headed in the right direction. For the first time in nearly eight years, we started to see a reduction in the rate of the incidents of violence in correctional centres in New South Wales following the commencement of the premier's priority initiatives.

Towards a Theory of Rehabilitative Prison Environments

Finally, all of this work has really led to trying to develop theoretical frameworks for rehabilitative prison environments, and looking at ecosystems as being a complex set of relationships between all the different elements that allow the possibility for rehabilitation and positive

Figure 7

Adult Offenders: Annual Average Reoffending Rate



change to emerge. Thinking about those environments as those microsystems; the physical, the cultural, the instructional, the social, and how the person fits within that and interacts with those; that bidirectional relationship between those two things. Looking at some of the potential causal properties or underlying mechanisms, so trying to increase people's basic sense of self-determination through all of those microsystems within the prison environment. How do we increase their sense of autonomy and relatedness and competency? How do we facilitate better skill and knowledge transfer? And how

do we support that identity transformation that can be so disrupted by the process of incarceration? And then, how do we look at that within the broader political and social context, and how do we understand the impact of the environments that people are going to return to when they come out of custody?

We've developed an empirical framework for how we want to look at the effectiveness of our initiatives and strategies moving forward. It's a framework that really recognises and engages the multiple levels of the social reality to really offer evidence of the causal impact of prison

environments, rather than trying to isolate or control every other variable except for the one variable that we're interested in, and staying within this quite constrained cause and effect model of evidence.

As part of my own research using the multi-level membership approach, I've been looking at trying to understand the relationship between the environmental characteristics of prisons and the post-release trajectories of people coming out of custody, and I have found that around 10% of the variance in re-offending outcomes can be explained at the prison level. This is significantly less than when we're looking at incidents of violence, but still, quite a high proportion of that variance after we adjust for individual risk characteristics is explained at the prison level, which was quite unexpected to have that rate so high.

What we found is that people who spend time in larger prisons tend to have poorer

post-release outcomes. People who spend time in centres where there's a high turnover to our remand facilities tend to have poorer outcomes. Centres that have got high rates of regime infractions, so for not following centre routine instructions or for not turning up; for most of those sorts of quite discretionary misconducts, they tend to increase people's likelihood of coming back into custody. The centres where there's more intensive therapeutic programmes tend to produce better outcomes for people once they're released from custody.

In terms of next steps, one of the real limitations of our data in New South Wales is that we're very much confined or restricted to administrative data, so we're about to roll out biannual surveys for both staff and people that we manage, both in custody and in the community. As for staff, we really want to understand their perceptions of safety, their job satisfaction, how they feel about working within corrections, the sense of

procedural fairness, and their sense of connection with their team. For people that we manage in the community or in prison, we really want to understand their perceptions of the correctional climate, so the sense of respect and hope, their sense of safety, and their sense of procedural fairness. We want to collect these biennially so that we can start to understand the relationship between people's perceptions and experiences of the environment, and the prevalence of things like violence, and also its impact on people's post-custody trajectories.

In Conclusion

The research that we've done and the projects that we've worked on in New South Wales have shown that prisons vary both in their impact on re-offending and the likelihood of exposure to violence. We've shown that contextual or environmental factors are significantly associated with the likelihood of being victimised and an individual's propensity to re-offend following release

from custody, and that the impact of prison is influenced by both the specific environmental factors within that context and also people's individual experiences of that environment.

In terms of a rehabilitative prison environment, this is a term that has infiltrated every part of our thinking within our strategy and our operating designs. We think about a rehabilitative prison environment as one that's designed and structured to create the conditions that enable people to flourish and to develop, rather than thinking about rehabilitation as something that the individual needs to engage in to address their own limitations or their own identified deficits. And this is very much about engaging with the complexity of the interplay between those individual and structural elements. It's more than the physical design, as the Rapid Build research has shown. It's something that really emerges from this complex interplay, and it's something that can

profoundly reduce the likelihood of violence and increase people's perceptions of safety within even maximum-security environments.

I think one of the most important things is that rehabilitative environments have got causal powers that are not reducible to their discrete components, so it's no one element of these environments that are effective – It's the combination and the

interaction between them that's important. So, the ecological and multi-level model of rehabilitative prison environments offers a theoretical and empirical framework that can progress our understanding of how and why prisons can enable and constrain rehabilitation, including minimising the risk of aggression and violence within correctional contexts.

Thank you.

REDUCING PRISON VIOLENCE WITHIN NEW ZEALAND: A GANG HARM REDUCTION LENS

DAMIAN WHITE

An insight into the relationship between our gang whanau, both within our community and our prisons. Cynicism is paralyzing, we need to become courageously optimistic with a new way of thinking. Addressing the wellbeing harms in our communities requires a coordinated response, combining community development, prevention, and law enforcement. This includes building relationships with our community partners as well as members of gang communities who are seeking genuine change and are committed to living offence-free lifestyles.

Why a new approach? In the past, we tended to be really culturally dismissive around anything Māori to begin with. We've also been dismissive of anything gang-related, and we had to peel that right back and understand what being in a gang meant and understanding what the whakapapa behind what they term their korowai, or their patch or their colours, what it actually meant to that individual.

Gang Harm Reduction: A Rationale

For too long now, as a society, we've often marginalised these groups and we've pushed our beliefs onto these groups or individuals. We've just got to take a step back, and I don't know if it's been spoken about today, but that first thousand days of a child's life is when they're imprinted to be who they're going to be as an adult. For some, we've got fourth-generation gang members. That's what they've been born into, that's how they've been

brought up, and that's what they understand. So we're trying to unpack some of that and understand what that looks like for our men in the gangs.

In saying that, I've tried to change some of the wordings around how we define these groups, and I'd rather call them *organic* gangs as opposed to *ethnic*, because as soon as we call them ethnic gangs, we tend to put a racial approach onto how we deal with them. That's not the way to do it at all.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, we do tend to have a higher percentage of Māori represented across the different groups, and we've already heard around the diaspora of the Māori moving into the cities, etc. I won't delve into that too much, but I need to say, whanau, I don't see myself as a gang expert, and anything I say here is my views, and it's not the view of the Police.

As I moved into the role, I thought, "How can we look at some co-determination?" Or

"co-design"? So we sat down and we had our first hui on a marae, which is a meeting place for Māori, where they have a tupuna whare, or the house that represents their ancestors. It wasn't a coincidence that I planned to have it at the marae, understanding that there wouldn't be any violence on the marae. The first hui went really well. We had to accept that there'd been some wrong in the past. The talk of colonisation was there. We know we have to look to the past to understand where we're going in the future, but we tend to now see that some of those conditions have changed and why these men are moving into the gangs.

Co-determining Priorities and Concerns

I tabled what it is that they wanted from police, it was the same that you and I want from society, as well. There was a lot of talk around aspirationally wanting better outcomes for education, better outcomes for their families, better housing situations, better employment

situations. We then had to stop and think, "Okay, not everybody wants the white picket fence with the three-bedroom house, with two and a half kids and a dog." For some, it was just having somewhere that they could call home, have all their whanau. Some of the men were getting their kids back from within the system and needed help. It was trying to break down and remember that it's easy for us to say that all these guys are criminals and they should leave the gang. But when you actually see them interact with one another, you can understand why that camaraderie is there, that togetherness that they're looking for. I know I'm jumping around here, but on the weekend we had a Mongrel Mob rugby league tournament. At least 1,000 patched members attended, with twice the number in supporters and whanau. They really stood up at the beginning of the tournament and said, "Look, this is about a healthy environment." There was no drinking, no smoking. They had activities for the children. Not

one person abused the referees... and I've been to plenty of club games! I'm involved with rugby league, both at a district and national level, and it was some of the cleanest footy I've seen in a long time. Nobody was abusing any of the officials. It was just magic to see.

What really struck me was the way the men would move around the different groups and the different chapters, and whether you were the lowest patched member or the highest captain or president, everybody was acknowledged. It really blew me away – guys that wouldn't even look like your typical gang member, and that would've been bullied as kids, they just looked like misfits to be fair, being acknowledged by some of the heads in the country. It was with respect as well. So that was really intriguing to see.

Aims of Gang Harm Reduction Work

Where are we heading as a project? Obviously, gangs are a political football and not

everybody likes them, and coming into the election cycle, we're seeing a little bit more rhetoric coming out now about smashing the gangs, being tough, banning patches. We are looking to Australia for a number of their takes on what they're doing and some of their structures. We're totally different. We're different to anywhere else in the world, and we need to stop looking across at other countries, because the only thing we have in common with the likes of Australia, Canada, and the States, is the rate of Indigenous incarceration, and that's it. So, the exit strategies that are working in Queensland won't necessarily work here for us. It's awesome that we're now partnered with Waikato University to do a review on the mahi that we're doing in the gang harm reduction space.

A classic example was the rugby league tournament. When I spoke to the Waikato policing district, there was a lot of cynicism there. And this is something that I'm always saying, that cynicism is

paralysing, and if we continue to be cynical about what the gangs want to do, we're not going to move forward. We're just going to sit there in that same cycle that's been happening for the last 60 years. We know we can't police our way out of it. We know that our Police Commissioner talks around policing by consent, and a lot of people don't understand what his intent is around that messaging. We've got some of the lowest numbers of sworn police to civilian populations. The only other country is Finland. So, it is a fact that we have to police by consent with the public.

Challenging Cynicism

Nine times out of ten, most people are law-abiding. We get that 1%. This has only been three years, so we're really looking to make a transformational change, which will be generational. And I understand, being optimistic, that we are going to have some setbacks, but we're also going to have some wins. Something that I picked up recently in the papers has been around

Kahukura, the meth program in the Hawke's Bay that was set up by the Mongrel Mob. And I think people have latched onto the fact that only 16% haven't re-offended or been using meth. I mean, 16% is better than no percent. So why don't we acknowledge the success in that and look to how do we replicate that? But we seem to be always wanting to drag these people down.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not naive enough to think that every gang member is an awesome person, but what we do need to do is unpack what happened to that individual to make them go that way and behave. What I have found in the three years that there are a number of men now that are in the gangs that don't have a criminal history. They're there for a sense of belonging. They hold down jobs. They're good parents. So, I'm looking at that going, "Okay, how do I replicate that?" We've found by reaching out to Corrections early now, and working within the wire – and a big shout-out to Waikeria Prison who have really jumped

on board – with particular attention to the Te Ao Marama focus unit. It's just been mind-blowing how open they have been for Police to come in and support the men.

Police-Prisons Interface

Now we're looking at helping them with reintegration. We help them at the parole hearing. We help them with their safety plans. We help them out in the community. And we understand that we can open doors that otherwise gang members can't get through, and it is going to take a collective approach on how we deal with these things.

As I've mentioned, it [GHR] is not something that all of my colleagues are on board with, but it's early days. I guess the Police have recognised that when we have the Understanding Policing development panels, which Sir Kim Workman chairs, and we know we can't hide behind those social constructs any more, of saying it's systemic bias: "The system is biased and that's why I'm doing what I'm

doing, because of the system." Well, it's not. It's individual choices now.

We talk around dominant culture. While we understand that the majority of our police are European, we're sitting at around 15% to 17% Māori within the organisation. So we're getting there. We can't hide behind the fact it's systemic bias or it's dominant culture that's driving the policing that we're doing. It's more about educating people and actually having those really hard and courageous conversations around racism or around bias.

If there's anything else you'd like to hear from me, feel free to charge in Armon.

Armon: Kia ora, Damian. Can you perhaps elaborate a bit more on your prison in-reach work? I hear your challenges and you've been a champion for wanting to develop this work in the interests of safer communities. Something that's always bugged me, personally, is this notion of so-called ethnic

gangs and exactly like you're saying, is a way of racialising the issues. But 'organic'? I like that. The work that you're doing has organically moved into a prison space and obviously you've developed connections and you've started to create some things there. Can you elaborate more on where this needs to go, from your point of view? Where does this work need to go?

Damian: I think we're on the right track. Definitely more into the prisons, because what I'm finding on the Parole Boards and at the parole hearings, they come up on parole and they sit there in front of the panel and they say to them, "The first thing you need to do is leave the gang". A lot of the men will lie and say, "I'm going to step out of the gang". You have to understand that that's all they've ever known and understood, and that's their safety mechanism. So in turn, we are creating our own '501' population internally. We take a guy, for example, from Maketu in the Bay of Plenty, and we'll put them into

Christchurch where they have no whanau support, no support from other gang members within their chapters. And the first thing they do, they reach out to someone. Nine times out of ten, they all go and workshop with everybody up and down the country. So now they've got major networks of like-minded people up and down the country. They'll reach out and they think they're doing them a favour, giving them some meth. Sell the meth and they're back inside within a month or two months. They're breaching conditions. How do we stop that from happening? We've discovered that if we reach out a year before these gentlemen are due for release, we can actually help start shaping the conversation, realising that we're not the enemy, we're there to help. We can also find work. Housing is a major, major problem for the men at the moment. We've had some massive breakthroughs, where Corrections now have understood, and Probation are letting men be released to other gang members. As long

as they've got the gang harm reduction support there, and they're pro-social, we don't see that as a bad thing.

In the past, as a young cop, I would try and smash as many charges onto a gang member, put them on a myriad of conditions, knowing full well they'd breach and then I'd get them locked up again. I was thinking, "Yeah, job done, problem solved". But all I was doing was actually making that person a better criminal, by going inside and then coming back out – They're fit now, they're trained. They've had exposure to Police. They know how to circumvent some of the systems. So it was better to actually start working with them inside and getting them to be honest about their offending and taking ownership.

We know all about the migrations into the cities and losing their cultural identities⁷⁴. I know there are people out there that go, "Well, it's a Māori issue. Māori need to deal

⁷⁴ See chapter (Tam), this volume.

with it. The iwi can sort it out". Well, a lot of these people are marginalised by iwi as well – They are criminals, and they are offending, and it does bring shame, sometimes, to different hapu. Like within my whanau, I've been at tangi, three of us are police officers, the other four are gang members. We're all in the kitchen, no one's getting stabbed, no one's having a fight. All there doing mahi in the kitchen.

I've tended to have a different view of the men that I've worked with. Same thing in the Army. Some of the men I served overseas with come home and a number of them have joined gangs. And at first I was like, "Man, what are you up to?" But it's the same camaraderie that we had in the military as what they're getting from the gangs.

Armon: It's interesting, the connections that you make in terms of other life worlds, and *how* they connect. You've talked about camaraderie, belonging, but also a life

outside of violence, as well. A common theme through today, and you've touched on Harry and Bobby's⁷⁵ korero also, and I think other speakers today have also talked about this, that there are real complexities going on here, which are rarely appreciated, and rarely discussed. My next question for you is, given what you've seen and what you've come to understand at a much deeper level, that level of community, and that it's so much more than simply a cops-and-robbers kind of dynamic between gang members and the wider community, what do you think the system needs to do to advance the agenda? What do you think we need to be thinking about more societally around the addressing issues for gang members, in relation to prison violence as part of that?

Damian: This is some of the stuff that keeps me awake at night. What I've noticed is that if we talk about the remand space first, when the men are charged and they sit on

⁷⁵ See chapter (Henry), this volume.

remand, nine times out of ten, a lot of them won't have any gang affiliation, but it can be seen as a way of protecting themselves. They pretty soon will have to draw a line in the sand, and either go red, blue, yellow, or whatever it is. And then there's a pecking order, you know what I mean? There's alpha males, and it's the same with bullying in schools, but it just carries on into the prison. The violence is more extreme, obviously, than a high school or intermediate or primary.

It's taken me a while to click, that for Police, putting someone into remand is an easy way, dare I say, a *lazy* way to move the problem. We're not dealing with the problem, we're just shifting it and we're waiting for the next problem to come up. And we'll shift that one into remand and then into prison, etc, etc. We don't have the resource. That's where the gang harm reduction team can come in. We do have time to sit down with that individual and work out why they're either selling meth, committing assaults, or doing robberies. If

we look at society at the moment, we touch on the 'ram-raids'. I hear a lot of people saying, "Oh, it's driven by the gangs". I can tell you for a fact, within those cars will be five different kids, right? They will all have five different gang backgrounds. It's not one gang drawing them together. What's drawing them together is the necessity to fend for themselves. We've got a generation now that have come through meth, right? We've got 20 years of it. The gangs, some of the chapters, and some of the gangs, have come to the conclusion that meth's not a good thing. They've had 20 years to discover that. Unfortunately, in that time, some of these kids are "meth babies". Mum was using meth as they were being carried. Some of them haven't had present parents. They've had to fend for themselves, and the only way that they've done it is to take what they need and take what they want.

Now you have social media where they get the affirmation that they're seeking. They're

getting it from other people on TikTok. There's a whole lot of copycat stuff starting to go on, and away they go. It's so easy now to take a car and fill it full of kids, and have some fun and think you're supporting one another. Gangs are a symptom of society. You know what I mean? So there's always going to be haves and have-nots. There's always going to be those that are pushed to the edge and not dealt with properly: "Right, I'll take what I want, when I want it".

The men are in prison because they don't have the tools to rationalise or to understand complex relationships. There's a whole lot of land wrapped up with papakainga, right? Māori land blocks. Well, something I've really wanted to do was open up some of those blocks. Put some housing on for remand and for reintegration, have the providers come in and work with those people. And then, after three or four years, we move to the next papakainga, set that up. The whanau or the hapu that belongs to the whenua can

come in and start living in those communities now. They're all set up. They can pay their mortgages after what's been paid off, etc. Then we just replicate that. We're filling a few needs there.

We've got our new lot of borstals coming up, we've got our new lot of young kids that will be brought in. All it takes is one rotten apple in that mix to really turn some of those impressionable young people and then we ship them back out. So we've got that same cycle starting again and again.

Armon: I feel your concerns about heavy-handed punitive approaches like boot camps, for example, which are often woefully unsupported in terms of outcomes and in many ways tell us more about the decision-makers than about those on whom decisions are being made. I'm quite taken by your vision about the community development side of this. What you are talking about is moving beyond prison walls entirely. Can you maybe just expand on

what your philosophy about that is?

Damian: We say it takes a village to raise a child. It's the same thing with these men. For whatever reason, they haven't had that grounding, like I said, that first thousand days, they've been missed and now we're dealing with that consequence. There's got to be a better way. I've dealt with individuals that have 156 convictions. How has a punitive approach stopped that? It makes us feel good, as a police officer, because we're a punitive society and that's that Westminster-based way we deal with our Law. We want our pound of flesh off our offenders. I understand that there's rights of victims as well, and victims want to know that something's being done, but there's got to be a better way to deal with it. As soon as we put a Māori approach on it though, we will be scrutinised more because it's something Māori. That's just the reality. I'm not trying to offend anybody, but Māori staff within police are scrutinised more

than Pākehā staff when they join. Māori staff, any of the Māori positions, you'll always hear, "it's all about hui, no do-ey". But having kai and sharing kai with people is a really important part of who we are.

Armon: Here's one from the floor... this person writes that they have written many parole reports and agree with you that the Board now recognise the non-association with the gang condition is not one which can be managed successfully in the community. So there is progress in that respect. The question is how have the 501 deportees impacted gangs, violence, prisons across New Zealand and how can the risks be mitigated?

Damian: Really good question. They (gang-affiliated 501s) bring a whole different level of criminality into New Zealand. Traditionally, our gangs don't want to murder one another. They don't want to murder police, and they definitely do not want to impact on what they would call civilians. The 501s are totally different.

They've come back in, they've got that hardened Australian attitude. So I was in Australia two months ago at a conference and they regretted banning gang patches because they fall in love with the image of being on a bike with a patch, riding with the boys and the noise. They fall in love with that whole idea, I guess. When they banned patches, what happened is those ones left and you were left with a core group of guys that all they want to do is crime, and it tended to be around drug offending to make money. That's what they're bringing to New Zealand.

There's a real uptake in gun violence with the 501s. They're different beasts to deal with on the street, they're different to deal with inside. They are definitely transnational, and by that I mean they have links outside of New Zealand. Our organic gangs aren't traditionally transnational. There'll be individuals within those gangs that do have links and can bring in drugs. But traditionally, the only time our gangs get organised is for a

punch-up or a piss-up. You'll get everybody involved. Selling drugs, not so much. The 501s, the likes of the Hell's Angels, the Comancheros, the Rebels, etc, will involve everybody. There will be different links in that chain. We know, by just shifting the 501s to New Zealand, it doesn't deal with it. We're the same with our guys. Shifting them from Auckland to Dunedin just shifts the problem, it doesn't *solve* the problem. So that's something we've really got to keep an eye on. I'm just really cautious of our 501 gang members.

Armon: Not only is the history of gang communities in Aotearoa complicated, but it's also the scope and scale of the landscape is changing, as well. I, myself, remember when the Killer Beez were a thing back in 2007, which in and of itself changed something of the landscape within the prison space, where now you had a younger group that were committing group assaults and outside of the usual prison codes and gang ways of doing

things. Not that I endorse prison violence, of course, but there appeared to be codes and rules around managing violence. Internally, at least, there was a degree of internal regulation, at the prisoner level. But this was a young group that were flouting that completely, which was putting everyone on edge because no one knew what rules they were playing to.

I have another comment posted here: *“After working at a prison for 45 years, and come through the borstal training, detention center training style, I can definitely say that it didn't work. Focus needs to be on changing behaviour before, during and after prison sentences, not predominantly punishment”*.

Damian: It's taken us a while to learn that, but we know that now, and that's why it's key that we get in and we look at that education part and even Corrections. I take my hat off to them with *Hōkai Rangī*, they're making some major in-roads and everybody is on the same

page, and it's awesome to see. Whereas before, we used to be siloed – I had no idea what Probation did and I wouldn't go over to their office. Now, we're having those conversations, so that we can get better outcomes for everybody in the community.

Armon: We have had a number of people commenting on how much they've been enjoying your korero. My last question for you is: what's the big takeaway message? What do you need us to know about?

Damian: If you look beyond the tattoos and the patch and the bluff that these guys have, deep down, they're just like you and I. That some of them haven't had the social graces that we have or the opportunities. Turning left instead of turning right could have been the difference for some of us here. We need to understand that behind every individual, there's a backstory, and once we dig into it, then we can look to see what we really need to do to help that person. They're going to have

influence over their whanau and their children, their grandchildren. On Saturday, I was approached by a Mongrel Mob Rogue member. He'd been in and out of jail, probably 20-odd years, and he came up and shook my hand and said, "Bro, thank you so much. If this had been around 20 years ago, I don't know if my kids would've followed me into the gang. I could have been owning a business and living in a house." And so that was a start. I watched him interact with his grandson, and his grandson spilled some drink over his pants and he went over, "It's alright, moko. Don't laugh at him, whanau, he's made a mistake." And I've seen it in the past where he would've potentially got a back-hand. So just understand that they're still human beings. We don't have to accept what they do, but let's just have *some* understanding.

Armon: I think that's a really important point to raise. Understanding's really been a key theme, not just for this korero, but throughout the day.

What I love about your work and how you approach it, Damian, is really coming to terms with the priorities of the community and not in an imposing way, which I think is always a risk for anyone who works in government. I think there's always expectations, irrespective of which department, but for government departments to approach issues in a certain way, to draw on certain frameworks and certain ways of working, which may not necessarily work for the person at the other end – the service users, clients, the communities, whoever.

It's been a long journey to get you to the symposium, but it's been fantastic having you here and sharing your thoughts, insights, your wisdom with us. You're clearly very passionate about your work and it really comes through, and it's really informative, and no doubt has really enlightened and hopefully provoked some new thinking for the audience today.

CONTRIBUTORS

PETER BOSHIER



Peter Boshier was appointed Chief Ombudsman for New Zealand in December 2015, following a distinguished career as a Judge, and in May 2020 was reappointed for a second five-year term. Born and educated in Gisborne, Peter attended Victoria University of Wellington, obtaining a Bachelor of Laws with Honours Degree in 1975. After a period of practice in Wellington he was appointed as a District Court Judge with a specialist Family Court warrant in 1988. In 2004 he was appointed as the Principal Family Court Judge of New Zealand and held that position until December 2012 when he was appointed a Law Commissioner, a position he held until his appointment as Chief Ombudsman.

Peter has served on the government's Family Violence Taskforce. He is patron of the White Ribbon Trust and patron of the Dwell Community Housing Trust in Wellington. In 2009 he was made a distinguished alumnus of the Victoria University of Wellington for his contribution to the law.

Peter has a long association with the Pacific and was seconded to undertake judicial training there, based in Suva in 2002 and 2003. He has travelled regularly to Pacific Island countries to undertake workshops on family violence and youth justice. He holds the Samoan Matai title of Misa which was bestowed in 2000.

In July 2015, he became the President of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts based in the United States. He is the first New Zealander to hold this position and did so until July 2016. In 2019, Peter took up the role of incumbent president of the Australasia and Pacific region of the International Ombudsman

Institute (IOI). In 2022, Peter took up the role of Second Vice President of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI). As Chief Ombudsman, Peter's focus has been on a faster and more effective resolution of Official Information Act and other complaints, working with government agencies to improve their practices and strengthening his team's investigation and monitoring of prisons and public mental health facilities.

LORRAINE JOHNSTONE

Lorraine Johnstone is a consultant clinical forensic psychologist who has worked at a senior level across a range of secure settings (prisons, forensic mental health, and secure children's homes). She has experience working clinically, managerially, in service development roles and in a strategic and advisory capacity. Lorraine has also maintained an active academic role and has published in peer reviewed journals and edited books. She is a co-author of the PRISM protocol and has used the approach extensively



NICK WILSON

Nick Wilson, PhD, PGDipPsych(Clin) has been working as a Clinical Psychologist for the Ara Poutama (Department of Corrections) in New Zealand for the last twenty-five years. His current role is as Principal Advisor, Psychological Services working for the Office of the Chief Psychologist with responsibility for developing intensive youth interventions, provision of specialist training and research in the area of risk assessment, management and treatment. Nick has a long-standing specialist expertise in the assessment and treatment of



criminal psychopathy and lectures at New Zealand universities on forensic risk assessment and treatment issues, as well as the management of institutional violence. Nick has carried out research into the area of risk assessment with youth and adult offenders, with violent and sex offences, as well as the evaluation of treatment programmes.

In recent years he has been involved in the development of dynamic risk and protective asset assessment measures used by probation officers and prison case managers, as well as improved suicide assessment in probation and prison settings. Nick has also been involved for several years in developing better mental health services for those placed in prison and continues to be involved in clinical practice with those in the care of Ara Poutama.

ROBERT HENRY

Ass. Prof. Henry's research focuses on violence, trauma, identity, and how it is impacted by health and justice systems, with a focus on street gangs and street lifestyles. Much of his research consists of using an Indigenous research framework focused on relational accountability.



Working with Indigenous ex-gang members and collecting life narratives using visual research methods, he examines how their notions of identity are impacted with their involvement within multiple social systems and how it maintains colonial control over Indigenous bodies.

He has published two manuscripts with Indigenous men (*Brighter Days Ahead*, 2013) and women (*Indigenous Women and Street Gangs: Survivance Narratives*, 2021) who were involved in street gangs on the Canadian Prairies. He has also co-edited and published in the areas of settler colonialism, Indigenous health, Indigenous justice, Indigenous research ethics, Indigenous street gangs, and Indigenous community-engaged research.

HARRY TAM

Harry Tam is a co-director of H2R Research & Consulting Ltd, a company established to facilitate the engagement and mobilisation of hard to reach Māori communities to improve their social and economic outcomes.



For nearly fifty years Harry has worked with indigenous ethnic gangs and other hard to reach communities throughout the country and in the prisons. In 1990, Harry was awarded the 1990 Commemoration Medal for services to New Zealand.

Harry has also worked as a senior public servant for nearly twenty years, providing policy advice to the government on a range of portfolios including youth, penal policy and criminal justice, housing, labour market, drugs and alcohol, and family violence.

Harry has been a guest lecturer on indigenous ethnic gangs in New Zealand at Victoria University.

Harry is on the governance board of Nga Tūmanakotanga which is undertaking an extensive research project into violence in New Zealand Prisons. This work is being led by Dr Armon Tamatea, Senior Lecturer in Clinical Psychology, University of Waikato.

JENNIFER GALOUZIS

Jennifer Galouzis is the Assistant Commissioner, Offender Management and Programs, Corrective Services NSW, Australia. Jennifer is also a current PhD candidate with the University of Melbourne and her thesis is titled 'A rehabilitative prison environment and the possibility of therapeutic prisons'. Jennifer's research interests are in the social and cultural climate of prisons and the measurement of prison performance. She



has published papers in the areas of violence, sex offender treatment and risk of re-imprisonment.

DAMIAN WHITE

Damian served 13 years within the New Zealand Army and was awarded MNZM for his service. Damian White has had an extensive 20 year career within the New Zealand Police and most recently initiated the Gang Harm Reduction Capability within the Bay of Plenty and is now leading the Gang Harm Reduction Project, in the role of Constabulary Lead Drug & Harm Prevention within the Resilience to Organised Crime in Communities work programme.



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ARMON TAMATEA

Armon (*Rongowhakāta; Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki*) is a clinical psychologist who served as a clinician and senior research advisor for Ara Poutama/ Dept of Corrections (New Zealand) before being appointed senior lecturer in psychology at the University of Waikato. He has worked extensively in the assessment and treatment of violent and sexual offenders, and contributed to the design and implementation of an experimental prison-based violence prevention programme for high-risk offenders diagnosed with psychopathy. Armon is the research lead for Nga Tūmanakotanga and teaches in the post-graduate clinical psychology programme in the School of Psychology. His research interests include institutional violence, psychopathy, New Zealand gang communities, and exploring culturally-informed approaches to offender management. Armon currently divides his professional time between research, teaching, supervision, and clinical practice in the criminal justice arena.



ABOUT NGA TŪMANAKOTANGA

Nga Tūmanakotanga is a multi-year applied research project funded by the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment (MBIE) and led by Dr Armon Tamatea. The aims of Nga Tūmanakotanga are to develop a holistic and integrated approach to understanding and addressing the causes and control of violence in carceral spaces.

A central assumption of Nga Tūmanakotanga is that prisons are *ecologies* – spaces where people, resources, and the built environment are interrelated – and that violence is a *product* of a complex of interpersonal and environmental factors that increase the likelihood of assault – but also suggest opportunities for possible solutions.

The project draws together a range of perspectives from across the ‘prison ecology’ and includes viewpoints from within these sites as well as those who interact from outside.

Please visit us at www.waikato.ac.nz/turning-the-tide

ABOUT “TE TAIPITIPITO”

Tidal imagery is central to Nga Tūmanakotanga and reflects how we navigate currents, heavy seas, and even tranquil waters. *Te Taipitopito* alludes to the different currents within the tide, inviting a closer examination of the *detail* of the contents – the ‘guts’ of it – and sort out the nutrients from the debris.

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Firstly, our fantastic presenters: Peter, Lorraine, Nick, Robert, Harry, Jennifer, Damian, Liam, Abi, Abby (and Randy!), and Nicola.

The Nga Tūmanakotanga governance committee:

- Neil Campbell (General Manager, Cultural Capability, Ara Poutama Aotearoa)
- Ben Clark (Acting National Commissioner Corrections Services, Ara Poutama Aotearoa)
- Rachel Leota (former National Commissioner Corrections Services, Ara Poutama Aotearoa)
- Linda Nikora (Professor of Indigenous Studies, Auckland University)
- Harry Tam (Director, H2R Research and Consulting)
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The research team:

- Dr. Lars Brabyn (School of Social Sciences, University of Waikato)
- David Cooke (Former (retired) Professor Glasgow Caledonian University; Consultant Forensic Clinical Psychology)
- Prof. Michael Daffern (School of Health Sciences, Swinburne University)
- Prof. Andrew Day (School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Melbourne)
- Prof. Randy Grace (School of Psychology, Speech & Hearing, University of Canterbury)
- Assistant Professor Robert Henry (College of Arts and Science, Saskatchewan University)
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Lastly, we appreciate YOU... those who attended the symposium and the readers of these proceedings. We hope that these insights and provocations have stimulated thought and helped to mobilise some constructive action in your space to address the issue of safer prisons and safer communities.

Ngā mihi,

Armon Tamatea & Renae Dixon
Project Lead Project Manager