SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AS A CORRECTIONAL IDEOLOGY: 
BREAKING NEW GROUND

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This paper examines the importance of the prison environment and its social organization as factors which reinforce the continued socialization of criminal careers. The authors analyze contemporary research findings within the context of prison administration and conclude that if behavioral change is to become a realistic by-product of incarceration, then we may need to reformulate the correctional ideology upon which penal policies rest. A social organization framework, consistent with empirical data, is then provided as the basis for an ideology leading to new generation prisons.

When we treat a man as he is, 
we make him worse than he is; 
When we treat him as he could be, 
we make him better.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The application of planned social organization has seen only limited use in adult corrections. It is our position that as a viable methodology for offender change, attempts to simulate "free world" forms of social organization within penal societies have been underemphasized by practitioners and scholars. This paper examines earlier, unsuccessful penal ideological outcomes for the purpose of providing a rationale toward the formulation of a new generation of correctional institutions that simulate societal forms of social

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organization, public policy and environment. The authors present an overview of theoretical considerations underlying the justification of a social organization ideology and a limited discussion describing key institutions within the new generation prison.

Applied in the context of this paper, the concept of planned social organization and public policy, which simulates free society, entails the presence of educational, economic, social, political and justice institutions within a correctional structure. The concept includes pseudodemocratic principles for policy formulation and administration to the degree that considerations of security will permit. The narrow definition of new generation prisons refers to correctional environments which tend to "normalize" the physical surroundings of the correctional institution. Within our concept of social organization, new generation prisons incorporate the inclusion of conventional norms as reflected by middle class America. The intent is to replicate, to the maximum extent possible, American middle-class culture in an experimental setting. Where clear lines of staff authority must exist in compatibility with inmate needs for self-esteem, special significance is accorded to role clarification. Because of the informal nature of this setting, staff and inmate selection become a top priority. Offender change through the fundamental techniques of imitation, social learning and behavior modification is not new. Applying these learning mechanisms within the context of a "social reality" created in an experimental prison breaks ground for a new correctional ideology of social organization. With the isolated exceptions of Machonochie's administration of the penal colony at Norfolk Island and Croftens' utilization of the "ticket of leave" at New South Wales, historical and research findings strongly indicate that traditional approaches to modifying criminal behavior have been irrefutable experiments in failure (Allen, 1975).

Since the Enlightenment, man has embarked upon the quest for a scientific-rationale model for eliminating crime. In the 18th century, revolution of the criminal law in England was the main focal point of classical criminologists. By the 19th century the penitentiary system had emerged in America as a social institution designed to effect the reformation of criminals. Prisons of this early era espoused religious fervor, discipline and hard labor as the tenets for effecting reformation. The strict regimen of isolation, deprivation and punishment proved unfruitful however, and at the turn of the 20th century, theories extracted from the behavioral sciences began to dominate correctional ideology. By the 1930's, the introduction of diagnostic and classification techniques provided for the systematic procurement and analysis of a wide range of offender data (Fox, 1976). The therapeutic approach, based on the psychoanalytic school, lasted approximately twenty years before