

OBSERVATION-INDUCED REACTANCE IN A PRISON,

by

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the defining characteristics of a correctional environment is the limitations which it places upon human freedom. That this loss of freedom is in itself an aversive condition is suggested by research in correctional institutions which has found increases in the degree of staff control over the decision-making power of inmates to be inversely related to the level of inmate morale (Moos, 1975, Chapter 7). This effect is one easily predicted by a theory of human freedom outlined by J.W. Brehm in terms of what he calls psychological reactance (Brehm, 1966).

Psychological reactance is a motivational state of arousal whose object is the restoration and preservation of choice.

It is assumed that for a given person at a given time, there is a set of behaviors any one of which he would engage in either at the moment or at some time in the future. This may be called the individuals' "free-behaviors" (Brehm, 1966, p. 3).

The elimination, or even threat of elimination, of any of these free behaviors is assumed to arouse reactance. Brehm is not talking about philosophical freedom in general, but is referring rather to specific actions which an individual believes he may engage in and which are within the limits of his ability. This description implies that it is the individual's subjective view of the alternatives

available to him, rather than his overt response tendencies, which determines the range of free behaviors which he perceives as salient. The question of whether he would actually engage in these behaviors if provided the opportunity, may be regarded as a separate issue. It is theoretically possible that an individual might experience reactance when thwarted with respect to a free behavior whose actual enactment would be impractical or unlikely. This principle, that an individual's appraisal of his own behavior may be systematically distorted, has provided the foundation for recent innovations in cognitive behavior therapy (e.g., Beck, 1979).

Brehm states that threats to a person's freedom of choice may emerge from the constraining actions of others ("social" limits), from the physical character of situations ("barriers"), or from the fact of one's own decisions and choices which, once made, then exclude the possibility of acting upon rejected alternatives ("self-imposed" limits). The analysis of self-imposed elimination of freedom can be rather complex as when Brehm notes that decision-making limits both the possibility of rejecting the chosen alternative and of choosing the rejected alternative; though subtle, both of these factors should arouse some measure of reactance. In a correctional environment, however, the first two of these freedom-constraining agents, barriers and social limits, are of most significance since they are

present to an unusually high degree.

When a freedom has been threatened or eliminated, the magnitude of reactance will be proportional to the importance of that freedom. What makes a freedom important is the significance of motives or desires that can be uniquely satisfied by exercise of it. Thus, the freedom to select a particular alternative would be important to the extent that the alternative could satisfy important motives or desires that other alternatives could not satisfy. (Brehm, 1971, p. 261).

One factor determining whether or not a potential behavior is viewed as "uniquely" instrumental in satisfying significant desires, involves a consideration of the number of alternative behaviors which are available to the actor. The individual with a variety of free behaviors in his repertoire will experience little reactance if one or two of his behavioral alternatives are contravened, while individuals such as those in correctional facilities who have few action alternatives to begin with, are liable to experience considerable reactance if any of these behavioral options are threatened or eliminated (Brehm, McQuown, & Shaban, in Brehm, 1966; Hormuth, Wicklund, & Dallas, 1978). An understanding of this principle helps to explain why riots may be triggered by conflict with the authorities over seemingly trivial matters. The significance of the need which a free behavior might satisfy is by definition a subjective one; in practice, Brehm and his colleagues have measured this significance by having subjects evaluate the

salience of goal objects on various rating scales (e.g., Brehm, Stires, Sensenig, & Shaban, 1966) prior to introducing experimental manipulations of these choice alternatives.

The importance of a behavioral freedom is further influenced by its comparative relation to other free behaviors. As the reinforcement value of a particular set of behaviors increases, the importance of behaviors which would obtain similar reinforcers of lesser magnitude decreases.

In a similar manner, Brehm postulates that the proportion of freedoms eliminated or threatened with elimination affects the magnitude of experienced reactance. Eliminating three out of five behavioral choices will create more reactance than one out of five, assuming that the other parameters remain constant.

Having defined reactance as a motivational state aimed at restoring free behaviors, it is necessary to specify how such restoration might be implemented. Brehm mentions three possible behavioral outcomes: direct restoration of freedom, indirect or implied restoration, and forced inaction. Direct restoration involves simple defiance of limitations upon freedom (as in a prison riot), while indirect restoration occurs through the exercise of a behavior perceived as similar to a denied freedom, restoring by implication the right to engage in a particular class of

behaviors. When even this degree of protest becomes impracticable--as is often the case in penal institutions--the individual is reduced to inaction. Brehm has devised a method for measuring reactance even in such behaviorally restricted circumstances, by examining the degree to which a forbidden alternative increases in attractiveness (Brehm, Stires, Sensening, & Shaban, 1966; Hammock & Brehm, 1967; Brehm & Rozeb, 1971).

In addition to these forms of freedom restoration, Worchel (1974) found that "arbitrary" thwarting of behavioral freedom arouses not only reactance but aggression. Worchel was careful to determine that simple arbitrariness or unexpected elimination of promised reinforcement (expectancy disconfirmation) does not create reactance; instead, the elimination of a promised choice among reinforcers (a free behavior) is necessary. The point is theoretically important in distinguishing this effect from that found in typical frustration-aggression studies. Worchel found that when a social agent, an experimental confederate, deprived subjects of an expected opportunity to choose between a variety of reinforcers, the subjects aggressed against the confederate even though the aggressive behavior served no instrumental value in terms of restoring the choice option. Reactance-provoking elements in a prison environment may therefore deserve consideration in attempting to understand



the source of prisoners' aggressive behavior.

That reactance-like processes may also disrupt performance was suggested in a study of paired-associate learning conducted by Perlmutter, Monty, & Cross (1974). The authors found that subjects who were initially given a choice about elements to be memorized prior to being assigned a second forced-choice list, showed poorer recall than a second group who were given no initial opportunities to exercise choice. While frustration due to expectancy disconfirmation may also be involved, the data suggest that a contrast between the exercise and subsequent restriction of a free behavior may lead to reactance processes which inhibit optimal performance.

Most of the studies cited thus far have concentrated upon reactance as it occurs in single subjects. The phenomenon has also been investigated in group settings, and certain of the findings are germane to this discussion. An experiment by Grabitz-Gniech (1971) demonstrated that reactance does occur in groups, and she noted that:

. . . reactance still is effective when one or more than one person is exposed to the freedom-eliminating or threatening influence. . . The occurrence of the reactance effect in a situation where several persons are together suggests possible applications of the theory in the fields of advertising, mass communications, education, penal institutions, etc. (p. 195).

In evaluating the influence of reactance processes in everyday societal contexts, Brehm (1966) admits that his

theory is fundamentally an asocial or antisocial one insofar as it portrays the individual as jealously guarding his prerogatives against the limitations imposed by associating with other people. It is obvious in practice, however, that humans do value their membership in social groups, and that reactance tendencies must in some way be modified by an acceptance of group behavioral norms. Brehm and Mann (1974) confirmed their predictions that reactance would be balanced against group conformity depending upon the importance of freedoms threatened by the group as contrasted with the degree of attraction to the group.

The preceding description of reactance theory and research raises an interesting point: while the foregoing studies have investigated the effects of direct threats to freedom upon individuals and members of social groups, relatively little attention has been directed toward the potentially wider area of vicarious, or modeled, threats to behavioral freedom. Research in the broad area of modeling using filmed behavior has focused upon demonstrating that viewers of films can learn new responses (Bandura, 1965; Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963; Bandura, 1977), can be incited to emit old responses similar to those depicted in the film (Bandura, et. al., 1963, Berkowitz, 1965) and can experience strong affect elicited by the film (Lazarus, Speisman, Mordkoff, & Davison, 1962). Bandura (1977) in fact contends

that filmed, televised, and live models provide the great bulk of stimulus information used by humans, who must come to understand their environment largely through "imitative learning." The ubiquity of such learning suggests that modeling-processes should have implications for the occurrence of reactance.

Reactance theory, which deals with behavioral freedom rather than response-acquisition, would apply to modeling processes to the extent that individuals might experience reactance arousal or reduction by observing the behavior of others in a freedom-threatening situation.

Actual studies of imitation learning and reactance have thus far been confined to the questions of whether films can enlarge the viewers' repertoire of salient free-behaviors (Worchel, 1972) and whether reactance elicited by a direct threat can be vicariously attenuated (Worchel & Brehm, 1971). The first study mentioned exposed subjects to filmed activities whose enactment was later threatened, concluding that:

. . . movies may serve to motivate a viewer to perform acts related to those he has seen in the movie and further, the movie may increase for him the importance of the freedom to do so. If this freedom is later threatened with elimination, the viewer is likely to become more motivated to perform the act in question as the threat may arouse reactance. (p. 433).

This experiment represented a fairly straightforward extension of modeling research insofar as it attempted primarily to inform and motivate viewers about an observed

behavior. The informative and motivational functions of imitation learning are central tenets of modeling theory (Bandura, 1977, p. 125). Reactance predictions were involved only in the latter portion of the experiment, when enactment of the filmed behaviors was constrained.

Worchel and Brehm (1971) investigated reactance and modeling more directly when they determined that a group member whose freedom is threatened will experience reactance-reduction if he observes another member of the group assert his freedom against the constraint. This has been termed freedom "restoration by social implication" (Wicklund, 1974, p. 74). This vicarious reduction of reactance may be an element contributing to the several instances in which groups of prisoners have demonstrated great solidarity in protesting to gain release of another who has "unjustly" been placed in solitary confinement (Mitford, 1973, Chapter 13). That is, the removal of a barrier (solitary confinement) to the freedom of another who is similar to themselves may give the demonstrators a sense of indirect freedom restoration.

More importantly, if reactance-processes are indeed implicated in such demonstrations, we must assume that the reactance arousal which motivates this activity is also vicariously generated. If the demonstrators were not themselves subject to a loss of freedom through direct

confinement in a segregation unit, their concern for another who is confined may represent a threat to freedom by implication. The possibility that reactance arousal may occur indirectly through a threat to the freedom of a similar other has received suggestive support in one previous study (Andreoli, Worchel, & Folger, 1974), which found that subjects who overheard an interaction in which another subject was denied the freedom to choose a discussion topic, were themselves more highly motivated to choose the alternative denied to the similar other. This denial did, however, violate a free-choice rule set by the experimenter, and the extent to which the reactance observed in the study was owed to the illegitimate nature of the implied threat is unclear.

The general conditions which may be necessary for investigating indirect reactance arousal have been described by Sharon Brehm as follows:

A threat to another implicates our behavioral freedom insofar as those others are similar to us, are in similar circumstances, or are threatened in regard to behavior similar to that which we have engaged in, are engaging in, or may want to engage in in the future. It should be obvious that these implication hypotheses vastly extend the possible realm of the arousal of reactance (1976, p. 19).

The observer-model variables which Sharon Brehm describes are clearly characteristic of inmates in a correctional setting. Inmates share a common role, are confined in similarly

restricted circumstances, and share a concern for behavioral freedoms of common importance. A threat to freedom by implication should therefore be readily produced within such an environment. The setting is also in general highly conducive to reactance arousal, whether induced directly or by implication, owing to the presence of the following variables described by Wicklund (1974) to be of central theoretical importance.

Importance of freedom. As stated initially, a freedom is important when the behaviors associated with the freedom have unique instrumental value for the satisfaction of important needs. Behavioral restrictions placed upon the lives of inmates greatly limit the number of response alternatives which can satisfy particular needs. Each behavioral freedom which is available is thereby increased in salience.

Proportion of freedom threatened. As a corollary of the above, the narrow range of response alternatives available to inmates implies that elimination, or threatened elimination, of any of them is a threat to a substantial proportion of total responses available.

Implication for future threat. The near total power of the administration carries the clear implication that curtailment of any particular activity may lead to further restrictions in the future.

Strength of threat. The aforementioned power of the

administration confers undeniable strength upon any threat which might be enacted.

This study is an investigation into the effects of observation-induced reactance created by allowing prison inmates to observe another inmate deprived of the choice to refuse group psychotherapy in the course of a videotaped scenario. Five hypotheses are offered which incorporate various measures of the observers' responses to the modeled freedom-threat. These measures and their rationale are described separately below.

(a) Increased choice-salience. It is predicted that inmates who view another deprived of the choice to refuse group therapy enrollment will express a heightened desire to retain the option of refusal for themselves. Wicklund has termed this reactance-effect a "greater liking for threatened behaviors":

Attraction to behaviors threatened with elimination is not conceptually different from engaging in them, but attraction is mentioned separately because it is a common method of ascertaining the presence of reactance, and because it is the only form of reassertion possible when events make performance of the threatened behavior impossible (1974, p. 71).

If modeled reactance is indeed a demonstrable phenomenon, it is reasonable to expect that a freedom which is threatened by implication, and which cannot directly be restored within the context of the experimental situation, will increase in importance for observers of the freedom-threatening scenario.

The setting for the videotape scene, as described in the methods section following, is a "classification team meeting" of the sort which all federal prison inmates are required to attend every ninety days. The observed interaction therefore has implications for observers insofar as they are compelled to attend similar meetings, and contend with similar program-enrollment decisions, periodically during their term of incarceration.

(b) Derogation of the involuntarily-assigned activity.

Just as a threatened activity increases in desirability due to reactance, an involuntarily-assigned item or activity decreases in desirability. Worchel (1974) demonstrated this effect experimentally, explaining that it occurs "because the assignment eliminates the subject's freedom to reject the assigned item and choose the denied ones, and, thus, motivates him to reject the assigned item and take the denied ones" (p. 311). Derogation will be measured in this study by allowing observers of the involuntary group therapy enrollment to rate the "anticipated benefit" of such therapy for themselves.

(c) Indirect freedom-restoration. "A threatened freedom that cannot be reinstated directly might carry over into any other area of freedom, independent of whether or not that second freedom is presently threatened or even salient" (Wicklund, 1974, p. 90). The study will test this



possibility by allowing observers of the modeled freedom-threat to choose whether or not to participate in an optional boring task presented at the end of the experiment. The optional task is deliberately contrived to appear unattractive in order that the salient choice for most individuals would be one of refusal. At the same time, social pressure toward compliance is exerted by the experimenter's indicating that he would like the subject to participate. The situation therefore parallels the freedom-limitation which observers saw enacted on videotape; a staff member is attempting to limit a subject's freedom to refuse an activity (and in this instance a clearly undesirable one) through social pressure toward compliance. In keeping with the "boomerang effect" frequently noted in attitude-change studies (e.g. Cohen, 1962), this should increase the subject's desire to choose the threatened free behavior of refusal. It is predicted that the observation-induced reactance on the part of freedom-threat observers will result in their demonstrating a higher refusal rate than will observers of a similar scene in which no freedom is threatened.

(d) Observer evaluations of self, inmate-model, and social-agent model. Semantic differential profiles will be completed by observers assessing themselves, the inmate model, and the social agent who is shown limiting the model's freedom. The semantic differential is employed in this study

as a measurement instrument for a number of reasons. Previous reactance studies which have measured subjects' evaluative ratings of a social agent who threatens a free behavior have utilized a limited number of bipolar scales whose format appears to have been arbitrarily selected. Worchel (1974) had subjects rate an experimenter who deprived them of choice on five thirty-one interval scales measuring efficiency, smoothness of conduct, pleasant manner, likeability, and suitability for re-hiring. He found that freedom-deprived subjects tended to rate the experimenter as unsuitable for re-employment, a response which was interpreted as reactance-induced aggression. Worchel and Brehm (1971) found that subjects whose freedom was threatened by an experimental confederate, rated the confederate as "unlikeable" on a similar thirty-one interval bipolar measure. While these results are interesting, and suggest that negative appraisals of social agents may be elicited by their freedom-threatening behavior, it is difficult to extend and interpret such data due to the idiosyncratic measures employed.

The semantic differential has, by contrast, been employed as a measure of perceived meaning in a number of cultural contexts across a wide range of rated stimuli (Osgood, 1964), revealing that Evaluative, Potency, and Activity (EPA) factors appear to be naturally-occurring dimensions of meaning which humans tend to perceive in both

animate and inanimate stimuli (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). The apparent ubiquity of these factors raises the question of how barriers to freedom, of both the impersonal and social-agent variety, might be perceived along these evaluative dimensions. If in fact a particular semantic differential profile is elicited by the social agent threat in this experiment, then subsequent research might determine a similar EPA configuration to apply to impersonal barriers as well. Such investigations may contribute to an understanding of "how" barriers evoke reactance effects. Need a barrier be both "potent" and "active" to elicit reactance? Would variations in EPA levels correlate with differing levels of reactance?

It is predicted that observers of the freedom-threat scenario will rate the social agent who is depicted as the source of this threat as negative, potent, and active. Observers who view the same social agent in a similar scene in which he does not threaten a freedom should rate him as less negative, potent, and active. The inmate-model in the freedom-threat scene should be rated as less potent and active than the same model in a no-threat scene. It is possible that the self-ratings of freedom-threat observers will converge with ratings of the threatened model as an index of observer-model identification, or perceived similarity, to the degree that reactance is evoked by the

freedom-threat scenario.

(e) Individual differences. This study will investigate whether higher frequencies of prior acting-out behavior in prison, as shown by accumulated numbers of rules infractions, will interact with the modeled-threat presentation to produce a greater degree of vicarious reactance in those subjects with such a history. This hypothesis is advanced in an effort to determine whether a poor record of compliance with institutional regulations (barriers) may be attributable in part to a higher need for direct freedom restoration on the part of those inmates who repeat such behavior.

Finally, it may be noted that the foregoing predictions are somewhat at variance with those which would be derived from traditional modeling theory. The usual modeling experiments investigate the extent to which observers are incited to imitate behaviors depicted on film. Were we to expect such imitation in this experiment, it would be predicted that observers of the choice-limitation interaction might tend to express an increased compliance with the loss of freedom to refuse group therapy, since such compliance is demonstrated by the inmate-model in the scenario used here (see Methods section). Direct imitation would therefore be expected to result in these observers expressing a lowered interest in having a choice about therapy enrollment. Such influence is unlikely to occur in this experiment,

however, insofar as the taped scenario does not present any salient incentives which might encourage observers to imitate the model's compliance; the model is not shown to receive any particular reinforcement for his behavior. It would in fact be difficult to credibly depict such reinforcement within the context of the institutional program-enrollment scenario used here. At most, the correctional staff who enroll the model might be shown expressing verbal approval of his compliant behavior, but the generally negative attitude of prison inmates toward staff renders it highly doubtful that observers would evaluate such approval as a salient reinforcer. In addition, some previous research (e.g., Hetherington & Klinger, 1964) has suggested that sociopathic subjects may in general be relatively unresponsive to social reinforcement. The absence of significant modeled reinforcement, in conjunction with the countervailing influence of reactance processes, is therefore expected to reduce any direct imitation-learning influences to a minimum.

## METHOD

### Subjects

Seventy-two inmates from the El Reno Federal Correctional Institution were randomly selected from the total institutional population of approximately seven hundred who had served a term of incarceration of six months or more. Inmates with less than six months of incarceration were excluded from the sample because they would be unlikely to have accumulated a significant number of rules infractions (incident reports). Incident report rates for the sample subjects were then computed by dividing the total number of incident reports by months of incarceration. A median split was used to divide the sample into high and low incident report-rate categories. Equal numbers of high and low subjects were then randomly assigned to the control, choice observation, and no-choice observation conditions. Subjects in all conditions were presented with consent forms which clearly stated that participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and that they were free to withdraw from participation without penalty. No incentives for participation beyond interest in the study itself were offered.

### Measures

Institutional Programs Survey (IPS). The IPS (Appendix A), used to measure choice-salience and benefits ratings for

group therapy, was adapted from an instrument employed by Hormuth and Wicklund (1978) in a reactance study at the Federal Correctional Institution, Fort Worth, Texas. The version of the instrument employed in this experiment utilized twenty-interval scales measuring choice and benefits ratings for nine institutional programs. Responses were scored from 1 to 20, with higher scores indicating increased choice salience. Eight other programs were included in addition to group therapy in order to mask the purpose of the experiment.

Semantic Differential (SD). A standard SD format (Appendix B) consisting of ten bipolar adjective pairs, each pair separated by a seven interval scale, was used in this study. Four adjective pairs, good-bad, worthwhile-worthless, fair-unfair, and trustworthy-untrustworthy, comprised the Evaluative factor measure. The Potency factor was measured by powerful-powerless, tough-gentle, and strong-weak, while fast-slow, loud-quiet, and calm-nervous comprised the Activity factor measures. Scores for each factor were obtained by averaging the ratings across adjective pairs belonging to that factor.

Salience of Manipulation Check. Salience of manipulation was measured on the Inmate Opinion Survey form (Appendix C). Question number 5 on this form asked the subject to indicate who had decided, the team or the inmate-model, about

enrollment in each of the three programs mentioned in the scenario. The form also served to provide a rationale for the subject's observation of the videotape. The salience of manipulation check was administered to subjects after they had completed the IPS in order to avoid sensitizing them beforehand to the issue of choice.

Boring Task Measure. Indirect restoration of freedom was measured by compliance/refusal rates on an optional boring task, presented as a visual accuracy test, which consisted simply of tables of two-digit random numbers followed by spaces into which they could be copied.

Post-Test Interview. Each subject was interviewed immediately following completion of the experimental session. Subjects were asked whether they understood the (supposed) purpose of the experiment, whether they recognized the "institution" or "staff" shown on the videotape, and whether they had any additional comments or opinions about the procedure. The primary purpose of this interview was to detect any suspicions about the videotapes or the experiment's purpose.

#### Procedure

Control condition. Subjects assigned to the control condition signed a consent form (Appendix D) explaining that they were participating in a study of inmate opinions about institutional programs. These subjects then completed



the IPS providing a baseline measure of choice-salience and benefits ratings for nine institutional programs, including group therapy.

Observation conditions. Subjects assigned to the observation conditions signed a consent form (Appendix E) indicating that they would view a videotape and offer their opinions about classification team procedures and institutional programs. Each subject was then seated in a room facing a videotape monitor placed on top of a small cabinet containing two shelves. On the top shelf was a stack of sequentially numbered folders containing the response measures; the lower shelf held a box for the placement of completed forms. Audiotaped instructions were played from a cassette recorder next to the videotape monitor. This automated design allowed the experimenter to be absent from the room, thus controlling for experimenter influence. The tape recorder and videotape monitor were controlled from an adjacent room, where the experimenter could observe the subject from behind a one-way mirror. The session began with activation of the following instructions:

These instructions are tape recorded so that they will be the same for everyone. During the next few minutes, I will have you view a short videotape and fill out some forms asking for your opinions about institutional programs and also about how to improve team meetings. I will begin by playing a videotape of a team meeting which was filmed at another institution. Please watch the tape

carefully, because a little later on I will ask for your criticisms of this team meeting.

The videotape monitor was then activated, allowing the subject to view what was presented as a classification team meeting held in another institution. The scene was actually one which had been produced using actors who portrayed a unit manager, case manager, and counselor enrolling an inmate in various program options. Two versions of the scenario were filmed, identical in content except with respect to a final decision about enrollment in group therapy. In the choice version, the unit manager, after reading a memorandum indicating that the psychology department is soliciting inmate enrollment in a new group therapy program, engages in the following interaction with the inmate:

UNIT MANAGER: Now I just wanted to mention it to you in case you were interested. It's entirely up to you.

INMATE: Yeah, that's something I would be interested in.

In the no-choice version, a limitation of the inmate's freedom is portrayed by having the unit manager decide for the inmate that he will enroll:

UNIT MANAGER: Now, I've looked through your jacket and I decided that we ought to sign you up for that, ok?

INMATE: If that's what you've decided, I'll do it.

Both scenarios contained the same number of words about group therapy enrollment. The only difference between the

videotapes consisted of the presence or absence of a threat to the free behavior of refusing enrollment, allowing a control for differential levels of exposure to information about the group therapy activity.

The videotape monitor had a small nine-inch diagonal screen; the subject's distraction by irrelevant visual cues was thereby minimized. The audio portion, by contrast, was quite loud and clear in order that the contrasting elements in the dialogue might clearly be discernable. Though the independent-variable difference between the two scenarios may appear slight, the results suggest that its impact was considerable, and reasons for this are described in the discussion section.

In both versions, the scenario continues by showing the case manager recording the inmate's enrollment. At the conclusion of the scene, the video monitor was deactivated and the audiotaped instructions continued:

You will now notice that there is a stack of folders on the top shelf in front of you. Please take the top folder, number one, and open it to the form inside. . . this form asks for some of your opinions about institutional programs. Follow the instructions for filling out the form, and when you are finished, place the form and the folder in the box on the bottom shelf.

This form, the Institutional Programs Survey, had embedded within it the initial dependent measures of the subject's desire to have a choice about group therapy

enrollment and his estimation of the benefits he might receive from group therapy. After he indicated completion by placing the folder in the box, the tape instructed him to proceed with the next folder, containing the salience of manipulation check. The subject was then similarly instructed to proceed with folder number three, containing the semantic differential. After the subject completed semantic differential ratings of the unit manager, inmate-model, and himself, the final audiotape instructions were played:

Thank you. You have now completed the opinion survey portion of the project. There is one other thing I am interested in, however. You will notice that there is one more folder, number four, left on the shelf. Please open this folder and look at the visual accuracy test inside. . . This test is one that I am interested in having people try out, and I would like you to try it. If you are willing to try the test, you may spend up to ten minutes working on it. You may also stop working on the test at any time before the ten minutes are over. If you do not wish to try the test at all, you may simply close the folder and place it in the box.

This folder contained the boring task measure of the indirect freedom-restoration hypothesis. After the subject had either participated on the task for up to ten minutes or refused it, the session was completed.

## RESULTS

Reliability Study. Reliability of the IPS was evaluated through a pilot study in which the instrument was administered twice to 20 subjects over a test-retest interval of 14 days. The second IPS administration utilized an alternate format with item order changed and some scales reversed in order to check for order effects. Test-retest coefficients of stability for the choice scores ranged from  $r = .63$  (Peer Counseling program) to  $r = .89$  (Community Treatment Center program), with Group Therapy  $r = .82$ . Coefficients of stability for the benefits scores ranged from  $r = .88$  (Staff Counseling program) to  $r = .98$  (Vocational Training program), with Group Therapy  $r = .96$ . Correlation coefficients for the remaining test items are reported in Appendix F.

Adequacy of procedure. Six out of the original sample declined participation after reading the consent form, and these subjects were replaced. No subject who did participate indicated suspicion about the videotapes or the purpose of the experiment. The only unsuccessful element of the procedure involved the boring task manipulation, a difficulty which is analyzed in the discussion section.

Salience of manipulation. The salience of manipulation check indicated that all observers were able to correctly identify the source of the decision about group therapy enrollment. Three subjects in the no-choice observation

did, however, incorrectly indicate that the team made the decision about G.E.D. enrollment as well as about group therapy enrollment. Whether this represents a generalization from their observation of the freedom-limitation in the scenario is unclear. As the direction of their response measures is otherwise consistent with that of the remaining subjects in this condition, data from these subjects were retained.

Choice and benefits rankings, control and choice-observation conditions. The order of choice and benefits ratings for the nine programs listed on the IPS is highly consistent across the control and choice-observer groups (between groups choice ratings  $r = .96$ , between groups benefits ratings  $r = .97$ ), indicating that observation of the choice scenario had little influence on the responses of subjects in that group. Observation of the no-choice scenario did, by contrast, affect the group therapy ratings of subjects in that condition as described in the next section. Mean choice and benefits scores for all programs rated by the control and choice-observation groups are presented in Table 1. Community Treatment Center release, vocational training courses, and educational programs are ranked in the top third of the choice and benefits ratings. Group therapy falls in the middle third of the rating pattern, while staff counseling and dormitory assignment are the two lowest ranked

TABLE 1

Rank Ordering of Mean Choice and Benefits Ratings,  
Control and Choice-Observation Conditions

(High-Low Incident Report Levels Combined)

<u>CONTROL CONDITION</u>			
Program	Mean Choice	Program	Mean Benefits
Community TC	17.38	Community TC	17.67
Vocational T	16.96	Vocational T	16.50
GED Classes	16.83	GED Classes	16.17
Group Therapy	11.59	Group Therapy	10.83
Work	10.42	Work	9.46
Peer Counseling	10.13	Peer Counseling	9.34
Pre-Release	10.00	Pre-Release	9.29
Staff Counseling	8.38	Staff Counseling	6.75
Dormitory	8.00	Dormitory	6.13

<u>CHOICE OBSERVATION CONDITION</u>			
Program	Mean Choice	Program	Mean Benefits
Community TC	17.29	Vocational T	17.58
Vocational T	17.29	Community TC	16.25
GED Classes	17.04	GED Classes	14.74
Pre-Release	12.04	Group Therapy	10.71
Group Therapy	11.96	Pre-Release	10.67
Peer Counseling	11.29	Work	9.25
Work	8.67	Peer Counseling	8.87
Staff Counseling	7.21	Dormitory	7.00
Dormitory	7.00	Staff Counseling	6.84

Higher choice scores indicate increased choice salience.  
Higher benefits scores reflect increased estimations of program benefits.

programs. Interestingly, averaged group choice and benefits scores show a high degree of linear correlation (choice-benefits  $r = .96$ ); the more highly a program is rated in terms of benefits, the more important having a choice about it becomes. Post-testing interviews with the pilot subjects in this study suggest that freedom to avoid negatively valued programs is not expressed here due to the subjects' awareness of institutional constraints. While staff counseling and dormitory assignment are consistently rated as being of little benefit, inmates are aware that the freedom to avoid these activities is not a viable option in any federal institution. The impracticability of such avoidance apparently keeps the ratings of choice-salience for these activities correspondingly low. A second factor which subjects mentioned as reducing their interest in having a choice, involved the extent to which particular programs were currently operational in the institution. Recent reporting statistics showed, for example, fewer than ten inmates enrolled in group therapy in the general population at El Reno. The low visibility of this and other programs such as pre-release classes and peer counseling appears to reduce concern for having a choice about them. The emergent pattern thus finds three programs to be commonly regarded as of high benefit and choice salience: Community Treatment Center, vocational training, and education. Two activities, dorm



assignment and staff counseling, are generally negatively rated. The remaining four activities, group therapy, pre-release classes, work assignment and peer counseling, fall in the middle.

Effect of the modeled threat upon choice salience.

The analysis of variance presented in Table 2 found a main effect for condition on the choice-salience scores for group therapy  $F(2,66) = 10.23, p < .001$ . The mean scores for the three conditions are presented in Table 3. The analysis indicates that neither the main effect of incident report level nor the interaction between condition and incident report level were significant. Planned comparisons indicate that the no-choice mean is significantly different from both the control  $t(66) = 4.05, p < .001$  and choice  $t(66) = 3.77, p < .001$  means, and that the control and choice means are not significantly different  $t(66) = .29, p > .05$ .

Effect of the modeled threat upon benefits ratings. As a corollary of the above, observers of the no-choice enrollment express a significantly lowered estimate of group therapy benefits. This is a main effect for condition  $F(2,66) = 14.71, p < .001$ . As indicated in Table 4, there is no significant main or interactive effect for incident report level. The group mean combined across incident report levels represents a significant decrease below benefits scores in

TABLE 2

## Analysis of Variance of Group Therapy Choice Ratings

Source	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u><math>\omega^2</math></u>
Observation Condition (A)	2	209.26	10.23*	.21
Incident Report Level (B)	1	1.39	.07	
A X B	2	13.18	.64	
Error	66	20.45		

\*  $p < .001$

TABLE 3

Mean Choice and Benefits Ratings for Group Therapy  
(Incident Report Levels Combined)

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	Control	Choice	No Choice
Group Therapy Choice	11.59	11.96	16.87
Group Therapy Benefits	10.83	10.70	4.96

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TABLE 4

## Analysis of Variance of Group Therapy Benefits Ratings

Source	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u><math>\omega^2</math></u>
Observation Condition (A)	2	270.38	14.71*	.28
Incident Report Level (B)	1	1.39	.08	
A X B	2	8.26	.45	
Error	66	18.38		

\*  $p < .001$

the control condition  $t(66) = 4.75, p < .001$  and the choice condition  $t(66) = 4.65, p < .001$ , while these latter scores are not significantly different  $t(66) = .10, p > .05$ .

Indirect restoration of freedom. It was not possible to evaluate between-group differences in compliance rates on the boring task due to the fact that only one subject in the no-choice condition and two in the choice condition elected to participate. It may at least be concluded that the task was successfully contrived as a palpably uninteresting one. Reasons for the failure of this manipulation are considered in the discussion section.

Evaluative factor ratings, Semantic Differential. Mean ratings of the Semantic Differential factors are presented in Table 5. As shown in Table 6, an analysis of variance found that the factors of Person  $F(2,88) = 97.01, p < .001$  and Choice  $F(1,44) = 10.65, p < .001$  exert main effects upon Evaluative factor ratings, and that the interaction of these variables is significant  $F(2,88) = 17.38, p < .001$ . As predicted, the unit manager is rated more negatively in the no-choice scenario than in the choice scene  $t(132) = 4.95, p < .001$ . Observer self-ratings on the E factor do not change between conditions  $t(132) = 1.02, p > .05$ , so that, again contrary to expectation, observer-model ratings actually diverge in the no-choice condition instead of showing the

TABLE 5

## Mean Ratings of Semantic Differential Factors

		Choice Observation		No Choice Observation	
		IR Level		IR Level	
		High	Low	High	Low
E	Unit Manager	3.00	3.04	1.79	1.54
	Model	4.54	4.06	3.19	3.96
	Observer	4.98	4.92	5.20	5.25
P	Unit Manager	4.11	3.64	5.83	5.94
	Model	4.19	3.67	3.03	2.58
	Observer	4.78	4.45	5.19	4.80
A	Unit Manager	3.75	4.08	3.78	4.39
	Model	3.72	3.28	3.47	2.97
	Observer	3.28	3.56	3.61	3.89

All scores range from one to seven. Higher scores on the E factor are in the "positive" direction, while high scores on the P and A factors indicate greater potency and activity. IR level refers to a high or low incident report rate.

TABLE 6  
 Analysis of Variance of Semantic Differential  
 E Factor

Source	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u><math>\omega^2</math></u>
Between subjects	47			
Choice (C)	1	12.99	10.65*	.03
Incident Report Level (IR)	1	.00		
C X IR	1	.73		
Error <sub>b</sub>	44	1.22		
Within subjects	96			
Person (P)	2	91.19	97.01*	.51
P X C	2	16.34	17.38*	.09
P X IR	2	.19		
P X C X IR	2	10.83	11.52*	.06
Error <sub>w</sub>	88	.94		

\*  $p < .001$

predicted convergence which would be suggestive of identification or perceived similarity between self and model. The effect of the no-choice scene in lowering E factor ratings of the model shows a significant interaction with incident report level, so that observers with a high number of incident reports have a greater tendency to downgrade the model than do observers with fewer infractions  $t(132) = 3.49, p < .001$ . This interaction was the only effect for individual differences found in the study, and it is evaluated in the discussion section.

Potency factor ratings, Semantic Differential. The analysis of variance shown in Table 7 found significant main effects for Person  $F(2,88) = 46.56, p < .001$ , Choice  $F(1,44) = 4.32, p < .001$ , and a significant interaction of these factors  $F(2,88) = 39.41, p < .001$  on Potency ratings. Consistent with predictions, the unit manager appears more potent  $t(132) = 5.51, p < .001$  and the model less potent  $t(132) = 3.08, p < .01$  in the no-choice interaction. Observer P ratings do not, however, change between conditions  $t(132) = 1.06, p > .05$ .

Activity factor ratings, Semantic Differential. The expected shifts in Activity factor ratings did not occur. The analysis presented in Table 8 shows no effect for the experimental variables on Activity scores.



TABLE 7  
 Analysis of Variance of Semantic Differential  
 P Factor

Source	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u><math>\omega^2</math></u>
Between subjects	47			
Choice (C)	1	6.52	4.32*	.01
Incident Report Level (IR)	1	4.22	2.79	
C X IR	1	.37		
Error <sub>b</sub>	44	1.51		
Within subjects	96			
Person (P)	2	34.92	46.56**	.19
P X C	2	29.56	39.41**	.16
P X IR	2	.28		
P X C X IR	2	.34		
Error <sub>w</sub>	88	.75		

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .001$

TABLE 8

## Analysis of Variance of Semantic Differential

## A Factor

Source	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between subjects	47		
Choice (C)	1	.20	
Incident Report Level (IR)	1	.30	
C X IR	1	.05	
Error <sub>b</sub>	44	2.41	
Within subjects	96		
Person (P)	2	5.04	3.09
P X C	2	1.20	
P X IR	2	2.99	1.83
P X C X IR	2	.19	
Error <sub>w</sub>	88	1.63	

## DISCUSSION

The results in general suggest that psychological reactance can be aroused by merely observing a threat to the freedom of a similar other. This reactance has the effect of increasing the observer's desire to have a choice about the threatened free behavior, at the same time that expectancies concerning the benefit of the involuntarily-assigned activity are reduced. In this experiment, the magnitude of these effects was considerable. The omega-squared index showed that 21% of the total variance in group therapy choice scores and 28% of the variance in group therapy benefits scores were accounted for by the experimental variable of choice condition. The magnitude of the results may be produced by certain factors peculiar to these subjects, the environment, and the nature of the modeled threat. In addition to the presence of those general variables described in the introduction which are highly conducive to modeling and reactance in a prison, the decision to use a unit classification team meeting as the scenario setting may have served to increase the power of the manipulation. Each inmate is required to attend such meetings upon arriving in a unit and every 90 days thereafter. Decisions made at these meetings have critical implications for an inmate's life within the institution as well as for such issues as custody reduction, outside furloughs, and early

release to a community treatment facility. An inmate's ability to engage in a number of free behaviors is therefore heavily dependent upon the conduct of such meetings. It may be noted that the removal of the model's freedom to refuse group therapy is a type of freedom threat which carries additional implications for his future. The unit manager points out in the memo which he reads that the group meetings are a weekly occurrence; the model is therefore presented with the obligation of restricting his freedom on a regular basis for an indefinite period. This interaction is observed by subjects who have no choice about the fact that they must also attend such meetings and deal with the consequences of decisions made therein. For those reasons it is likely that the observers were highly attentive to noting any actions in the videotape which might be unacceptable or threatening to them.

In the videotaped scene the actual decision about group enrollment is not absolutely or entirely removed from the model; he theoretically has the option of resisting the unit managers' decision or of appealing it to other authority in accordance with certain standard procedures. Instead, he merely verbalizes compliance. It was considered necessary within the design of the experiment to avoid showing the model exhibiting resistance or even distaste for his induced enrollment, since this would have confounded observation-

induced reactance on the part of the observers with simple imitation of modeled displeasure. For this reason, the model is seated with his back to the camera so that no facial responses are visible. Had straightforward modeling results been obtained in this experiment, we might find no-choice observers expressing a lowered interest in choosing about group enrollment, in keeping with the model's passive acceptance of freedom loss. Dependent measures clearly show this not to be the case. Not only do observers apparently choose not to imitate the model, but their Semantic Differential ratings suggest that they tend to be actively critical of the model rather than evaluating him as similar to themselves.

It was predicted that a model who is portrayed in a freedom-limiting circumstance will be viewed as less potent than one whose freedom is not threatened, but no shifts on the Evaluative factor were anticipated. No-choice observers do, however, perceive the model as relatively bad, worthless, unfair, and untrustworthy (Evaluative) as well as gentle, weak, and powerless (Potency), while these dimensions are perceived neutrally by observers of the model in the choice scene. Dislike for the models' compliant role in response to a freedom threat may be an important factor influencing such ratings. Inmates share a notorious distaste for those among them who are viewed as overly cooperative with

institutional staff, and the model's behavior may have been interpreted in this light. This line of reasoning may help explain the interactive effect of incident-report levels on the Evaluative factor ratings of the model in the freedom-loss condition. Subjects with a higher number of rules infractions are by definition less compliant with institutional procedures than others. That these subjects were the most critical of the model when he is shown giving into pressure from a staff member may be understood with reference to cognitive balance theory. Balance theory (e.g., Heider, 1958) suggests that an individual who has opposite cognitions about self and another will tend to have negative sentiment (affect) toward the other. Thus, subjects with a noncompliant attitude toward staff would show a greater tendency to negatively evaluate a model who demonstrates compliance.

Cognitive consistency processes may also influence the lowered benefit ratings for group therapy found in the no-choice observation condition. It seems at first to be almost paradoxical for subjects to express a heightened choice preference for an option which has lowered in value. It is however the free behavior of refusing enrollment which is threatened in the no-choice scene, and the observers' increased interest in having a personal choice about enrollment is assumed to reflect their desire to protect the option of refusal. Even so, reactance theory is not entirely clear

about the process through which an increased desire to refuse an option creates a more negative appraisal of the merits or benefits of that option.

Wicklund's (1974) survey of theories related to psychological reactance includes a discussion in Chapter 2 of attitude change studies which have found that subjects will tend to adopt a position opposed to that advocated by an influence agent toward whom they have negative affect. In the present study, the unit manager can be viewed as an advocate of group therapy by virtue of his decision that the inmate model should enroll in that activity. Observers may therefore tend to derogate the benefits of group therapy as a consequence of their negative evaluation of the unit manager.

It was anticipated that identifying or empathizing with the model would be a necessary precondition for the vicarious experience of a freedom threat on the part of observers. Instead, the data gathered here indicate that reactance can be generated via observation in the absence of perceived similarity between observer and model. This suggests that an "empathy" or "vicarious experience" model for the mediation of observer reactance may be inappropriate. Stotland (1969), in his studies of empathy, makes a pertinent distinction when he notes that it is possible to

distinguish empathy from those situations in which a person's experiences may carry

implications for the welfare of one who might observe them. For example, when his father frowns a child might expect unpleasantness to follow. This is not empathy; the other's perceived emotions are acting as discriminative stimuli (sources of information) about the observer's possible or probable fate (p. 40).

In line with this reasoning, it would be possible for an observer to view a freedom-threat to a model as conveying information relevant to his own situation, without actually identifying with the model himself. Indeed, it is quite probable that the presence of the inmate-model in the freedom-threat scenario is of less significance in this experiment than would typically be the case in traditional modeling studies. Bandura (1977) suggests that imitation-learning usually involves an observer's incorporating modeled behaviors into his own behavioral repertoire through a process of identification and covert rehearsal. While the likelihood of observer identification with (and probable imitation of) the model is not supported by the data in this study, observers do react strongly to the freedom-threatening behavior demonstrated by the unit manager. For this reason it is quite possible that reactance might be evoked through an observer's witnessing a scene in which no "model" at all were present in the usual sense. Instead, it may only be necessary for an observed scene to incorporate informative elements which include discriminative stimuli suggesting that a potential freedom-threat is active in a



stimulus context similar to that in which the observer himself is, or may be, involved.

Somewhat surprising in the Semantic Differential responses is the lack of movement on the Activity factor ratings for both the model and unit manager. It was expected that the unit manager would appear more active and the model less active in the no-choice scene, paralleling changes in perceived potency. In understanding why this did not occur, it may be important to remember that the dimensions of activity and potency were separable in Osgood's factor analysis precisely due to their relative orthogonality; they cannot be viewed as covariates. It was predicted that this study would, however, show a barrier-threat (the unit manager) to be active by virtue of its reactance provoking properties. In this view, a social agent who threatens freedom would, other factors remaining constant, be perceived as more active than one who does not. It may have been the very constancy of the stimulus variables employed in this design which precluded such an effect. The three scales comprising the Activity factor are: fast-slow, loud-quiet, and calm-nervous. These variables in the actors' behavior were deliberately kept as stable as possible across both videotapes in order to reduce unwanted confounds. Stability of the Activity factor ratings between conditions may therefore reflect rather accurate perceptions on the part of observers. It is

possible that a social agent who is in the role of threatening the freedom of another in the natural environment might actually tend to behave, and be perceived as, more active. Such a possibility deserves investigation in a design which does not deliberately minimize naturally occurring variations in activity levels.

Evaluation of the indirect restoration of freedom hypothesis was not possible because only three out of seventy-two subjects elected to try the boring task. It might be argued that the manipulation failed because the task was too boring in nature, and that higher rates of compliance could have been elicited by rendering it more interesting. While this might be true, it would have been impossible to formulate any clear reactance-theory interpretations of participation or refusal on a more rewarding task. As the task becomes progressively more interesting in nature, the freedom to engage in it becomes as salient as the freedom to refuse it. Subjects who choose to participate in an interesting activity can be said to be exhibiting as much freedom as those who do not. In order therefore to clearly interpret refusal as the choice which would be salient for most subjects, the undesirable nature of the task had to be held constant. In the originally proposed design, this bias toward refusal was to have been counterbalanced by introducing the task (in a slightly altered form) as a favor-

request by another staff member who would have been blind to the condition from which the subject emerged. It was hoped that the observation-induced reactance in no-choice observers would be sufficient as to add an extra incentive to resist the social pressure of a staff members' favor request, and differences in compliance rates between the two groups would be manifest. When members of the local research committee questioned the appropriateness of having a staff member ask an inmate for a "favor" (which is in fact somewhat contrary to policy), this element was dropped. The task was instead incorporated as a supposed visual accuracy test in which the experimenter was interested, but which was optional. It was hoped that the response-set of progressing serially through the response measures in the four stacked folders would carry over into some willingness to complete the optional final one. This did not turn out to be the case. It is probable in retrospect that after completing 35 pages of measures (Semantic Differential scales are presented singly to optimize discrimination in judgments), the subjects gladly refused further paper and pencil activity.

One of the questions investigated in this study concerned the extent to which the individual-differences variable of incident report rate would exhibit interactive effects with the modeled threat. Such an effect was found only for the single measure of model evaluation on the Semantic

Differential. To explore the reasons for this finding, the following is a discussion of two inferences which were involved in formulating the hypothesis that a history of rules infractions might influence responses in this study.

The first inference consisted of operationally defining rules-infractions as instances of direct freedom-restoration. Since an institutional regulation prohibiting a certain action functions as a barrier to the exercise of a free behavior, rules-violations share characteristics of direct freedom-restoration. A second inference, however, involved the assumption that the number of incident reports in an inmate's file is a reasonably accurate measure of the number of violations in which he has engaged. The problems in such an assumption are those confronting the use of any naturally-occurring variable whose measurement is not controlled by the experimenter. Staff members in the various institutions and living units to which the subjects were assigned undoubtedly varied greatly in the degree to which they would detect and report rules infractions. Though a chi-square analysis did not show high incident report-level subjects in this study to be disproportionably drawn from any particular unit at El Reno, it was impossible to evaluate the degree to which biased reporting may have occurred in the several other institutions to which subjects were exposed. It could only be hoped that these and other

extraneous variables would exert a roughly equivalent effect across all members of the sample, but this is difficult to evaluate.

Though it was appreciated in advance that the extraneous variables just described would weaken the test for individual differences interactions in this experiment, it was on balance considered desirable to incorporate the incident report-level stratification as an initial exploration into reactance-related factors which may contribute to institutional maladjustment. Had subjects in the high incident report category shown a different baseline level of choice or benefits ratings in the control group, and/or had they reacted differently to the intervention, then such results would have been of practical utility in suggesting further investigations into the relationship between reactance and acting-out behavior in prison. It can only be concluded from the data analysis here that the study does not provide evidence linking rules violations directly to psychological reactance. It is therefore possible either that such a link does not exist, or that it does exist, but could not be detected owing to inadequately uniform measurement of rules-violations.

Another important issue concerns the degree to which the findings in this study can be generalized to other contexts. As previously noted, several characteristics

peculiar to a prison setting may in concert have generated something of a "hothouse" effect producing stronger responses to the modeled freedom-threat than would more generally obtain. Still, this is not to suggest that observation-induced reactance is a phenomenon whose occurrence is limited to populations of prison inmates. Suggestive support for an indirect threat to freedom was found in the Andreoli (1974) study using college students as subjects, and the converse of the phenomenon, observation-induced restoration of freedom, was demonstrated by Worchel and Brehm (1971) with student subjects also. It is therefore probable that the videotape technique used here to induce reactance would prove effective for such subjects as well.

Aside from the question of generalizability to other environments, the reactance behaviors displayed by subjects in this experiment would indicate that indirect reactance arousal is a phenomenon which may be common to prison settings in general. It was mentioned in the introduction to this paper that prisoners who engage in demonstrations whose purpose is the redress of perceived mistreatment of others, may be motivated in part by a sense of indirect threat to their own freedom and welfare. While this remains a speculation, the results described here support such a possibility. Prisons present a confluence of conditions favorable to both modeling influences and reactance arousal. Under such

conditions, indirect threats to an inmate's freedom may readily occur.

Observers of the no-choice enrollment show a strong tendency to derogate the value of group therapy in comparison to observers who have not witnessed a threat to the free behavior of refusing such enrollment. This finding suggests that inmates in the general prison population may harbor negative appraisals of certain institutional programs as a consequence of the reactance evoked by their perceived involuntary nature. Such optional programs as educational classes should be relatively free of such effects, while others, such as mandatory work assignments, would not be. Institutional constraints compel an inmate to suppress the reactance evoked by involuntary work, while this study suggests that he at the same time develops a negative appraisal of the activity. Upon release from these constraints, he might show a stronger tendency to exercise the free behavior of avoiding the work activity which he has learned to dislike.

Now that the existence of reactance induced through observation has received further support, several lines of future investigation may be suggested. Do modeled threats to an individual's freedom produce reactance of a magnitude similar to that evoked by direct threats? Since perceived similarity between self and model as measured by the

Semantic Differential is not necessary for indirect reactance arousal, is the presence of a model necessary at all in order to arouse reactance in the observer, or are the discriminative information cues present in the observed situation of greater importance? In this light, the behavior and personal characteristics of the model may be less crucial than the fact that he occupies a role similar to that of the observer. Systematically varying these elements in future research may provide a clearer understanding of such parameters of the phenomenon.



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APPENDIX A: Institutional Programs Survey

## Institutional Programs Survey

I PLEASE INDICATE BELOW HOW MUCH OF A FREE CHOICE YOU THINK YOU SHOULD HAVE CONCERNING THE AREAS OF INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAMMING THAT ARE LISTED.

FOR EACH ITEM, BLACKEN IN THE CIRCLE ON THE SCALE WHICH INDICATES HOW MUCH OF CHOICE YOU SHOULD HAVE IN THAT AREA.

DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THE PAPER. ALL REPLIES ARE CONFIDENTIAL. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS. PLEASE MAKE EACH OF YOUR ANSWERS A SEPARATE JUDGMENT.

1. HOW MUCH CHOICE SHOULD YOU HAVE ABOUT ENROLLING IN A VOCATIONAL TRAINING (VT) PROGRAM?

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20					
NO CHOICE					A LITTLE CHOICE					SOME CHOICE					A GREAT DEAL OF CHOICE					COMPLETE CHOICE				

2. HOW MUCH CHOICE SHOULD YOU HAVE ABOUT YOUR INSTITUTIONAL WORK ASSIGNMENT?

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1					
COMPLETE CHOICE					A GREAT DEAL OF CHOICE					SOME CHOICE					A LITTLE CHOICE					NO CHOICE				

3. HOW MUCH CHOICE SHOULD YOU HAVE ABOUT ENROLLING IN GED/COLLEGE EDUCATIONAL CLASSES?

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

COMPLETE  
CHOICE

A GREAT DEAL  
OF CHOICE

SOME  
CHOICE

A LITTLE  
CHOICE

NO  
CHOICE

4. HOW MUCH CHOICE SHOULD YOU HAVE ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN PEER COUNSELING SESSIONS?

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

NO  
CHOICE

A LITTLE  
CHOICE

SOME  
CHOICE

A GREAT DEAL  
OF CHOICE

COMPLETE  
CHOICE

5. HOW MUCH CHOICE SHOULD YOU HAVE ABOUT ENROLLING IN GROUP THERAPY?

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

COMPLETE  
CHOICE

A GREAT DEAL  
OF CHOICE

SOME  
CHOICE

A LITTLE  
CHOICE

NO  
CHOICE



6. HOW MUCH CHOICE SHOULD YOU HAVE ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN A HALF-WAY HOUSE (CTC) RELEASE PROGRAM?

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1					
COMPLETE CHOICE					A GREAT DEAL OF CHOICE					SOME CHOICE					A LITTLE CHOICE					NO CHOICE				

7. HOW MUCH CHOICE SHOULD YOU HAVE ABOUT WHICH STAFF COUNSELOR WILL BE ASSIGNED TO YOU?

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20					
NO CHOICE					A LITTLE CHOICE					SOME CHOICE					A GREAT DEAL OF CHOICE					COMPLETE CHOICE				

8. HOW MUCH CHOICE SHOULD YOU HAVE ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN PRE-RELEASE CLASSES?

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1					
COMPLETE CHOICE					A GREAT DEAL OF CHOICE					SOME CHOICE					A LITTLE CHOICE					NO CHOICE				

9. HOW MUCH CHOICE SHOULD YOU HAVE ABOUT WHICH DORMITORY OR LIVING UNIT YOU WILL BE ASSIGNED TO?

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20					
NO CHOICE					A LITTLE CHOICE					SOME CHOICE					A GREAT DEAL OF CHOICE					COMPLETE CHOICE				

II. PLEASE INDICATE BELOW HOW MUCH BENEFIT YOU THINK YOU PERSONALLY WOULD GET FROM EACH OF THE PROGRAMS WE ARE EVALUATING. INDICATE BY BLACKENING IN A CIRCLE ON THE SCALE HOW MUCH BENEFIT YOU PERSONALLY WOULD EXPECT TO RECEIVE FROM EACH PROGRAM.

AGAIN, ALL ANSWERS ARE PURELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY AND WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS.

1. GED/COLLEGE EDUCATIONAL CLASSES

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1					
A GREAT DEAL OF BENEFIT					CONSIDERABLE BENEFIT					SOME BENEFIT					LITTLE BENEFIT					NO BENEFIT				

2. PEER COUNSELING

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20					
NO BENEFIT					LITTLE BENEFIT					SOME BENEFIT					CONSIDERABLE BENEFIT					A GREAT DEAL OF BENEFIT				

3. VT PROGRAMS

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20					
NO BENEFIT					LITTLE BENEFIT					SOME BENEFIT					CONSIDERABLE BENEFIT					A GREAT DEAL OF BENEFIT				

4. INSTITUTIONAL WORK ASSIGNMENT

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1					
A GREAT DEAL OF BENEFIT					CONSIDERABLE BENEFIT					SOME BENEFIT					LITTLE BENEFIT					NO BENEFIT				

65

5. PROPER DORMITORY ASSIGNMENT

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1					
A GREAT DEAL OF BENEFIT					CONSIDERABLE BENEFIT					SOME BENEFIT					LITTLE BENEFIT					NO BENEFIT				

6. STAFF COUNSELING

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20					
NO BENEFIT					LITTLE BENEFIT					SOME BENEFIT					CONSIDERABLE BENEFIT					A GREAT DEAL OF BENEFIT				

7. PRE-RELEASE CLASSES

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1					
A GREAT DEAL OF BENEFIT					CONSIDERABLE BENEFIT					SOME BENEFIT					LITTLE BENEFIT					NO BENEFIT				

8. GROUP THERAPY

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1					
A GREAT DEAL OF BENEFIT					CONSIDERABLE BENEFIT					SOME BENEFIT					LITTLE BENEFIT					NO BENEFIT				

9. HALF-WAY HOUSE (CTC) RELEASE PROGRAM

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20					
NO BENEFIT					LITTLE BENEFIT					SOME BENEFIT					CONSIDERABLE BENEFIT					A GREAT DEAL OF BENEFIT				

APPENDIX B: Semantic Differential Scales

## Semantic Differential Scales

## Evaluative Factor Scales:

Worthless	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Worthwhile
Fair	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Unfair
Trustworthy	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Untrustworthy
Bad	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Good

## Potency Factor Scales:

Powerless	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Powerful
Weak	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Strong
Tough	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Gentle

## Activity Factor Scales:

Fast	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Slow
Calm	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nervous
Loud	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Quiet

Scales were printed one per page to optimize discrimination in judgment. Subjects completed three complete sets of scales, providing separate evaluations of the unit manager, inmate model, and themselves.

APPENDIX C: Salience of Manipulation Check  
(Inmate Opinion Survey)



## INMATE OPINION SURVEY: VIDEOTAPED UNIT TEAM PROCEDURES

1. If you were the inmate in the situation you watched on the tape, would you be unhappy about anything that the team did?
  - No, I would not be unhappy about anything that happened
  - Yes, I would be unhappy about \_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you think that the team treated the inmate fairly?
  - Yes, I think he was treated fairly.
  - No, I think he was treated unfairly.
3. Do you think that the inmate or the team would have acted any differently if the meeting had not been videotaped?
  - Yes, they would have acted differently.
  - No, everyone would have acted about the same.
4. Whose idea was it that the inmate should get his G.E.D.?
  - It was his idea.
  - It was the team's idea.
5. Who decided that the inmate should enroll in group therapy?
  - It was the inmate's decision.
  - It was the team's decision.
6. Who decided that the inmate should take V.T. Welding?
  - It was the team's decision.
  - It was the inmate's decision.
7. How could this team meeting be improved?

APPENDIX D: Consent Form, Control Subjects

Explanation of Research and Informed Consent for Inmates Who Will Complete the Institutional Programs Survey Only

You are being asked to participate in a research project conducted by Jeffrey Aston, Chemical Abuse Program Psychologist at FCI, El Reno. This research is carried out under the general authority of 18 U.S.C. 4001 (b) and 4042 (2). This portion of the project has the purpose of surveying inmate opinions about institutional programs. If you volunteer to participate in this research project, you will be asked to fill out a survey form which asks for some of your opinions about institutional programs. This will require about ten minutes of your time. Nothing else will be required of you. There will be no discomforts or risks for you as a result of your participation. Your answers on the survey form will be kept strictly confidential. If you choose to participate, I will answer any questions about the project when the project is completed.

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand the purpose of the project described above, and I consent to participate in the study. My participation is voluntary, and I realize that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time. I understand that all research information will be handled in the strictest confidence, and that my participation will not be individually identifiable in any reports. I further understand

that there is no penalty or prejudice of any kind for not participating in the study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)      (Register No.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Witness)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

APPENDIX E: Consent Form, Observation Subjects

Explanation of Research and Informed Consent for Inmates  
Who Will Participate as Videotape Observers and Evaluators

You are being asked to participate in a research project conducted by Jeffrey Aston, Chemical Abuse Program Psychologist at FCI, El Reno. This research is carried out under the general authority of 18 U.S.C. 4001 (b) and 4042 (2). This project has the purpose of surveying inmate opinions about classification team procedures and institutional programs. If you volunteer for this project, you will be asked to view a brief videotape and to give your opinions about team procedures and institutional programs. This session will take about forty-five minutes to complete. No further sessions will be required of you. There will be no discomfort or risks for you as a result of your participation. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential. If you choose to participate, I will answer any questions about the project when the project is completed.

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand the purpose of the project described above, and I consent to participate in the study. My participation is voluntary, and I realize that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time. I understand that all research information will be handled in the strictest confidence, and that my participation will not be individually identifiable in any reports. I further

understand that there is no penalty or prejudice of any kind for not participating in the study.

---

(Signature)

---

(Register No.)

---

(Date)

---

(Witness)

---

(Date)

APPENDIX F: Pilot Study Stability Coefficients  
for Institutional Programs Survey



Test-Retest Stability Coefficients: Pilot Study, Institutional Programs Survey

Number of Subjects: 20

Test-Retest Interval: 2 weeks. Second administration utilized alternate format with scale directions reversed and item order changed to check for order effects.

1. Vocational Training
  - a. Choice scores:  $\underline{r} = .72$
  - b. Benefits scores:  $\underline{r} = .98$
2. Community Treatment Center
  - a. Choice scores:  $\underline{r} = .89$
  - b. Benefits scores:  $\underline{r} = .92$
3. Dormitory Assignment
  - a. Choice scores:  $\underline{r} = .87$
  - b. Benefits scores:  $\underline{r} = .94$
4. GED Education
  - a. Choice scores:  $\underline{r} = .85$
  - b. Benefits scores:  $\underline{r} = .97$
5. Group Therapy Enrollment
  - a. Choice scores:  $\underline{r} = .82$
  - b. Benefits scores:  $\underline{r} = .96$
6. Staff Counseling
  - a. Choice scores:  $\underline{r} = .85$
  - b. Benefits scores:  $\underline{r} = .88$
7. Peer Counseling
  - a. Choice scores:  $\underline{r} = .63$
  - b. Benefits scores:  $\underline{r} = .89$
8. Pre-Release Classes
  - a. Choice scores:  $\underline{r} = .80$
  - b. Benefits scores:  $\underline{r} = .90$
9. Work Assignment
  - a. Choice scores:  $\underline{r} = .83$
  - b. Benefits scores:  $\underline{r} = .92$

APPENDIX G: Frequency Distribution of Subject Incident  
Report (IR) Rates

## Frequency Distribution of Subject Incident Report (IR) Rates

IR/Year	$\underline{f}$
0 - .50	10
.51 - 1.00	8
1.01 - 1.50	13
1.51 - 2.00	11
2.01 - 2.50	7
2.51 - 3.00	8
3.01 - 3.50	7
3.51 - 4.00	2
4.01 - 4.50	2
4.51 - 5.00	2
5.01 - 5.50	0
5.51 - 6.00	1
> 6 *	1

\* (10.00)

$$\sum \underline{f} = 72$$

APPENDIX H: Videotape Script

PAGE 1

CW: (HANDS FORM TO COUNSELOR) , you want to sign that?  
 UM: OK . . . Who's next?  
 CW: . (CALLS OUT) Come on in, .  
 (DOOR OPENS, CLOSES)  
 I: (ENTERS, GLANCES AT VIDEOCAM)  
 UM: Have a seat.  
 (INMATE SITS)  
 OK . . . You know about the fact that they're doing videotapes of our team meeting this week . . . I guess they told you, if the Bureau wants to show any of these somewhere else for training purposes, they'll ask you to sign a release form if you're willing . . .  
 I: Yeah, the counselor told me about that.  
 UM: OK, let's get on with it then.  
 (TO CASEWORKER) What have we got for him?  
 CW: Well, he's already working on his job . . .  
 UM: Good. (TO INMATE) How are you getting along with ?  
 I: OK so far.  
 CW: . . . and I talked with him this weekend about the programs that are available . . .  
 (TO INMATE) So, have you decided what you might like to get into while you're here?  
 I: Yeah, I want to get into that VT Welding course they got out there.  
 CW: VT Welding. Right, OK . . . (WRITES ON SMALL FORM) we can put you down for that. Now, you might want to talk to them in the shop about the waiting list, I don't know how long it'll be before that's available, but there's usually a few weeks wait before they can start you on that. See about it.  
 I: OK.  
 CW: What else are you interested in?  
 I: Well, I quit school in the tenth grade, so I'd like to go ahead and get my GED while I'm here.  
 CW: OK. Glad to hear that. (WRITES) (TO UNIT MANAGER) Do you know when they're teaching that now?  
 UM: Used to be on Tuesday and Thursday nights. He can check on that over in education. (TO INMATE) Do you know where the education department is? Where has his office?  
 I: Yeah, I already did their testing over there.  
 CW: OK. They can work out a schedule with you. Be sure and let me know when you're finished with that so I can include it in your progress report.  
 I: Right.  
 CW: What else?  
 I: Uh . . . when do I find out about my custody?

CW: Well, you'll be "IN" custody to start with, but I've got to figure up your points to see when that might change. Come by my office again this Saturday and we'll take a look at your points sheet.

I: OK, Saturday.

UM: Let me mention this . . . (PICKS UP MEMO, SAYS TO INMATE) We got some memos here from psychology department indicating that they're starting a new program in group therapy, let's see . . . On Monday and Wednesday afternoons, two hours a week. They're looking for volunteers for that . . . it's for people who want to work on their personal problems, that sort of thing.

## PAGE 2

## CHOICE VERSION

UM: Now, I just wanted to mention it in case you were interested. It's entirely up to you.  
(Pause)

I: Yeah, that's something I would be interested in.

## NO-CHOICE VERSION

UM: Now, I've looked through your jacket and I decided that we ought to sign you up for that, OK?  
(Pause)

I: If that's what you've decided, I'll do it.

---

UM: OK, then I'll give you a copy of this. (HANDS COPY) And it tells you where they are having it and when.

CW: (TO UNIT MANAGER) Is that a 55 or 56?

UM: Well, it says "group" so it's a 56, right?

CW: (LOOKS AT FORM) Yeah, right.

UM: (TO COUNSELOR) How's he doing in the Unit?

C: Yeah, he's doing OK so far. He's keeping pretty much to himself, keeps his house clean.

UM: Sounds good. Keep it up.

CW: Anything else?

I: No, not at the moment.

UM: OK. We'll see you later then. You got any questions, you come and see us.

CW: Just a second . . . (HANDS FORM TO INMATE) this is your copy of the BP 6.1. You keep that.

I: OK.  
CW: Let me sign your pass.

# # #

APPENDIX I: Vita



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# OBSERVATION-INDUCED REACTANCE IN A PRISON

by

Jeffrey Whitehead Aston

(ABSTRACT)

Male inmates incarcerated in a Federal Correctional Institution viewed one of two videotaped scenes which were presented as recordings of a classification team meeting held in another institution. The two videotapes were actually simulations identical in content except with respect to the presence or absence of a segment in which an inmate model was shown to receive social pressure from his unit manager to enroll in group psychotherapy. This social pressure constituted a threat to the model's freedom to refuse therapy enrollment. It was predicted that observers of the freedom-threat tape would experience observation-induced reactance which would result in their desiring a greater amount of choice about group therapy enrollment at the same time that they would derogate the value of group therapy for themselves. Subjects also completed semantic differential profiles of the unit manager, inmate model, and themselves, allowing a test of predictions that the freedom-threatening unit manager would be rated as negative, potent, and active, while the threatened model would be seen as positive, less potent, and inactive. An optional boring task was presented to subjects to determine whether the freedom-threat observers would show a heightened tendency to refuse the task in order to indirectly reassert their freedom. It

was also predicted that subjects with a history of frequent rules infractions would respond more strongly to the modeled freedom threat than would subjects with fewer infractions. The predictions regarding increased choice salience and increased derogation of group therapy for freedom-threat observers were supported by the data analysis. As anticipated, the unit manager was rated as negative and potent in the freedom threat scene, while the threatened model was perceived as less potent than when he was viewed in the no-threat scene. An unexpected finding showed the model also to be evaluated as negative in the freedom-threat condition. Activity ratings of the unit manager and model did not differ significantly between threat/no threat observation conditions. Compliance rates on the boring task were too minimal in both conditions to permit a test of the indirect restoration of freedom hypothesis; this manipulation was therefore regarded as a failure. The study found only one effect for the individual-differences variable of prior rules infractions: subjects with a high number of infractions showed a greater tendency to negatively evaluate the freedom-threatened model. The results in general provide support for the theory that psychological reactance can be aroused by merely observing a threat to the freedom of a similar other. The negative evaluations of the model provided by freedom-threat observers may however, indicate that perceived similarity between the personal characteristics of the

model and observer is not necessary in order for the effect to occur. Instead, the model's role, as similar to that of the observer, may be more important. It was suggested that cognitive consistency processes may need to be invoked in explaining the freedom-threat observers' derogation of group therapy.