

Supermax

Controlling risk through solitary confinement

Sharon Shalev (London School of Economics)

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'This is an extraordinarily important book, full of rare insights and invaluable information... The book is extremely well written, engaging, and astute. It is a must read for scholars, prison policy-makers, and interested citizens alike.'

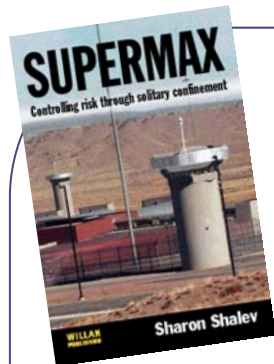
- **Professor Craig Haney**, University of California, Santa Cruz

'Shalev succeeds where much literature on imprisonment fails: comparing the 'internal' technologies of control—architectural design, techniques of constant surveillance, daily routine—with 'external' ideologies of justification. An important book.'

- **Professor Stanley Cohen**, Emeritus Professor, London School of Economics

Sharon Shalev has provided us with a long-overdue authoritative, meticulously-researched portrait and thoughtful, scholarly analysis of this draconian invention'

- **Professor Hans Toch**, School of Criminal Justice, University at Albany



The Book

This book examines the rise and proliferation of 'supermax' prisons in the United States since the late 1980s. It describes the daily reality of life for the tens of thousands of prisoners labelled the 'worst of the worst' in the American prison system and subjected to strict solitary confinement and extreme measures of control, inspection and surveillance in these prisons. It asks why solitary confinement, which had been discredited in the past, is now proposed as the solution for dealing with 'difficult', 'dangerous' or 'disruptive' prisoners.

Drawing on unique access to supermax prisons and on in-depth interviews—with prison officials, prison architects, current and former prisoners, mental health professionals, penal, legal and human rights experts, the book offers a comprehensive review of the theory, practice and consequences of these prisons.

'This is an extraordinarily important book, full of rare insights and invaluable information. Shalev uses a well balanced blend of theory and data—including observations, interviews, and official documents—to lay bare the harsh and dehumanizing realities of these draconian prison environments. She manages to penetrate and deconstruct the official rhetoric that is used to justify this problematic prison form, and provides a detailed, factual analysis that is at once troubling and highly instructive. The book is extremely well written, engaging, and astute. It is a must read for scholars, prison policy-makers, and interested citizens alike.'

- **Professor Craig Haney**, University of California, Santa Cruz

'Supermax prisons are hidden from sight, deep in the inner structure of the American correctional system. Sharon Shalev combines theoretical skill and a fine eye for empirical detail to ask and answer all the right questions about these extraordinary (and expanding) institutions. ... Shalev succeeds where much literature in imprisonment fails: comparing the 'internal' technologies of control—architectural design, techniques of constant surveillance, daily routine—with the 'external' ideologies of justification. An important book.'

- **Professor Stan Cohen**, Emeritus Professor of Sociology, LSE

'The 'supermax' makes a high-technology contribution to the art of institutionalized inhumanity ... Sharon Shalev has provided us with a meticulously-researched portrait and a thoughtful, scholarly analysis of this draconian invention.'

- **Professor Hans Toch**, School of Criminal Justice, University at Albany

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The Author

Sharon Shalev is a research fellow at the Mannheim Centre for Criminology at the London School of Economics and an Associate at the International Centre for Prison Studies, King's College London. She is the author of the *Sourcebook on Solitary Confinement* (LSE, 2008).

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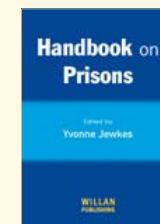
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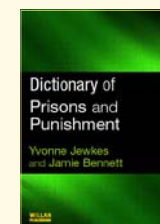
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