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Collisions of the personal and the public in post-Realignment California: How women and front-line workers manage post-incarceration work

March 3, 2015

By Megan Welsh

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Abstract

This dissertation examines a largely taken-for-granted aspect of post-incarceration life: the various forms of work associated with rebuilding one's life, and how this work is organized by the institutions that typically process individuals who are reentering society from prison or jail. This project also considers how post-incarceration work has changed in one California county under the Public Safety Realignment Act of 2011 and the subsequent changes to the state's penal policies as implemented through Assembly Bill 109 (AB 109).

Rooted in the principles of institutional ethnography, a mode of inquiry that examines work processes and how they are coordinated, data collection for this project unfolded in two phases. The first phase involved participant observation of and in-depth interviews with formerly-incarcerated women, as well as analysis of key policy and programmatic texts used in the institutions that process women. The second phase involved in-depth interviews with front-line workers in the institutions of parole and probation.

The findings shed light on the ways in which formerly-incarcerated women grapple with various post-incarceration priorities–and specifically, how they manage when their own priorities clash with those that are imposed upon them by the various institutions that claim to offer assistance. Analyses show that the work that women do to survive occurs across a continuum of personal to public: women strategically disclose intimate details of their lives in public settings such as the welfare office to get the assistance they need as well as in intermediate spaces such as the temporary, transitional housing programs in which women often reside immediately post-release. Under AB 109, the personal and the public are colliding in a new way, as women are now subjected to surveillance by local law enforcement agencies tasked with conducting compliance checks.

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Front-line community supervision workers are functioning within institutions that have been disparately affected by Realignment's mandate to ensure public safety while simultaneously minimizing the use of incarceration. State parole agents have endured cuts to staffing and resources in addition to a reduction in the ability to use parole revocation as a tool for coercing parolee compliance. Meanwhile, county probation officers carrying out AB 109's new form of supervision–many of whom are brand new to working with adults–are adjusting to new supervision approaches as well as what they perceive to be a more dangerous and sophisticated clientele. In managing their work under this new mandate, the analyses presented here show how front-line workers in parole and probation manage the complexities of their work by variously bringing personal elements–values, experiences, and histories–to their interactions with clients. Parole agents' motivations for employing the personal are related to a disconnect between stated institutional goals and agents' self-defined goals, while probation officers' motivations are guided by a "critical belief" in the potential of Realignment.

By integrating the perspectives of both clients and workers in the field of post-incarceration services, this project not only offers theoretical insights into how people experience and operate within public service institutions, but also contributes empirical depth to a new criminological literature that is documenting the challenges of implementing decarceration policy. Findings from this project point to recommendations for both structural and on-the ground change.

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Chapter One

Introduction: Study context and key concepts

This dissertation examines how three groups of people–formerly-incarcerated women, parole agents, and probation officers–are managing their work on the front-lines of the substantial shift in policy enacted through California's Public Safety Realignment. With an inquiry rooted in critical scholars' call to closely assess how rehabilitation actually happens in our current era of "carceral devolution" (Miller, 2014), the analyses presented here show how people confront the disconnect between stated policy priorities and the resources available to meet them. Across four empirical chapters, this dissertation examines: how the institutions encountered by recently-released women frame their goals; how women struggle to achieve both institutional goals as well as their own; and how front-line workers within these institutions function in the gap between the rhetoric and the reality of rehabilitation. Findings suggest that in varying ways, people manage the limits of rehabilitation by bringing personal elements of their values and experiences into public settings.

This introductory chapter first provides an overview of the macro- and community-level contexts in which fieldwork for this project took place. The main concepts and perspectives that shaped the development of the project are delineated. Next, the terminology used throughout the dissertation is defined and discussed. The chapter concludes with a roadmap to the empirical chapters that follow.

The political, social, and geographic contexts of the project

The shifting landscape of carceral policy

After decades of punitive policies which have earned the United States the ignominious distinction of incarcerating the largest number of people, as well as the largest percentage of its

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population compared to all other countries (Walmsley, 2013), the U.S. has entered an interesting moment in criminal justice policy. Across the country, people are having conversations about partially or fully legalizing marijuana, the possession and sales of which lead to the arrests of three-quarters of a million people each year (Drug Policy Alliance, 2014). Not only have campaigns like Ban the Box raised awareness about the stigma associated with having a criminal record, but they have also succeeded in eliminating questions regarding criminal history on initial job applications in jurisdictions within 26 states (National Employment Law Project, 2014). A related movement seeks to eliminate the lifetime ban on food stamps for people convicted of drug felonies–a key issue confronted by the women who participated in this study (Mauer & McCalmont, 2013). On a broader scale, several states across the U.S. are shifting their stances on how to handle people who have committed low-level, non-violent offenses. The largest such effort is happening in California, where the fieldwork for this project took place.

Yet it is far too early to celebrate the end of mass incarceration. In a recent report, researchers at the Brennan Center for Justice show that although the U.S. incarceration rate is indeed decreasing, a decline of 5.5 percent since the peak in 2007 hardly signals the end of mass incarceration as we know it. In fact, although imprisonment rates have dropped precipitously in states like California, New York, and New Jersey–which have made policy changes to achieve this effect–other states such as West Virginia, Minnesota, and Kentucky have seen increases in incarceration by as much as 30 percent in recent years (Cohen & Roeder, 2014; Carson, 2014).[1]

Furthermore, unraveling the legacy of mass incarceration will be far more complex than simply reducing the use of imprisonment as punishment. There now exists a well-established literature on the incursion of "invisible punishments" (Belknap, 2001; Mauer & Chesney-Lind,

[1] As Travis (2014) points out, California enacted these changes unwillingly, after fighting them for more than a decade.

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2002; Travis, 2002; Welsh & Rajah, 2014) and the collateral consequences of criminal involvement (Beckett & Western, 2001; Bumiller, 2014; Dickman, 2009; Pager, 2003, 2007; Rubenstein & Mukamal, 2002; Western, Kling, & Weiman, 2001; Western & Pettit, 2000). The criminal records and histories of incarceration that impede so many people's efforts to survive in American society are the cumulative result of decades of "tough on crime" discourse and policy. As a wealth of recent scholarship has argued, institutional responses to crime-processed people are typically couched in a rhetoric of what some have referred to as "responsibilization" (Garland, 1996; O'Malley, 1992, 1997): we have made you a problem by putting you in prison and giving you a criminal record, but you must fix yourself, largely on your own (Bumiller, 2013; Carlen & Tombs, 2006; Haney, 2004, 2010; Kaufman, 2015; McKim, 2008, 2014; Miller, 2013, 2014; Moore & Hirai, 2014; Shaylor & Meiners, 2013; Thompkins, 2010; Thompkins, Curtis, & Wendel, 2010).

This is not a new concern. Decades ago, Stanley Cohen (1979) envisioned a "punitive city," the defining features of which would be:

> the dispersal and penetration of social control beyond prison walls; the blurring of spatial boundaries which mark the differences between inside and outside, freedom and captivity, imprisoned and released, and guilty and innocent; the emergence of corrections a continuum where intervention and control is finely graded to fit individual 'need'; and the widening of the controllable population which resulted from fuzzier definitions of deviancy and normalcy (Lynch, 2001, p. 89).

Scholars have since used terms such as "government at a distance" (Miller & Rose, 2008), "hybridity," "decentralization," and "devolution" (Haney, 2010; Miller, 2014; Soss, Fording, & Schram, 2011) to describe the various ways in which oversight of social programs has shifted vertically from the federal to the state and local levels, affecting both public funding and social service delivery. On a horizontal plane, increased decentralization at the local level means that state policy is increasingly carried out through various sorts of "public-private partnerships."

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Non-profits, faith-based organizations, and other non-governmental entities now carry out what has traditionally been government work through contracts and grants (Haney, 2010, pp. 15-16; see also: Smith & Lipsky, 1993).

This pattern is readily visible in the field of post-incarceration service provision. Arguing that "prisoner reentry" now constitutes its own institution comprised of vastly disparate state and non-state entities, Reuben Miller (2014) has proposed perhaps the most comprehenisve definition of what reentry is in our current era of carceral devolution:

> It is at once an event in the lives of almost all prisoners, something almost all former prisoners do, and something that is done on their behalf. It is a state sanctioned, largely state funded institution of care and a criminal justice intervention administered to reduce crime. As a complex system with rule, values, and norms that position social actors within a social structure, the practices of prisoner reentry organizations produce and maintain particular ways of being in the social world. I therefore conceptualize prisoner reentry as a welfare state–criminal justice hybrid institution that activates the universe of human service actors, criminal justice agencies, and policy and program planners to assist former prisoners to make their transition from prison to their home communities. Each of these stakeholders has specific goals, conceptualize prisoners in specific ways, and advocate for specific kinds of interventions in former prisoners' lives (p. 307).

A key point in Miller's definition–that each stakeholder in prisoner reentry has distinct goals and understandings of what former prisoners "need"–serves as the starting point for the analyses undertaken here. As I examined the institutions of welfare, parole, and probation–all stakeholders in prisoner reentry–I came to understand that as each institution fundamentally has a "helping" goal (for examples: rehabilitation, fostering financial independence) and a "control" goal (for examples: preventing welfare fraud; ensuring public safety), these goals often compete and conflict not only with each other, but with formerly-incarcerated people's self-defined goals. The following sections lay out the particularities of this situation as it pertains to women, the state of California, and South Los Angeles in this current moment in carceral policy.

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Understandings of gendered community-based punishment and rehabilitation

In recent decades, researchers have heeded the call (Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 1992; Daly & Chesney-Lind, 1988) to closely and critically examine gendered aspects of the crime-processing system. A now broad swath of literature has contributed a deep understanding of the many ways in which, for women in particular, involvement with the crime-processing system intersects with social and economic marginalization.[2] In the fields of community corrections and prisoner reentry in particular, a growing vein of scholarship is examining how rehabilitation is both carried out on behalf of and experienced by women. This research is of critical importance, given that although women account for just about 10 percent of the prison population, they comprise 24 percent of people on probation and 12 percent of the parole population (Glaze & Bonczar, 2011; see also: Frost, Greene, & Pranis, 2006; Mauer, 2013).[3]

Broadly, feminist scholarship on prisoner reentry has sought to reveal how the diverse stakeholders referenced by Miller (2014) implement "responsibilizing" approaches to

[2] Women tend to have experienced greater economic disadvantage than men–and are much more likely to be caring for children–prior to their incarceration (Heilbrun, Dematteo, Fretz, Erickson, Yasuhara, & Anumba, 2008). Just as for men, women's needs are seldom met in prison (Wright, Van Voorhis, Salisbury, & Bauman, 2012), leaving them to confront a multiplicity of challenges as they leave prison. This comes in addition to the universal struggle of coping with the stigma of being a former prisoner (Schram, Koons-Witt, Williams, & McShane, 2006). Trends in women's incarceration are reflective of broader patterns of systemic racial and socioeconomic marginalization. Black women comprise 12 percent of the female population in the U.S., yet they now account for more than 50 percent of women in prison (Sokoloff, 2005; see also: Frost, Greene, & Pranis, 2006; Mauer, 2013). It is estimated that, combined, Black and Latina women constitute 70 percent of the adult female prison population (Solinger, Johnson, Raimon, Reynolds, & Tapia, 2010). At the time they enter the system, female state prisoners across the United States are frequently undereducated, with only 39 percent reporting having completed a high school degree or its equivalent. Female prisoners often occupy the lowest socioeconomic class, with more than a third reporting earnings of less than $600 per month prior to incarceration (Greenfeld & Snell, 1999).

[3] Put another way, between 1995 and 2006, the growth rate of women on probation or parole increased by 56 percent, far outpacing that of men (Glaze & Bonczar, 2007; Morash, 2010). These statistics are largely the legacy of punitive drug policies implemented in past decades: between 1986 and 1991 alone, the number of women incarcerated in state prisons for drug crimes increased 433 percent, while men's incarceration for drugs increased 283 percent during this period (Bush-Baskette, 2010, p. 40).

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rehabilitation–and how these approaches are gendered. In her study of a substance abuse treatment program in a women's prison, Jill McCorkel (2003, 2013) finds that therapeutic discourse around women's criminal behavior is rooted in an understanding that women need to be "habilitated," since their drug use renders them incapable of complying with social norms. McCorkel argues that this in turn necessitates the use of what she calls "embodied surveillance" techniques in which a criminalized woman is repeatedly and publicly confronted with her pathology for the sake of her own treatment.

In a similar vein, other recent work has uncovered how women's emotions are both controlled and exploited for the sake of rehabilitation in mandatory community-based drug treatment programs and state-run halfway houses (Caputo, 2014; Haney, 2010; McKim, 2008, 2014). McKim (2008) paints a particularly grim picture of how such programs use women's emotions to govern them:

> Staff members expected clients to get gut-level in nearly all groups at WTS, including didactic (e.g. parenting) and vocational groups. Clients should be ready to disclose at nearly any moment. This constant level of emotional exposure was painful and exhausting, so some women only pretended to get gut-level, and the staff members policed clients' disclosures for authentic emotions (p. 314).

Interestingly, the rehabilitative techniques identified by these researchers seem to confirm a fundamental concern in feminist scholarship: that women are associated with emotions–which are considered to be unpredictable and uncontrollable and thus in need of intervention–while men are associated with reason (Jaggar, 1992). Similarly, in her comparative study of how parole and probation officers conceptualize men's and women's "criminal selves," Wyse (2013) finds that women's needs are discursively framed in relational and emotional terms, while men's needs are understood in economic terms. This comes at the expense of what both men and women

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actually need, which is attention to and assistance with rebuilding all of these facets of their lives.

While this scholarship has shed considerable light on how both women and front-line workers experience prisoner reentry programming, gaps remain in our understanding of these settings. Specifically, much of the excellent theorizing that has been done to-date on the gendered aspects of community-based punishment has emerged out of ethnographic examinations of state-run facilities (Caputo, 2014; Haney, 2010; Kilty & DeVellis, 2010; McCorkel, 2003, 2013; McKim, 2008, 2014; see: Hackett, 2013 for one of the few exceptions to this). Indeed, Nicole Kaufman's (2014, 2015) examination of prisoner reentry organizations in two Wisconsin cities highlights the fact that these organizations are far from monolithic both in their understanding of the presenting needs of former prisoners and in their approaches to addressing them. Perhaps more importantly, Kaufman shows that reentry organizations vary widely in the extent to which they align with state correctional policy and political discourses about what the rehabilitation of formerly-incarcerated people should involve.

This dissertation aims to contribute to a fuller understanding of how women experience post-incarceration work through their involvement with a community-based, activist organization with very loose ties to the state. Furthermore, much of the theorizing on how women experience these settings has centered around how they control and manipulate women's emotions for the sake of "treatment." This project takes a different approach by examining the tactics that women use to get the assistance they need (for example, cash aid, food stamps, and housing) while minimizing the harm that can be inflicted upon them in institutional settings (such as further stigmatization, surveillance, and emotional manipulation).

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The promise and peril of California's Public Safety Realignment

California has been compelled via court order–and chronic budget deficits–to carry out a massive reduction in its state prison population. The Public Safety Realignment Act, which is typically referred to as either Realignment or AB (Assembly Bill) 109, was passed in 2011 in the wake of *Brown v. Plata* earlier in the same year. In *Plata*, the Supreme Court determined that, due to rampant overcrowding, California state prisoners' lack of access to adequate health care violated the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishment (see: Simon, 2014 for a thorough examination of this court decision and its implications). Images 1.1 and 1.2 depict the result of this dramatic shift in one of California's 33 prisons.

Image 1.1 Pre-Realignment crowding at California Institution for Men ("Chino"). [4]

[4] For some perspective on the scale of the overcrowding, in 2010, a year prior to the court ruling, 5 of California's 33 prisons were over 200 percent of their design capacity, and another 23–including all 3 of the women's prisons–exceeded 150 percent of design capacity (CDCR, 2010; see also: Simon, 2014).

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Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, 2012.

Image 1.2 The same gym is now empty.

Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, 2012.

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The *Plata* ruling upheld a district court order that the state prison population be brought down to 137 percent of design capacity, or reduced by about 40,000 prisoners, within two years. Governor Brown subsequently won a two-year extension on that order, arguing that if the state was not given more time, he would be forced to move thousands of additional inmates to out-of-state prisons (Lovett, 2014).[5]

[5] In January of 2015, CDCR reported that the prison population had approached the 137 percent of design capacity target a full year early. In large part, this is due to the passage of Proposition 47 in November of 2014. Prop. 47 reclassifies six drug and property crimes from felonies to misdemeanors. Roughly 10,000 individuals who are currently incarcerated are now eligible for resentencing (*Coleman v. Plata* and *Plata v. Brown* Defendants' January 2015 Status Report; Stanton, 2015).

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AB 109 represents the latest attempt to balance the goals of rehabilitation and public safety–this time, while reducing systemic reliance on incarceration as punishment. AB 109 has made three key changes to the way people convicted of low-level felony offenses are managed. First, individuals newly convicted of "non-non-non" or "N3" offenses (non-violent, non-serious, and non-high-risk sex offenses) are now handled by the counties rather than the state. In this way, Realignment is simply the latest example of the trend toward carceral devolution (Abarbanel, McCray, Newhall, & Snyder, 2013; Misczynski, 2011). Second, these individuals, who previously would have been sent to state prison, now either serve out their time in county jail or on Post-Release Community Supervision (PRCS)–under probation instead of parole. This shift has affected a massive number of people: as of mid-2013, 100,000 individuals convicted of new offenses had been diverted since the new law went into effect (Petersilia, 2013; Petersilia & Snyder, 2013). Lastly, with rare exception, parole violators are now also handled at the county level, serving time in county jail following revocation rather than returning to state prison (Bird & Hayes, 2013; CDCR, 2013a; Misczynski, 2011).

Thus, it is important to note here that the women who participated in this study are all formerly-incarcerated, although some were on PRCS while others were on state parole at the time of their participation. Conventionally, probation is a punishment in and of itself, and a person on probation will not necessarily have been incarcerated at any point in her/his life. A person may only be on parole if he or she has served time in a state or federal prison. All women in this study, whether on probation or parole, had served time in either jail or prison.

Los Angeles County, where fieldwork for this project was conducted, has had a particularly arduous struggle under this policy change. In addition to having the largest jail system in the world (Vera, 2011), L.A. County residents alone account for more than a third of the inmates in

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California's state prisons (CDCR, 2013), meaning that the sheer magnitude of Los Angelenos who will be shifted to AB 109 for future convictions is quite staggering.

Finally, along with the promise that AB 109 holds of eliminating unnecessary incarceration for people convicted of low-level crimes, it also holds the risk of extending the time and spaces into which people can be under criminal supervision. This is an important consideration not just in California, but in states across the country that are shifting away from incarceration and toward community-based punishment. Criminologists have consistently shown the community-level destabilizing effects of incarceration on family bonds and employment (Clear, 2007; Laub & Allen, 2000; Rose & Clear, 1998). Yet in the absence of adequate institutional infrastructure, the influx of individuals who otherwise would be incarcerated back into our communities means destabilization in other ways: strains on communities in general as they try to reconcile the desire to return incarcerated people back to their families with concerns about what AB 109 means for public safety; and strains on community-based supervision and social services as they scramble to cope with expanding caseloads.

South Los Angeles

Over the course of 22 months in 2012 and 2013, fieldwork for this project unfolded in two phases. In phase one, I conducted in-depth interviews and intensive participant observation with women who were living at and receiving services from a small, non-governmental organization in South Los Angeles. I pseudonymously refer to this program throughout as "New Beginnings." I began this fieldwork six months after AB 109 went into effect. While the institutions I visited with the women were spread out all over L.A. County, most observations took place in the immediate South Los Angeles area. In the second phase of the study, in the fall of 2013, I conducted in-depth interviews with parole agents and probation officers also working in South

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Los Angeles. The details of my methodological approach can be found in Appendix A. The place-based nature of this study is important for several cultural, historical, and political reasons.

Until 2003, South Los Angeles was known as South Central Los Angeles–an area made infamous by its portrayal in popular media as an area plagued by Black poverty and crime. Indeed, as of the 2013 American Community Survey 1-Year Report, South Los Angelenos are unemployed at an official rate of 42.2 percent,[6] and 40.1 percent live below the federal poverty line (ACS, 2013a). As Pulido, Barraclough, and Cheng (2012) argue, the complex history of South L.A. must be understood within four interrelated forces: housing segregation, economic marginalization, oppressive policing tactics, and collective resistance.

South Los Angeles began to be developed in the 1920s and 1930s, and was first inhabited by working-class Whites, many of whom had migrated from the South. During World War II, large numbers of Blacks arrived, also from the South. Just as in many other parts of the country, Blacks living in South Los Angeles experienced intense racial segregation, including violent intimidation tactics by White homeowners. In 1965, civil unrest in Watts spurred a mass exodus of Whites from South Los Angeles, along with most corporate retailers, who feared plummeting property values; soon after, antidiscrimination laws began to facilitate the movement of middle-class Blacks to more affluent areas. Poor Blacks remained in large numbers, while the departure of Whites and middle-class Blacks allowed other ethnic groups, particularly Latinos, to begin to move into the area (Pulido et al, 2012)

In the late 1970s, as part of a larger deindustrialization trend across the U.S., manufacturing plants left the Los Angeles region en masse, just as people of color had gained a firm foothold in

[6] Following Western (2006) and Roussell and Gascón (2014), it is important to note that the unemployment rate in a poor, racially segregated, post-industrial community like South L.A. is undoubtedly much higher than the official measurement.

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the middle class by way of relatively lucrative, unionized manufacturing jobs. Deindustrialization hit South Los Angeles particularly hard, and the factories that stayed drastically restructured their employment opportunities, offering only low-wage, non-unionized positions (Davis, 2006; Larson & Finney, 1996; Pulido et al, 2012). More recently, a branch of literature has revealed the ways in which underinvestment in commerce (see, for example, Larson, 2003 on the dearth of supermarkets in South Central) and environmental racism–by way of disproportionate exposure to various forms of pollution (Boer, Pastor, Sadd, & Snyder, 1997; Pulido, 2000; Pulido et al, 2012)–further harm residents of this area.

Alongside economic marginalization, residents of South Los Angeles have had a tense, often violent, relationship with the police. Two events in particular remain embedded in the consciousness of long-term residents, and have spurred a legacy of community activism in response. In 1965, the Watts Rebellion took place after a confrontation between a young Black male civilian and a White male police officer (Pulido et al, 2012). Almost three decades later, widespread rioting following the acquittal of four Los Angeles Police Department officers in the beating of Rodney King left over a thousand buildings damaged or destroyed in South Los Angeles (Larson & Finney, 1996).

In response to these and many other instances of police brutality, organizations promoting collective resistance and activism against structural inequality were formed across Los Angeles, but especially in the South Central area. Most notable of these groups were the Los Angeles chapter of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, the American Indian Movement, and the Coalition against Police Abuse (Davis, 2006; Pulido, 2012). It is from this ingrained culture of protest and resistance that Ms. B., New Beginnings' executive director, built the program's philosophy of grassroots activism and empowerment. Similarly, it is the historical weight of

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police oppression in South Los Angeles that makes the use of local law enforcement in the implementation of Realignment so troubling–a topic I examine in Chapters 2 and 3.

An additional aspect of Los Angeles which contributes to the marginalization of poor and crime-processed people in particular is that of its size and accessibility. L.A. County encompasses more than 4,000 square miles, much of it nearly impossible to traverse without a car. Transportation is a major aspect of reentry work, and one that severely limits people's opportunities for economic advancement (Morani, Wikoff, Linhorst, & Bratton, 2011). Of course, this is connected to the earlier discussion of housing segregation: research has shown that the working poor spend a much higher percentage of their income on commuting, and that the cost burden of commuting is higher in urban areas–including Los Angeles, where there is a dire shortage of affordable housing–than in other parts of the country (Roberto, 2008).[7] In conducting fieldwork for this project, it was not unusual for me to drive an hour or more to get women to their appointments in other parts of the city–distances which would require at least double that amount of time on public transportation.

Conceptual framework

Dorothy Smith's institutional ethnography

The strength of the institutional ethnographic approach for understanding prisoner reentry through the lenses of both the client and the worker experience is that it provides for a "detailed mapping of the ways in which decisions, events, and practices going on elsewhere impinge on the setting, effectively incorporating it into the *relations of ruling* (original emphasis)" (McKendy, 1992, p. 62). For the women in this study, the fact that happenings elsewhere are

[7] As Davis (2006) notes, even if one can afford to own and maintain a car, there is a hefty "congestion tax" one pays for the privilege of driving in Los Angeles traffic–upwards of 93 hours per commuter per year (p. xi).

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affecting their daily existence was readily apparent. Likewise, much of the frustration detailed by the workers interviewed for this project stemmed from happenings outside of their local offices; workers regularly alluded to or mentioned directly policies and practices that made their work more difficult. From the workers' perspectives, many of these adversities seemed to materialize out of nowhere–they were often disconnected from what workers knew and understood from their years on the job. In this way, workers were recognizing what Dorothy Smith (1990) has called *ideological practices*: activities that

> convert what people experience directly in their everyday/everynight world into forms of knowledge in which people as subjects disappear and in which their perspectives on their own experiences are transposed and subdued by the magisterial forms of objectifying discourse (p. 4).

This abstraction process involves not only individuals positioned as "clients," but also the professionals tasked with helping them. Ideological practices are produced and perpetuated through the use of texts–for examples, written policies and programmatic charts and forms–which coordinate people's activities across many sites (Smith & Turner, 2014). This theoretical understanding grounds the analyses presented here of how both clients and workers in the broad field of prisoner reentry recognize and adapt to the limitations of the discourses around rehabilitation and public safety that are often borne out through these texts.

Another key way in which this perspective has shaped this project is through the feminist critique of capitalism–by way of Marx's[8] historical materialism–that is at the heart of institutional ethnographic inquiry. Dorothy Smith's notion of "ruling relations" does not seek to simply illuminate "power" or "structural forces" in action, but rather "refers to an expansive, historically specific apparatus of management and control that arose with the development of

[8] It is important to note, though, that Marx himself did not have much to say about crime-processed people, whom he referred to as the "lumpen proletariat" (Marx & Engels, 1845) and as the "refuse of all classes" (Marx, 1852).

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corporate capitalism and supports its operation" (DeVault, 2006, p. 295; see also: Burawoy, 1979).[9] This project seeks to account for the ways in which the legacy of economic, social, and political marginalization of people of color–often by way of involvement in the crime-processing system–in South Los Angeles has shaped the ways in which such marginalization currently occurs. Likewise, this study examines how the broader political context contributes to the ways in which front-line workers in parole and probation understand and experience their work. For example, Chapter 2 briefly traces how the political evolution of the CCPOA (the California Correctional Peace Officers' Association), the union that represents both state Correctional Officers (COs) and parole agents, has led to the marginalization of parole under Realignment; Chapters 2, 3, and 5 critically examine the new use of police to do community corrections work, particularly in the historical context of South Los Angeles..

The point of entry into ruling relations, Smith advocates, is through a generous definition of work (Smith, 1987). As Marjorie DeVault, another leading institutional ethnographer, explains,

> the work involved could be part of a paid job; it might fall into the broader field of unpaid or invisible work, as so much of women's work does; or it might comprise the activities of some "client" group. In any case, there is recognition that institutional ideologies typically acknowledge some kinds of work and not others (2006, p. 294).

Similar to other institutional ethnographers' experiences, I found that my conceptualization of the reentry process as work was readily accepted and understood by my study participants, who appreciated that I recognized their work as such. As Mykhalovskiy & McCoy (2002) note, "talking about 'work' stimulated rich conversation since the term implies forms of effort and intentionality easily recognized by people in their everyday experience" (p. 26). In framing my

[9] A growing vein of literature on the political economy of punishment, which argues that societal preference for incarceration is driven largely by capitalism, is compatible with the tenets of institutional ethnography. Scholars working in this area have analyzed the ways in which the poor and immigrants–two marginalized and often criminalized groups–play the role of surplus laborers in the capitalist economy (De Giorgi, 2006, 2010; Stageman, 2013).

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interests in this way, my conversations with formerly-incarcerated women created a space for them to reflect on their post-incarceration work in a way that was otherwise unavailable to them. Likewise, in my interviews with workers, I found that explicitly focusing on work processes allowed workers to reflect on their daily tasks in a way they rarely had time to do on their own.

Women's work of emotion management

The act of leaving a total institution and adjusting to post-incarceration life is a deeply emotional experience. Unsurprisingly, however, as I sought to learn "how things actually work" (Rankin, 2009) for the women with whom I conducted fieldwork for this project, I repeatedly found that women's emotional suffering is obscured by the bureaucratic, (questionably) rational processes involved in leaving prison and completing the required tasks to rebuild one's life. Unsurprisingly, too, the techniques of emotion management that ensure survival in prison–such as being tough, intimidating, or withdrawn (Bottoms, 1999; Britton, 2003; Crawley, 2004; Crewe, 2009, 2011; Crewe, Warr, Bennett, & Smith, 2014). Owen, 1998; Sykes, 1958)–don't always work so well in the outside world.

Hochschild (1979, 1983) is widely credited with sparking scholarly conversations about emotion work. Emotions, she argues, have largely been neglected because they are viewed as uncontrollable and thus not governed by social rules. On the contrary, as Hochschild shows, there are rules that dictate how people try or try not to feel in ways that are acceptable to a given setting. People whose spontaneous feelings do not fall in line with a given rule will frequently attempt to act out the appropriate emotion and thereby influence their actual feelings. It is the existence of these rules that leads people to carry out "emotion work," which Hochschild (1979) defines as "the act of trying to change in degree or quality an emotion or feeling. To 'work on' an emotion or feeling is, for our purposes, the same as 'to manage' an emotion or to do 'deep

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acting'" (p. 561). This work may or may not actually be successful in bringing one's emotions in compliance with the feeling rules of a given setting.

Part of the work of navigating the institutions necessary for rebuilding one's life is engaging in emotion work so as not to succumb to the overwhelming emotions of the reentry experience and to evoke a competent and compliant self. In their dealings with public institutions, the women I studied quickly came to realize that they had to bring their emotive registers in line with institutional expectations. Some women tried and succeeded in doing so, but with difficulty, while others resisted in various ways.

Race and ethnicity also has bearing on how people perform and experience emotional labor (Harlow, 2003; Kang, 2003; Mirchandani, 2003; Wingfield, 2010). For Black and Latina women in particular, there seem to be two possible paths, neither of which are desirable. Some women do emotion work to stay calm during infuriating circumstances, knowing outward displays of anger and frustration likely will only make their situations worse (Harlow, 2003); others deliberately adopt a "loud Black woman" persona (Ong, 2005) that plays into stereotypes, but which also allows them space to assert themselves. I found support for both of these types of responses in my observations.

For marginalized women, the discourses that shape their emotion work are particularly constricting. Collins (2000) writes about controlling images and how they hinder women's lives. The transformation of the controlling image of the post-World War II welfare mother into the Reagan-era welfare queen is particularly relevant to the women studied here. Collins writes:

> In contrast to the welfare mother who draws upon the moral capital attached to American motherhood, the welfare queen constitutes a highly materialistic, domineering, and manless working-class Black woman. Relying on the public dole, Black welfare queens are content to take the hard-earned money of tax-paying Americans and remain married to the state. (2000, p. 80).

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In this way, Collins argues, the transformation of lower-class Black women into welfare queens epitomizes the deterioration of the state. Thus, as a formerly-incarcerated woman of color enters a public institution such as the welfare office or family court, her displays of emotion are not only controlled by her status as former criminal, but also by intersecting discourses on her race, class, and gender, among other positionalities.

Discretionary practices in front-line public service work

Broadly, policy-oriented research and theorizing on front-line work has revolved around the key issue of discretion: the degree to which workers have the freedom and flexibility to make decisions about how to do their jobs. Up for debate is the effect this discretion has on how social policy is carried out, as well as the extent to which workers should be allowed to exercise it.

The conceptual underpinning of Michael Lipsky's argument in *Street-Level Bureaucracy* (1980) is that workers exercise wide discretion in making decisions about which clients deserve services and resources. In aggregate, these discretionary decisions constitute policy-making at the street level. Like other policy makers, front-line workers function in an environment that shapes the way they interpret problems and craft solutions to them. Lipsky paints front-line work in broad strokes, including workers as varied as teachers, judges, police officers, public defenders, and social workers in his analysis. These job roles, he argues, are essentially the same, in that they maneuver within the paradoxical reality of public service work: workers must treat all clients the same in their quest for resources or services, yet they must be responsive to variations in individual cases. While elements of Lipsky's theory were supported in the findings that will be presented in later chapters, it is also important to note that the amount of discretion wielded by front-line workers varies widely based on the organizational structure, goals, and policies of each institution–and that the discretionary tools that workers have available to them

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have changed under AB 109. As will be discussed throughout this dissertation, workers' use of discretion is informed not just by the material circumstances of their work–the focus of Lipsky's theorizing–but also aspects of their personal backgrounds that they value.

The conceptualization of this project drew on Lipsky's arguments about workers' relationships with their clients and the tension between advocacy and alienation. Front-line workers' relationships with clients are typically shaped by the fact that clients are non-voluntary. This applies not only in obviously non-voluntary settings, such as parole and probation, but also in institutions which provide essential services that cannot be obtained anywhere else. Applicants for welfare, for example, may appear to be voluntarily sitting in the welfare office, but their participation is certainly not voluntary if they have no other income. Likewise, a formerly-incarcerated mother on a limited income who is seeking to regain custody of her children from the foster care system typically has no alternative to an over-worked court-appointed attorney. This has immense implications for the worker-client dynamic. Due to their non-voluntary status, clients have minimal leverage in their encounters with workers. Workers will attempt to minimize client dissatisfaction by dealing with as many complaints as they can, but this does nothing to change policy in response to client concerns about lack of worker responsiveness. However, Lipsky also points out that clients are not completely helpless in these relationships: to the extent that workers' job performance is evaluated based on client success–as is the case for the parole agents and probation officers interviewed for this study–workers are beholden to obtaining client compliance with their demands (Lipsky, 1980, pp. 54-57).

The contradiction inherent in front-line work is that on one hand, services or resources are being provided from one human being to another, conjuring up an image of caring human interaction and engagement; on the other hand, delivery of services through a bureaucracy,

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conditions of resource scarcity, and other constraints beget interactions of detachment in the name of equal treatment. Thus, workers participate in both *advocacy* on behalf of and *alienation* from their clients. Front-line workers–particularly broadly-categorized "human services" workers–are frequently trained to be much more than detached and passive gatekeepers to resources; they are trained to advocate on behalf of clients to receive the fullest array of treatment, services, or resources available. However, as Lipsky points out, "the helping orientation of street-level bureaucrats is incompatible with their need to judge and control clients for bureaucratic purposes" (p. 73). The trained advocate situated within an institutional context thus experiences a tension between the institution that hoards resources to be meted out discriminately, and her/his position as an advocate for those resources to be distributed to the clients with whom s/he interacts (pp. 71-73).

More recently, Maynard-Moody and Musheno (2000, 2003) have built on Lipsky to argue that a key difference in understandings of front-line work is what they call the "state-agent" and "citizen-agent" narratives. While not necessarily mutually exclusive, these two narratives differ in how they view workers' motives in their discretionary decision-making processes. In the state-agent narrative, discretion is understood as inevitable, and is typically employed by workers in an attempt to make their work easier, safer, and more fulfilling. In constructing workers as fundamentally self-interested, the state-agent narrative is often used by those at the top of the policy-making hierarchy to voice concern about workers' use of discretion as a threat to democratic governance.

Workers' narratives of how they approach their work, however, tell a different story. In the citizen-agent narrative, workers view themselves as making decisions based on the presenting issues of their individual clients. Unsurprisingly, workers view themselves not at automatons of

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the state who process their clients based on rules, procedures, and laws, but rather as skilled professionals who assess the usefulness of such policies based on the particular circumstances of their clients. Worker decisions are thus based on their own normative values and not necessarily in response to the policies they are tasked with following. In this way, Maynard-Moody and Musheno contend, front-line workers actually tend to address client issues in ways that make their jobs harder, not easier (2000, 2003). This is a theme that emerged particularly in my analysis of probation officers' narratives, which are examined in Chapter 5.

Theoretical perspectives on community supervision work: How risk management perpetuates the illusion of rehabilitation

In the narrower field of theorizing on the front-line work of carrying out penal policy, scholarly debates broadly revolve around two interrelated issues: whether the new technologies employed in community supervision signal a shift in perspective, or merely in rhetoric; and whether the workers carrying out penal policy have really bought into the new perspective (whatever it actually is). Indeed, as Corbett (2008) observes:

> Very little attention has been given by probation agencies to what might be referred to as the "black box" of probation–that is, those microprocesses, those particular actions and professional styles, employed by probation officers with their caseload. The profession has been in thrall to what I might describe as a cult of instrumentation–a fixation on the forms and protocols used to assess and classify offenders to the detriment of any attention to how probation officers actually interact and communicate with offenders. It is as if the most human dimension of supervising offenders–what actually transpires between an officer and an offender–has been taken out of the mix (pp. 306-307).

The "cult of instrumentation" to which Corbett refers includes the rapid growth of a risk assessment industry, the tools of which are meant to categorize crime-processed people for the purposes of more effective and efficient supervision. Before delving into risk and how it has shaped front-line work, a few perspectives are worth noting for context.

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In conceptualizing their "new penology" framework, Feeley and Simon (1992) argue that the administration of criminal justice has, over the past few decades, devolved into a "waste management" enterprise. The poor, dangerous underclass of criminals is to be managed at the lowest possible cost, not transformed into worthy members of society (Simon, 1993). This perspective is contrasted with the "old" penology, which viewed individuals–and their motivations for engaging in criminal behavior–as potentially malleable and therefore worthy of punishment and treatment (Lynch, 1998).

The new penology paradigm manifests itself in three distinct ways: first, it emphasizes discourses around risk and the probability of future criminal behavior instead of moralizing judgments about wrong-doing. Second, criminal justice objectives aim to identify, categorize, and manage criminals rather than punish or rehabilitate them. Lastly, this shift in objectives has led to the development of new techniques geared toward classifying and managing risk. Two particularly prevalent examples of these techniques are the use of drug testing and the advent of actuarial risk assessments to classify criminals in terms of their statistical risk levels (Feeley & Simon, 1992; Simon, 1993; Lynch, 1998).

Lemert (1993) and McCorkle and Crank (1996) take issue with Feeley & Simon (1992), arguing that there is little "new" about the new penology. McCorkle and Crank (1996) contend that the primary role of parole agents and probation officers has always been to supervise the urban underclass. Although agents have adapted to recent technological advances such as electronic monitoring, drug testing, and actuarial risk assessment, "as in any other era, the supervision provided over offenders in the community continues to be random, meager, and ineffectual" (p. 3). Likewise, in his study of California probation officers, Lemert (1993) argues that, far from internalizing the managerial logic of the "new penology," probation officers

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continue to “bankload” cases: they focus the vast majority of their time and energy on the most serious cases and essentially ignore the rest.

Mona Lynch (1998, 2000) strikes a middle ground. In her 1998 study, she considers how Feeley & Simon’s (1992) “new penology” framework holds up on the front-lines of community supervision work in a central California parole office. She finds that agents largely resisted urgings by management to rely on risk assessment techniques, preferring to prioritize “an individualistic approach to the clientele and an intuitive approach to case management” (Lynch, 1998, p. 861-862). In a follow-up paper, Lynch (2000) argues that while rehabilitation as an ideal is still present in how parole agents approach their work with parolees, the new twist is that only the individual parolee can make the change(s) necessary to live a conforming, non-criminal life; little can or should be done by the agents toward this effort. As she notes, “[a]gents are given a social work directive without the resources to fulfill it” (Lynch, 2000, footnote 18, p. 62).

The resources available to front-line community supervision workers are rather geared toward assessing and managing risk. Implicit in the proliferation of risk assessment tools is the idea that they can facilitate the achievement of both the helping (rehabilitation) and control (ensuring of public safety) goals of community corrections. However, a rich vein of literature has detailed the shortcomings of these tools (see, for examples: Hannah-Moffat 1999, 2004, 2009; Harcourt, 2010; Robinson, 2008; Werth, 2011a, 2011b, 2013). The fundamental concern here is two-fold: first, that the “needs” of criminalized people have become code for “risk” in actuarial assessments (Hannah-Moffat, 2005), and further, that risk assessment is focused on addressing “criminogenic” needs which don’t necessarily correspond to individuals’ self-defined needs. Critical scholars have thus argued that these so-called “risk technologies” are part of an extensive

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network of governance techniques that are employed to "discipline and responsibilize" crime-processed people, and in particular, crime-processed women (Hannah-Moffat, 1999, p. 88).

The three principles upon which it is widely agreed that effective correctional treatment should be based are "risk," "need," and "responsivity" (Andrews, Bonta, & Hoge, 1990). However, "risks" and "needs" are determined by their statistical correlation with recidivism, meaning that the "responsivity" to these risks and needs is limited to that which will directly reduce the likelihood of recidivism. Feminist scholars have thus argued that these tools fail to take into account "non-criminogenic" needs[10]–for example, poverty and health–that are not directly related to recidivism (and thus a low priority) but nonetheless may be self-defined by crime-processed people as high priorities. In this way, social problems are recast as individual problems with individual solutions (Hannah-Moffat, 2004, 2009). These scholars have been particularly vocal about the inability of these tools to account for race, ethnicity, and gender (Belknap & Holsinger, 2006; Fass, Heilbrun, DeMatteo, & Fretz, 2008; Gavazzi, Yarcheck, & Lim, 2006; Hannah-Moffat, 2009; but for rebuttals to this claim, see: Smith, Cullen, & Latessa, 2009; Rettinger & Andrews, 2010), and that this in turn shapes how risk is constructed by front-line workers (Hudson & Bramhall, 2005).

A few scholars have begun to answer Corbett's (2008) call to understand what actually transpires in the community supervision relationship. While the shortcomings of risk assessment tools are indeed concerning, there is evidence that although the notion of risk dominates community corrections policy, in practice, the people actually carrying out the work may not necessarily place the actuarial definitions of risk front and center in their supervision approach.

[10] As Hannah-Moffat (2004) points out, "needs are constructed within narrowly defined parameters. The definition of a need is not necessarily linked to an offender's perception of that the individual requires but rather in terms of risk reduction and 'intervenability.'" (p. 38).

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Cheliotis (2006) has argued that the new penology framework fails to account for human agency among front-line personnel, instead positioning parole agents and probation officers "as executive automata or docial bodies entrapped in the 'iron cage' of an over-rationalized criminal justice system" (p. 314). Indeed, as Werth (2011b) observed, among California parole administrators and supervisors, the "scientific" and "evidence-based" usefulness of risk assessment tools are regularly touted; meanwhile, front-line staff have been slower to buy into the merits of such tools for their everyday work. Similar to Lynch (1998), who found that parole agents rely on their intuition, Werth (2011a, 2011b) found that parole agents are much more likely to rely on "gut feeling" in assessing risk. Likewise, Viglione, Rudes, and Taxman (2014) found that while probation officers regularly conduct risk assessments on their clients, the results of these assessments are not consistently integrated into how they make decisions about how to supervise their clients.

While this research has contributed greatly to our understanding of how front-line community supervision workers manage what they see as the shortcomings of the "science" of risk, gaps remain. In the following sections, I lay out my conceptualization of the personal as it relates to the work that both clients and workers do in these settings. In doing so, I try to make the case for the importance of understanding of how people bring personal values and experiences into their work.

The colonization of the private: how personal factors influence front-line work

If Maynard-Moody and Musheno are indeed correct in their contention that workers tend to create more–not less–work for themselves, why do they do so? In other words, as Michael Burawoy has asked in his ethnographic examination of Chicago factory workers, "why do workers work as hard as they do," (1979, p. 34) even in systems that regularly exploit them?

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While Burawoy's findings pertain to capitalist motivations–less applicable in state-run institutions–his question remains relevant.

Scholarship on workers' identities and self-representation has suggested that workers draw heavily not only on the culture of their institution, but also on personal values and experiences in defining their professional roles. As Blake Ashforth (2001) notes, understandings of workers' *roles* as distinct from their *persons* or *selves* only became a concern relatively recently, as organizations in industrialized societies sought to formalize and institutionalize the performance of tasks. For example, the task of child care was once done informally in homes and neighborhoods; it has now been formalized by organizations such as day-care centers and summer camps. As roles become institutionalized, they can be learned and carried out by workers who are interchangeable–as Ashforth notes, "the role perseveres, but the occupants do not" (p. 2). In this way, organizational structures necessarily constrain individual expression; the "colonization of the private" means that workers tend to occupy roles as extensions of an organization, rather than as individuals.

Yet because workers are not–as Maynard-Moody and Musheno point out–automatons of the state, they inevitably bring their personal identities into the public settings in which they work. Ashforth (2001) suggests that workers draw both on what he calls "situational relevance" and "subjective importance" in defining their roles. Situational relevance, unsurprisingly, denotes the extent to which a worker's identity is appropriate to her work setting. Subjective importance, meanwhile, refers to "a social identity... that is highly central to an individual's global or core sense of self or is otherwise highly relevant to his or her goals, values, or other key attributes" (p. 30). The more closely one aligns with a given identity, Ashforth argues, the more heavily it

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affects one's sense of self. This in turn affects the extent to which workers align with not only their professional roles, but with broader organizational goals.

Later chapters of this dissertation examine how the elements of situational relevance and subjective importance play out in how parole agents and probation officers define their roles. A key difference noted between these two groups of workers is in the extent to which the subjective importance of agents' and officers' work identities aligned with the goals of their respective institutions. Unsurprisingly, this in turn influences how workers carry out their jobs.

Bridging the public-private divide: The "personal touch"

Part of what makes women's post-incarceration work so arduous, as it is conceptualized it here, is the wide array of institutions they must navigate–often simultaneously–in the course of rebuilding their lives. This means that a woman's life is constantly under scrutiny: a welfare eligibility worker wants to know how much is in her bank account (if she has one); a substance abuse counselor wants to know the details of her addiction, which likely link up to traumatic events earlier in her life; a child welfare worker investigates the most intimate details of her family life to determine whether she is a suitable parent. In one setting or another, we have all been forced to disclose information we'd rather keep private, but for poor and crime-processed people, such disclosures are far more frequent and invasive. This is illustrative of what Richie (2012) has called the "hostile social environment" that poor women of color are forced to endure. Furthermore, people on community supervision have no legal right to privacy.[11] Thus, when I talk about private matters, I instead use the term "personal."

[11] People on probation may be searched at any time without a search warrant, per *People v. Mason,* 5 Cal. 3d 764-766 (1971). As noted by the Prison Law Office (2013), people on parole have an even lower legal expectation of privacy: searches can happen without the parolee's consent, a search warrant, probable cause, or even reasonable suspicion that the conditions of parole have been violated. For people on both parole and probation, the limitation to this seems to be that searches must be constitutionally "reasonable:" they should not take place at an unreasonable hour, be unreasonably long, happen too often,

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Much has been written about the public-private divide,[12] particularly by feminist scholars as it relates to women's oppression. Indeed, as Pateman (1983) notes, "the dichotomy between the private and the public is central to almost two centuries of feminist writing and political struggle; it is, ultimately, what the feminist movement is about" (p. 155). The core of the feminist argument is that women have been systematically oppressed by a patriarchal notion of "separate spheres" in which women maintain private life as mothers and caretakers, while men function as breadwinners in the public sphere–but maintain dominion over both worlds. Thus, in varying ways which are themselves deeply contested, feminists have sought to blur the lines between private and public life in an effort to bolster recognition that women's ways of relating to the social world should be recognized as different from men's–and equally important.

In criminology in particular, feminist scholars have argued for acknowledgement and accommodation of the fact that most crime-processed women are primary caregivers to children or other family members, and that this should inform the supervision of and services for women (Bloom, Owen, and Covington, 2003; Covington, 2003; Haney, 2000). Research on how front-line community supervision agents can facilitate their female clients' post-incarceration work has only recently emerged, but also points to the need for such recognition (Opsal, 2009; Morash, 2010; Morash, Kashy, Smith, & Cobbina, 2014). Most notably, for women on probation or parole, the adoption of a "supportive" relationship style by their officer or agent has been found

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or be conducted in an arbitrary manner. Still even if a search is determined to be unreasonable, evidence yielded by the search can still be used in a parole revocation hearing. See also: *Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole v. Scott* (1998) 524 U.S. 357, 363-364; *People v. Reyes* (1998) 19 Cal.4th 743, 753-754; Cal Penal Code §3067(d).

[12] C. Wright Mills (1959) also wrote about the distinction between "personal troubles," which are limited to the individual and her immediate social relations, and "public issues," which penetrate social and historical structures and which often invoke a "crisis in institutional arrangements." The *Plata* ruling and the legislation it spawned can been seen as a step toward addressing the crisis of mass incarceration, which has had pervasive effects on both personal and public concerns.

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to lead to positive outcomes such as lower anxiety and increased self efficacy, including avoiding criminal behavior–especially for women categorized as being at high risk for recidivating. Conversely, a more punitive style of supervision is counterproductive for women, particularly for those at the lowest risk of recidivism (Morash et al, 2014).

A nascent avenue of quantitative research is examining what the "personal" means in front-line work. One vein of this research is bridging the fields of psychotherapy and community corrections to examine how community supervision agents might foster a "therapeutic alliance" with their clients.[13] In the field of psychotherapy, the therapeutic alliance is considered to be the "quintessential integrative variable" for reducing symptoms, bolstering adherence to treatment, and enabling behavioral change (Wolfe & Goldfried, 1988, p. 449; see also Bordin, 1979, 1983; Connors, Carroll, DiClemente, Longabaugh, & Donovan, 1997). While the precise mechanism through which the alliance between a therapist and a client affects change has not been identified (Ross, Polaschek, & Ward, 2008), it has been suggested that this bond, which fosters interpersonal closeness, may simply improve clients' well-being. However, unlike a therapist-client relationship, community supervision agents must adopt a "dual role" in which they work to ensure both rehabilitation–a "caring" role–and public safety–an "enforcement" or "control" role (Trotter, 1999; Skeem, Eno Louden, Polaschek, & Camp, 2007). Recent research on this conflict suggests that parolees whose supervising agents were effectively able to balance this dual role by being "firm, fair, and caring" had lower rates of rearrest (Kennealy, Skeem, Manchak, and Eno Louden, 2012). This fits with earlier ethnographic work which found that "synthetic" officers

[13] Bordin (1979) suggests a broader term, "working alliance" to indicate that these alliances may also be formed outside of conventionally therapeutic settings. The working alliance consists of three elements: goals, tasks, and a bond. The alliance is successful to the extent to which the client and the therapist agree upon and commit to working toward goals and tasks; the bond, or relationship between the client and the therapist, will vary depending on the nature of the goals and tasks to be undertaken.

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who placed equal emphasis on both caring and control were more effective than those who heavily emphasized one or the other (Klockars, 1972).

Lastly, a small vein of qualitative scholarship is examining how workers draw on their personal identities and histories in working with their clients. In her ethnography of front-line welfare workers, Watkins-Hayes (2009) found that workers' personal biographies–particularly their own experiences with poverty and with what she calls "racialized professionalism"–are an important factor in how workers interact with their clients (pp. 87-92, 130-135). While she points out that personal histories, because they are highly individualized, cannot explain everything that workers do in institutional settings, Watkins-Hayes suggests that experiences of various sorts of marginalization "often give workers a set of resources for their discretionary toolkits that can be marshaled with clients that co-workers from nonimpoverished backgrounds are less likely to wield" (p. 89). Although not the primary focus of her study, Wyse (2013) noted that parole and probation officers variously draw on elements of their personal experiences in supervising their male and female clients, and argues that future research should more closely examine this aspect of community supervision. This dissertation seeks to contribute to these veins of research by examining how both clients and workers bring elements of their personal selves to their work–and how, for workers in particular, these tactics not only facilitate surveillance toward the goal of ensuring public safety, but also function as a stop-gap measure in lieu of achieving the loftier helping goal of rehabilitation.

Terminology

Throughout this dissertation, certain terms are used to describe the circumstances of the women, workers, institutions, and policies examined here. These choices are reflective of an effort to align with certain epistemological perspectives.

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The crime-processing system/crime-processed people

In *The Invisible Woman*, Joanne Belknap (2001) encourages feminist criminologists to avoid perpetuating the misnomer of the "criminal justice system." As Potter (2006) points out, "*[j]ustice* (original emphasis) implies that victims and offenders are treated justly and equally within the 'criminal justice system,' however, this is not always true, particularly with African American women" (footnote, pp. 120-121). Following this line of thinking, wherever possible, the term "crime-processing system" is used in lieu of the more conventional term "criminal justice," and people who have contact with this system are referred to as "crime-processed." The term criminal justice is used, however, to refer to macro-level policy decisions.

Formerly-incarcerated people

This more specific term is used to describe people who have served time in prison or jail. For variety, it is used interchangeably with "former prisoner." It is disheartening to read critical work–much of it published in recent years–that still uses the term "offender" to talk about imprisoned people. This term and its close cousins–"convict," "criminal," and "felon"–imply that people *are* the offenses they commit, much in the way that calling someone who lives with the mental illness schizophrenia a "schizophrenic" defines the person by their illness, allowing little room for the person to have other dimensions to their being. It is precisely these other dimensions–mother, daughter, sister, student, employee, neighbor–that need to be reestablished after the social and economic decimation that occurs as a result of incarceration. Such harmful labels impede this rebuilding, and I strive to not perpetuate them here.

Prisoner reentry and reintegration

The term "prisoner reentry" has been contested for about as long as it has been part of the criminal justice lexicon. At its most general, reentry denotes the process of being released from

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prison or jail. Much of the dissatisfaction with the term seems to stem from its imprecision. The "process" of reentry is not singular in nature–as has already reviewed, reentering people must engage in difficult work to rebuild multiple aspects of their lives, and many–between 40 and 60 percent–return to prison within three years. Critiques of the term have focused on how it specifies a "problem at the level of individuals" (Bumiller, 2013, p. 16), rather than a problem that is socially constructed and produced, and that it has been co-opted by for-profit institutions to establish a prisoner reentry "industry" (Thompkins, 2010; Wacquant, 2010). For clarity, I use the term "prisoner reentry" in reference to the broader institution as defined by Miller (2014), and I use the terms "post-release" and "post-incarceration" as adjectives to specify the multiple forms of labor associated with the process of rebuilding one's life.

Along these same lines, critical scholars have objected to the implication that reintegration occurs after reentry, arguing that reintegration is impossible because people ensnared in the crime-processing system were never integrated to begin with (Bumiller, 2013; Richie, 2001; Shantz, Kilty, & Frignon, 2009). Following this line of thinking, the term "reintegration" is only used to speak of what could be possible, were our economic and social institutions to be restructured–and laws revised–in ways that facilitate rather than hinder the rebuilding of one's life post-incarceration.

Clientele terms

As the narratives of different groups are examined in this dissertation, I adjust my terminology to align with the words and phrases used by the group that is focus of my analysis. The main manifestation of this adjustment is in how different groups of workers refer to their clientele. Parole agents tend to refer to their clients as "parolees," so for consistency's sake, throughout Chapter 4, the term parolee is used there. In contrast, in Chapter 5, the term "client"

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is used to denote individuals who are on Post-Release Community Supervision (PRCS), as this is the term most frequently used by the probation officers interviewed for this project. However, it is important to note that in some of the official documents associated with AB 109, people on PRCS are referred to as "Post-release Supervised Persons," or PSPs (see, for example, L.A. County's PRCS flow chart in Chapter 2).

Progression of chapters

The empirical chapters of the dissertation begin with an introduction to the three institutions studied in-depth, then examine in turn how each of three groups–women, parole agents, and probation officers–approach their work in these settings.

Chapter 2 gives an overview of the "institutional circuit" (Sered & Norton-Hawk, 2014) that women typically navigate post-incarceration, with a focus on the systems of welfare, parole, and probation. Drawing on ethnographic data, my analysis centers around the formal, textually-mediated aspects of each institution, including goals and mission statements and the policies, forms, and procedures which directly affect post-incarceration work. Conflicts in the welfare system that make women's post-incarceration work more difficult are examined. For both community corrections agencies, the focus is on how AB 109 has transformed the nature of front-line work. This analysis to set up arguments in later chapters about how women and front-line workers variously cope with mismatches between the goals of institutions, the goals of the people they claim to help, and the resources to achieve either of these sets of goals.

Subsequent chapters examine this situation from the perspectives of women, parole agents, and probation officers. Chapter 3 defines the "personal" in the post-incarceration work that women do as including intimate information, emotions, and spaces that one would choose to keep private if their social status permitted them to do so. This chapter focuses on the tactics

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women use when they are forced–or strategically volunteer–to disclose personal aspects of themselves in the public sphere in order to get the help they need.

Chapters 4 and 5 examine how front-line community supervision workers are functioning within institutions that have had to change rapidly–and quite disparately–under Realignment's mandate to ensure public safety while minimizing the use of incarceration. Chapter 4 shows how state parole agents are managing their work amidst cuts to staffing and resources, in addition to the near elimination of parole revocation as a tool for ensuring parolee compliance; Chapter 5 examines how the county probation officers carrying out AB 109's new form of supervision are adjusting to the new model as well as to what they perceive to be a new clientele. While the implementation of AB 109 has had dramatically different effects on these two institutions, the thematic thread that runs across these two chapters is the various ways in which workers within both institutions utilize deeply personal strategies to cope with the complexity of their changing circumstances.

The concluding chapter (Chapter 6) integrates findings from both the women's and the workers' circumstances in an attempt to answer the question: how can we capitalize on the promise of Realignment, while minimizing its peril? Two sets of recommendations are explored: at the institutional level, it is suggested that various systems need to break out of their silos so that services can be more integrated; at the community level, recommendations center around how organizations might more immediately seek to improve people's post-incarceration experiences.

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Chapter Two

The institutional circuit

This chapter draws on programmatic and policy texts and participant observation data to examine facets of the institutions of welfare, parole, and probation that both facilitate and hinder women's post-incarceration work. Specifically, this chapter examines:

1. The formal, textually-mediated aspects of each institution, including goals and mission statements and the policies, forms, and procedures which directly affect post-incarceration work;
2. For the community corrections institutions, how AB 109 has changed both the texts and the work; and
3. How each institution interacts (or doesn't) with the other institutions.[14]

Institutional demands upon women's time and energy which make post-incarceration work difficult are highlighted. In doing so, this chapter lays the groundwork for arguments in later chapters about how women and front-line workers cope with both the frequent mismatch between institutional goals and those of clients, and the lack of resources to achieve these goals.

Defining the institutional circuit

As it is conceptualized here, the "institutional circuit"–a term coined by other scholars who have examined women's post-incarceration circumstances (Sered & Norton-Hawk, 2014)–is the set of public institutions which recently-released individuals must navigate in order to reestablish their lives. It is within this circuit that the personal collides with the public. The two defining features of this circuit which make post-incarceration labor difficult are:

1. The *fractured nature* of the circuit in terms of how institutions do and do not coordinate their responses to formerly-incarcerated people; and
2. The ways in which *texts coordinate people's work*–to the exclusion of some who need help the most.

[14] Following Herman's (1971) image of the organizational iceberg, here and in subsequent chapters I also examine the largest but least visible piece of the iceberg: the "human aspects" of each institution–its customs, language, and norms.

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Institutional fracturing

In their recent book, *Can't catch a break: Gender, jail, drugs, and the limits of personal responsibility* (2014), Susan Starr Sered and Maureen Norton-Hawk offer an exhaustive inventory of the multitude of institutions meant to help crime-processed women. These institutions typically comprise the institutional circuit:

> The women we describe in this book have spent years, and in some cases, decades moving in and out of homeless shelters, family shelters, drug courts, probation, parole, rehabilitation programs, mental health centers, detoxification facilities, emergency rooms, clinics, respite care, battered women's services, hospitals, welfare offices, WIC offices (for the USDA's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children), Social Security (Supplemental Security Income [SSI] or Social Security Disability Insurance [SSDI]), psychiatric units, mental health centers, child welfare offices, family court, public housing, sober houses, substance abuse programs, faith-based agencies, prisons, and jails (p. 11).

As Sered and Norton-Hawk note, despite cycling in and out of all these agencies and programs that claim to offer help, the vast majority of women remain in a marginalized caste typified by poor physical and emotional health, unstable housing, and limited income opportunities. Sered and Norton-Hawk use the term "institutional captives" (p. 13) to denote people whose lives are shaped by their entrapment in the circuit. The heart of this argument is that across these various institutions, social policy that prioritizes personal responsibility and independence from state assistance sets women up to fail.

Beyond responsibilization techniques, in my ethnographic work with the women at New Beginnings I repeatedly observed an unsurprising side effect of carceral devolution: the ways in which siloization is perpetuated at the expense of both clients and the workers trying to assist them. There is no "one stop shop" for people getting out of prison in most jurisdictions, meaning that formerly-incarcerated individuals must cobble together the services they need from multiple institutions. In this way, clients must then navigate a circuit within each institution, as they encounter each institution's distinct operational culture, formal and informal rules for who can

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receive assistance, and legal ability to exchange information with other institutions on the broader circuit. For example, just within the institution of welfare, one must often navigate different circuits for cash assistance, food stamps, and the required welfare-to-work component.

Post-incarceration work is frequently hindered by the inevitable conflicts that arise when the demands of one institution compete with those of another. For example, the work women do to comply with the demands of their community supervision often conflicts and compete with the work they must do in order to regain custody of their children through the family court system.

Textually-mediated work in the circuit

In post-incarceration work, conflicts across institutions arise and are borne out through texts of various sorts. In institutional ethnography, texts are broadly defined as "material artifacts that carry standardizing messages" (Bisaillon, 2012, p. 620). Texts may include pieces of legislation, written policies, application forms, photographs, and other visual media. The emphasis in institutional ethnography is on texts in action: the interpretive work that people do in "activating" texts to produce the "truth" of an event (Smith, 1990, p. 216). For example, in the welfare eligibility process, an applicant fills out a series of forms. These forms–and more importantly, an applicant's responses on them–structure the interaction between the eligibility worker and the applicant during the eligibility interview. For the purposes of the analyses presented here, institutional mission statements and goals as well as key programmatic flow charts and application forms are examined to illustrate how front-line workers employ standardizing texts in ways that both facilitate and hinder post-incarceration work. Specific attention is paid to the ways in which "helping" and "control" goals are communicated through the texts used within each institution.

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Table 2.1, which depicts how the 24 women in this study's sample were involved in the institutional circuit, gives a hint of how texts may play an important role in how formerly-incarcerated women are categorized through texts for the sake of institutional processing.

Table 2.1 Women's involvement in the institutional circuit.

Participant name*	Race/ ethnicity	Custody of children	Drug felony conviction (food stamp ban)	Parole	PRCS (AB 109)
Alice	Black	GROWN	X	X	
Patricia	Black	NO	X		X
Dawn	Black	NONE		X	
Gabrielle	Latina	YES		X	
Randi	Black	GROWN		X	
Carina	Latina	YES	X	X	
Gail	Black	GROWN		X	
Vicki	Black	YES	X	X	
Lucy	Black	GROWN		X	
Grace	Black	SEEKING	X		X
Kai	Black	NONE		X	
Sally	Black	GROWN		X	
Jane	White	YES	X		X
Kate	Black	GROWN		X	
Rae**	Black	NONE	X	X	
Larissa	Black	SEEKING		X	
Zara	Black	NONE	X		X
Rowena	Black	GROWN			X
Sabrina	Black	SEEKING		X	
Jessie	Latina	SEEKING	X		X
Abby	Black	NONE	X	X	
Reggie	Black	GROWN			X
Carla	Latina	NONE	X		X
Yasmine	Black	SEEKING		X	

* All names are pseudonyms.
** Rae was the only woman in my sample who was not receiving welfare; she was receiving SSI.

The fieldwork for this project initially focused on women's encounters with the welfare system. This was often the first "stop" on the institutional circuit for study participants, who, typical of recently-incarcerated people, had no other means of supporting themselves. Community correctional agencies–parole or probation–comprised an equally frequent set of institutional

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interactions.[15] These three institutions for were later targeted for further examination.[16] The sections that follow closely examine three stops on the institutional circuit: welfare, parole, and probation. The ways in which social welfare and criminal justice policy coordinates people's on-the ground work within each institution are examined by through analyses of key texts that are employed in worker-client interactions to categorize clients as worthy or unworthy of assistance. Drawing on institutional mission statements and goals, these analyses reveal the ironies and contradictions within and across institutions that process formerly-incarcerated women.

Welfare

Key context: The co-production of crime-processed women's marginality

Worthiness for receiving institutional assistance is typically tied to children, and to women as "good" caretakers of children. As Table 2.1 reflects, formerly-incarcerated women tend to exist in the liminal space between being parents and being childless, and this means that they are often rendered invisible both in the scholarly literature on welfare and in actual welfare processing. Feminist scholars, focusing on the plight of single mothers in particular (for excellent examples of this work, see: Brown, 2006; Weight, 2006), have thus paid little attention to the "safety net of last resort": state-administered General Assistance (GA) programs for poor adults who do not qualify for other forms of assistance. Because crime-processed women do not neatly fit into institutional categories and therefore often fall into this category of "last resort," my investigation of the institution of welfare centers on GA.[17]

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[15] The other most frequent stops on the institutional circuit were family court, mental health, and drug treatment of various kinds, evidence of which is displayed in Table 2.1. I was unable to study these institutions in the same depth as I did the big three.

[16] In addition to interviews with parole agents and probation officers, the findings of which are presented in this dissertation, I conducted interviews with welfare eligibility workers and case managers. These findings will be published separately.

[17] Applicants for GA include: people who do not have custody of minor children; people who are not sufficiently disabled to qualify for the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program, or who are waiting

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In her seminal piece on the politics of need interpretation in welfare, Fraser (1987) argues that welfare, through its discursive framing as a "feminine" system, constructs its clients as dependents in need of therapeutic intervention. This construction is reinforced by positioning women–the large majority of welfare recipients–as caretakers of children. Fraser contrasts this with "masculine" systems of aid such as unemployment insurance, in which men are the majority of clients. Recipients of masculine forms of aid are constructed as participants in the workforce and thus as having "rights" instead of "needs." Fraser's typology has a gap, however: individuals who are categorized as "Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents" (ABAWD; United States Department of Agriculture, 2014) and who therefore do not neatly fit into either type of system. Because of their precarious situations, formerly-incarcerated individuals living in states that offer it seek out GA, which is neither a conventionally "feminine" nor "masculine" system, per Fraser's definition. Although nationwide demographic data on GA recipients are not available, state-level data indicate that a slim majority of GA recipients are men (Shannon, 2013). Thus, female recipients of GA–and formerly-incarcerated women in particular–are rendered invisible because they are not receiving the expected form of aid for their gender. This invisibility has only been considered in passing by other researchers (Brown & Bloom, 2009).

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on a disability determination; and those who are not elderly (Schott & Cho, 2011). Under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, the federal welfare policy term for an individual who might qualify for GA is "Able-Bodied Adult Without Dependents" (ABAWD; United States Department of Agriculture, 2014). Individuals categorized as such are not eligible for federal cash assistance under the current program (Temporary Aid to Needy Families, or TANF). Instead, they may only receive food stamps (formally known at the federal level as SNAP–the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and at the California state level as CalFresh) for three months out of every three years (USDA, 2014). Because there is no federally-funded cash safety net for individuals categorized as ABAWD, they are at the whim of state provision of such aid, which varies widely. Thirty states provide some assistance, but only 12 states (including California) do not require recipients to have a documented reason for being unemployed–typically, a disability (Schott & Cho, 2011).

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A similar erasure of women's experiences occurs in the critical literature on punishment. Contact with the criminal justice system has become a routine site of interaction with the government (Weaver & Lerman, 2010). Yet although women have comprised the fastest-growing prison demographic for the past three decades (Frost, Greene, & Pranis, 2006; Mauer, 2013), discourses around incarceration–and prisoner reentry in particular–are predominantly about men (Richie, 2012). Loïc Wacquant, a prominent critic of prisoner reentry discourse, reinforces this "separate spheres" notion, as the following passage illustrates:

> Indeed, the renovated reentry chain is for lower-class criminal men, *the penal counterpart and complement to punitive workfare* (original emphasis) as the new face of public aid for derelict women and children–who happen to be their mothers, sisters, wives, and offspring, since the welfare and criminal justice arms of the state fasten onto the same households located at the foot of the socioracial hierarchy according to a gendered division of control" (2010, p. 616).

Wacquant recognizes an important fact about America's "prison nation" (Richie, 2012): that there is a convergence of the penal and welfare states in the lives of poor people of color. However, his argument positions women as bystanders to mass incarceration, when in reality, thousands of women are themselves being swept up into the criminal justice system every year. In this way, our popular and academic discourses around the welfare and penal states are functioning to co-produce the exclusion of formerly-incarcerated women–a theme that repeatedly emerges throughout this dissertation.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)

Referring back to Table 2.1, of the 24 women in this study's sample, only four had custody of their children and thus qualified for assistance under TANF. Nine of the women were mothers of adult children, while another five were actively seeking custody of young children they had had prior to their most recent incarceration. These women, along with the seven who either did not

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have children or had chosen not to pursue custody, were only eligible for GA, as well as three months of "emergency" food stamps.

In Los Angeles County, the GA program is called General Relief (GR). An individual on GR may receive a maximum of $221 of cash aid per month for nine out of every twelve months[18,19,20] (DPSS, 2014a, 2014d); the maximum CalFresh allocation is $189 per month for three months (CDSS, 2014a).[21] At the time of their first interview or observation with me, all but one of the women in my study were in the process of applying for–or were already receiving–some form of welfare aid; the remaining woman, Rae, had recently been approved for SSI. Eleven of the women were prohibited from receiving food stamps for themselves because they had drug felony convictions and thus could only receive GR for themselves or assistance for their children.

The mission statement of California's Department of Social Services (CDSS), which oversees the state's version of TANF ("CalWORKs") is "to serve, aid, and protect needy and vulnerable children and adults in ways that strengthen and preserve families, encourage personal responsibility, and foster independence" (2014b). The mission statement of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), which directly dispenses federal funds via

[18] As long as the individual participates in CalWORKs for up to 20 hours per week.
[19] It is important to note that GR is a "grant" or more specifically a loan, meaning that it is expected that the individual will pay the County back–typically, when she eventually qualifies for SSI.
[20] The financial criteria for an individual to qualify for GR is as follows: the applicant can have no more than $50 in cash; her personal property cannot exceed $500; if she has a car, the Blue Book value cannot exceed $4,500; and she cannot own property valued over $34,000. The criteria for emergency food stamps include that an individual's income be less than $150 per month and cash in-hand or in bank accounts must be less than $100.
[21] As a point of comparison, individuals with dependent children can receive cash aid through TANF for up to 48 months in California, with no set time limit on food stamps (California Department of Social Services, 2011; Schott & Pavletti, 2011).

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SNAP and CalWORKS and county funds via GR, is simply "to enrich lives through effective and caring service" (DPSS, 2014b).

CDSS's mission statement predictably illustrates that within the helping goal of the state's welfare institution, personal responsibility and independence from state assistance are priorities: welfare applicants must disclose that they are "needy and vulnerable" in order to receive assistance, but simultaneously must accept responsibility for their circumstances. The strengthening and preservation of families is emphasized–but as reviewed above, families must be "intact" in order to qualify for federal benefits. Furthermore, as Sered and Norton-Hawk (2014) point out, even though the notion of family seems to be the cornerstone of welfare policy (at the exclusion of those who don't fit the definition), "institutional policies often pit women and men against each other. Women may risk losing their public housing, welfare, and food stamps when a man–even her children's father–is caught living in her apartment" (pp. 43-44).

L.A. County DPSS's mission of the enrichment of lives through effective and caring service reveals multiple ironies, many of which are readily observed at any of its offices. This is where welfare's control goal–preventing the unworthy from receiving aid–becomes starkly visible. As Image 2.1 illustrates, there is a pervasive threat of criminal repercussions for breaking the rules of the welfare office. While waiting to enter the building, welfare applicants are warned that they may be charged with trespassing should they bring any of a long list of forbidden items into the office. Metal detectors and bag searches heighten the sense that one is not entering the office to be cared for and enriched. Once inside, signs instruct people in the waiting room not to stand or lean against the wall. Mug shots of people convicted of welfare fraud line the walls.[22]

[22] As Gustafson (2009) notes, California is among the most aggressive states in the investigation and prosecution of welfare fraud, and prefers criminal to civil penalties. One striking illustration of California's punitive culture on this issue is a local newspaper in Riverside County, a neighbor of Los

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After waiting in line to check in and enter the queue, applicants receive a thick packet of forms to fill out from a clerk sitting behind bulletproof glass. It is here that the "penal-welfare convergence" (Haney, 2010) is set in motion through text. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to analyze all of the forms one must fill out in order to be considered for public assistance; here, this analysis focuses in on the key form through which penal-welfare convergence manifests. For just under half of the women in my sample, the answers they provided on the Food Stamp Program Qualifying Drug Felon Addendum, shown in Image 2.2, rendered them ineligible to receive food assistance.

Image 2.1 The front of the line at the welfare office.

Angeles, which regularly runs ads listing the names of individuals who have been convicted of welfare fraud. These ads are paid for by the County's Department of Public Social Services (Gustafson, 2013).

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While waiting to enter the building and walk through the metal detectors, one has ample time to read the long list of items not permitted inside. In addition to the expected array of weapons and things that can be used as weapons, these items include bicycle pumps, curling irons, and manicure sets. Photo by the author. April, 2012.

Image 2.2 The textual determination of eligibility for food stamps.

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA - HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM QUALIFYING DRUG FELON ADDENDUM

You may be eligible for food stamp benefits even though you or a member of your household have been convicted of a drug-related felony. Please answer the following questions and then read and sign this form. If you have any questions, please contact your worker.

	County Use Column
1. Since August 22, 1996, have you or a member of your household been convicted of a drug-related felony that has not been expunged? ☐ Yes ☐ No If Yes, complete the questions below: Have you been convicted of: • Transporting, importing into this state, selling, furnishing, administering, giving away, possessing for sale, purchasing for the purposes of sale, manufacturing, or processing precursors with the intent to manufacture a controlled substance or cultivating, harvesting, or processing marijuana? ☐ Yes ☐ No • Encouraging, inducing, soliciting or intimidating a minor to participate in any of the above activities? ☐ Yes ☐ No If No, please complete the questions below.	
2. Have you or any member of your household: a) Completed a government recognized drug treatment program? ☐ Yes ☐ No b) Participated in a government recognized drug treatment program? ☐ Yes ☐ No c) Enrolled in a government recognized drug treatment program? ☐ Yes ☐ No d) Been placed on a waiting list for a government recognized drug treatment program? ☐ Yes ☐ No e) Ceased the use of controlled substances? ☐ Yes ☐ No Please attach proof or talk to your worker if you have questions.	Proof provided: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Food Stamp Fraud Penalties

There are new food stamp fraud penalties.

I understand that if I am convicted of an Intentional Program Violation, for having given wrong facts or incomplete facts, I can be disqualified for **one year** for the **first violation** and **two years** for the **second violation** and **forever** for the **third violation.** If I am found guilty in any court of law of having traded food stamp benefits for a controlled substance, I will be disqualified for **two years** for the **first violation** and **forever** for the **second violation.**

If I trade or sell food stamp benefits worth $500 or more, I can be disqualified **forever.**

APPLICANT/RECIPIENT CERTIFICATION

I have completed the questions above and read all the information. I understand the new food stamp rules and penalties apply to my application or reapplication for food stamps. I understand the new rules and agree to comply with them. **I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America and the State of California that the information contained in this form is true, correct and complete.**

SIGNATURE ADULT HOUSEHOLD MEMBER (AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE)	DATE
WITNESS IF YOU SIGN WITH AN X	DATE
ELIGIBILITY WORKER SIGNATURE	DATE

FS 26 (12/09) REQUIRED FORM - NO SUBSTITUTES PERMITTED

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The first section of this form asks about any drug felony convictions an applicant has incurred since welfare reform took effect in 1996, and listed the convictions that could render her ineligible for aid. Another section asks if the applicant has completed, participated in, enrolled in, or been placed on a waiting list for a "government-recognized drug treatment program." Checking "yes" for any of these items could absolve one of her drug conviction and make her eligible for food stamps (though a threatening statement about the harsh prosecution of welfare fraud reminds her not to lie). Yet because of earlier convictions, most women were ineligible for such a treatment program. A further irony here is that individuals are precluded from receiving food stamps for *selling*, not *using* drugs–a distinction women readily pointed out to me (see also: Welsh, 2015).

California is one of 34 states that ban individuals convicted of a drug sales felony from receiving food stamps (Mauer & McCalmont, 2013).[23] This is a legacy of the welfare reform legislation that took effect in 1996, which was crafted at a time when crime rates–of drug-related violence in particular–were at their peak. Concern about drugs and their deleterious effects on communities began to replace a focus on normative family structure. Although crime rates have subsequently declined, crime-related welfare restrictions remain, and in some states, they are even expanding to include mandatory drug testing for welfare recipients (Soss, Fording, & Schram, 2011; Mauer & McCalmont, 2013; McCarty, Aussenberg, Falk, & Carpenter, 2013).

After an applicant fills out the packet of forms, she will wait for several hours to see an eligibility worker. For an individual seeking assistance in L.A. County after being released from state prison elsewhere, the hours-long wait is often punctuated by an eligibility worker telling them that they must come back once they have been in the county for 14 days, as DPSS policy

[23] During the writing of this dissertation, California's legislature passed SB 283, which will lift the ban on food stamps for people convicted of drug felonies starting in January of 2015.

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requires that an applicant establish "residency" in the county before they can receive welfare assistance.[24] In Los Angeles County, the standard processing time for a GR application is 30 days. This means that individuals just released from prison must wait up to six weeks for cash assistance. However, they can get emergency food stamps (if they qualify) within three days[25] as well as a hotel voucher for up to two weeks.[26] The cost of the hotel voucher is deducted from the amount of cash aid they will eventually receive for the first month.

Once an applicant has established residency, filled out the required forms, and met with an eligibility worker, she must immediately begin to meet the requirements for the County's welfare-to-work program, General Relief Opportunities for Work (GROW). Between the day she initiates the application process and the appointment she receives to return the following week, an applicant must:

1. Register with the Employment Development Department (EDD), which claims to help people apply for jobs, but in actuality is merely a vehicle for checking to make sure that a welfare applicant does not qualify for resources through Unemployment Insurance;
2. Obtain proof of income (if any); and obtain proof of application for a Social Security Card–another source of difficulty for formerly-incarcerated people, who often have to go through the process of first obtaining a birth certificate before they can complete this task; and
3. Obtain evidence–through business cards and website applications–that one has applied for a certain number of jobs (typically six) within the first week, and every week thereafter.

Once one's GR application is approved, she must then attend a two-hour orientation to the GROW program and subsequently participate in the required 20 hours per week of job skills

[24] In June of 2014, I submitted a report to DPSS on my findings. The report highlighted this residency policy, not only as one of the most facially harmful to recently-incarcerated people, but also as one of the seemingly easiest to amend. A DPSS representative has informed me that the Department is now considering revising this policy.
[25] In practice, emergency food stamps are usually disbursed within hours, on the same day the application is submitted.
[26] Often, however, a hotel voucher is given for one week at a time, and the recipient must return to the DPSS office to get an additional voucher for the second week.

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preparation classes, vocational assessments, and job searches. None of the women in my sample found employment through GROW, and several were chronically on the verge of being "sanctioned" and having their cases "terminated" for not complying with GROW requirements (DPSS, 2014c, 2014d).

Although the welfare office–by virtue of its position at the top of the list of places people need to go on the post-incarceration institutional circuit–could serve as a "hub" through which people can get the various sorts of help they need, in reality, it tends to tack on much more work to an already difficult process, without providing the sorts of linkages to other institutions that might actually be helpful. This happens through the proliferation of rules and tasks meant to distinguish the worthy from the unworthy (McCarty et al, 2013; Piven & Cloward, 1993). As Chapter 3 will show, in order to humanize themselves in this highly impersonal process, which Gustafson (2013) has likened to Garfinkel's (1956) degradation ceremonies, the women in my sample selectively shared personal aspects of themselves, which in turn often changed the course of their interactions with workers. As I observed this technique in action, I began to develop an idea about how people on both sides of public service institutions bring personal elements of themselves into public, often dehumanizing, settings.

Community corrections

Typically, the second stop on the institutional circuit is to a community corrections agency. "Community corrections,"[27] a popular catchphrase in criminal justice policy and practice,

[27] I alternate my use of the term "community corrections" with similar phrases like "community supervision" and, more precisely, "parole" and "probation" supervision. However, it is important to acknowledge that "community corrections" and its close relative "alternatives to incarceration" have become euphemisms for a whole host of public and private programs aimed at reducing costs while maintaining surveillance of crime-processed people. These include, but are not limited to: pre-trial diversion programs; dispute resolution programs; restitution; community service; various fines and fees; work release programs; halfway houses; intensive supervision programs; and electronic or "GPS" monitoring (Vera, 2013), as well as the use of these punishments as remedial sanctions if a parolee or

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involves the supervision of "people who are under the authority of the criminal justice system but who are not in prison or jail" (Vera Institute of Justice, 2013).

Broadly, the helping goal of community corrections is to facilitate rehabilitation, while the control goal is to ensure public safety. Lynch (2000) defines rehabilitation as:

> any language and action that indicates an aim to reform the parolee, either psychologically (i.e. through counseling or psychotherapy), interpersonally and situationally (i.e. through family interventions, training, and education), more structurally (i.e. through employment or housing interventions), or some combination (i.e. placement in residential therapeutic programs)... including any discourse or practices that speak to transforming or normalizing the criminal into a socially defined non-deviant citizen" (p. 45).

Central to Lynch's definition is the understanding that rehabilitation must involve the imparting of some form of assistance that will enable individuals to lead productive, non-criminal lives. In contrast, the control goal of community corrections is to ensure public safety, which necessitates the management and surveillance of crime-processed people and the documentation of these efforts.

Community correctional work is primarily carried out by two agencies, parole and probation.[28] Parole supervision occurs only after an individual has served time in state prison, while probation supervision can be a punishment in itself. In the United States, parole is a state-run agency, while probation is operated at the county level.[29] This is a key distinction and one that has significant implications for how the both the crime-processed women and the workers

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probationer violates the conditions of her supervision. From a critical perspective, the growing net of these "alternatives to incarceration" means the concerning expansion of the time and spaces into which punishment can be carried out (Welsh & Rajah, 2014). Thus, I am careful to use the phrase "community corrections" only when referring generally to parole or probation, and I note when I am speaking about these other forms of punishment.

[28] There are two exceptions to this: individuals on pre-trial release with open, active court cases; and individuals who have open courts cases but who have been diverted to a special court or diversion program. This latter group will be convicted and sentenced if they do not successfully complete the program (Vera Institute of Justice, 2013).

[29] To further confuse things, however, individuals who have served time in federal prison are released under federal *probation*, not parole.

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interviewed for this project understood their circumstances under Realignment. As subsequent chapters of this dissertation will illustrate, workers in the institutions of parole and probation have inarguably experienced the most substantial changes under AB 109. Table 2.2 summarizes these changes.

Table 2.2: Before and after AB 109.

	Before	After
For people convicted of "N3" offenses	-Time served in state prison -3 years of mandatory state parole -Compliance checks conducted by parole agents	-Time served in local jail and/or up to 1 year on county Post-Release Community Supervision (PRCS) under probation -Compliance checks conducted by local law enforcement
For state parole agents	-Revocable parole -Mixed caseloads of people convicted of both N3 and serious/violent offenses	-Parole revocation is restricted; revocations handled locally -Caseloads of people convicted of serious/violent offenses -Layoffs/downsizing upon AB 109 implementation
For county probation officers	-Traditional probation model and caseloads	-Traditional probation still exists -PRCS–a new form of probation -Large-scale hiring of new officers, most from juvenile supervision

The overarching changes initiated by AB 109 are:

1. *Who* is responsible for people convicted of "N3" crimes (non-violent, non-serious, and non-high risk sex offenses)–previously this was state parole; now it is county probation; and
2. *How* these people are supervised–previously this was state prison and parole; now it is county jail and a new form of community supervision.

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Subsequent chapters will show in detail what these changes have entailed and their impact on the three groups studied in this project; the following sections of this chapter draw on key programmatic and policy texts to examine how work is to happen under this new structure.

California State Parole: From walking the "toughest beat" to becoming a "dying breed"

Parole is the discretionary release from prison following a period of incarceration. In California, the institution responsible for supervising individuals on parole is the Department of Adult Parole Operations (DAPO), which is part of California's Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). The stated goals of DAPO are as follows:

- "To protect our communities by aligning our practices with those which have proven to reduce recidivism through effective offender supervision strategies; and
- To promote a paradigm and cultural shift where staff openly embrace emerging Correctional practices which have shown to facilitate long-term behavioral change within the offender population" (CDCR, 2014a).

Werth (2011b) has argued that California parole's three central aims, which he identifies as promoting public safety, rehabilitation, and reentry, are inherently–and by design–fractured: while the effort to ensure public safety relies on risk assessment and management, the facilitation of rehabilitation and reentry necessitate attention to individual parolees' needs and circumstances. This fracturing, unsurprisingly, has only been amplified under Realignment, which has necessitated a rapid "paradigm and cultural shift" in a large agency that changes slowly. To achieve this shift, staff are to "openly embrace" new practices which will better facilitate the reentry process. After situating contemporary parole within its political and historical contexts, this section offers a close examination of how these new practices are expected to shape everyday parole work.

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Key context

California parole has endured multiple identity changes in recent decades, many of which correspond with the vicissitudes of the prevailing penal and political perspectives of the times. In his definitive book on the topic, Simon (1993) traces present-day parole's roots to the 1950s, in which a "clinical" or "disciplinary" model of parole prioritized rehabilitation. Parole's location within the penal system has been precarious since the 1970s, during which rehabilitation was replaced with a retributive philosophy that emphasized incarceration over community reintegration.[30] During this period, parole's rehabilitative efforts were deemphasized–by the 1980s, parole was essentially a "gateway back to the institution" (Lynch, 1998, p. 843). This has been evident in California's highest-in-the-nation recidivism rates: two-thirds of previously incarcerated people were returning to prison within three years in the decades preceding Realignment (CDCR, 2011a; Petersilia, 2013).[31] In recent years, as our overreliance on mass incarceration has become financially and politically untenable, parole agents carrying penal policy out on the ground have had to adjust to yet another shift in penal logic, as rehabilitation has been reincorporated as a goal. A symbolic manifestation of this occurred in 2005 with the addition of the "R" to the state's correctional agency name: California's Department of Corrections (CDC) became the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) (Werth, 2013).

Proponents of the "new penology" perspective (Feeley & Simon, 1992) argue that this paradigm has positioned parole agents as "waste managers" whose mandate is to control a

[30] In non-academic media, Kenneth Hartman (2009, 2014) has vividly described what it feels like to be on the receiving end of punishment infused with retributive values. Hartman is serving a sentence of life without parole at California State Prison, Los Angeles County, also known as Lancaster.
[31] Put another way, until recently, about 60% of admissions to California state prisons have been returning parolees (Grattet, Petersilia, & Lin, 2008).

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dangerous class of poor people–neither incarcerating nor rehabilitating them. This is where actuarial risk assessment tools have been incorporated into parole agents' daily work: because agents are no longer concerned with addressing *why* people engage in criminal behavior, the task is to figure out how to most efficiently manage them given their level of reoffending risk. Other viewpoints, such as the one posed by Mona Lynch, are slightly less cynical. Lynch's (1998) ethnography of a California parole field office suggests that, while conceptualizing their role through a traditional law enforcement lens, in their dealings with their parolees, parole agents draw on a highly individualized and intuitive approach. In doing so, the agents Lynch studied actively subverted management directives to adopt a role as actuarial risk managers. Lynch (2000) does argue, however, that rehabilitation lives on largely as rhetoric, not practice. My findings indicate some similar patterns: in describing their work, the agents interviewed for this project spoke about their approach to supervision as both complying with and resisting the ever-evolving mandate of the agency. Importantly, my data show that rehabilitation is still largely rhetoric, even as parole revocation–which historically has been the main tactic for meeting the goal of ensuring public safety–has been all but eliminated as a means of control.

Distinguishing features of California parole

There are three aspects of California parole that are relatively unique and thus important to highlight here. First, until recently, parole was a mandatory condition of release for all individuals coming out of state prison. Under mandatory parole, which was implemented alongside determinate sentencing in 1977, once an individual completed her court-imposed sentence, she was automatically released onto parole supervision for three years (Grattet, Petersilia, & Lin, 2008). Unsurprisingly, this fueled parole's rapid expansion: pre-Realignment,

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California's rate of parolees by population was 438 per 100,000 residents, much higher than the national average of 315 (Glaze & Bonczar, 2009).

In 2009, Non-Revocable Parole was instituted in an effort to reduce parole caseloads.[32] In Non-Revocable Parole, available to a select subset of the parolee population, a parolee does not have to report to a parole agent and she cannot be returned to custody for a parole violation. The only apparent difference between being on this form of parole and total freedom is that a parolee can still be searched by any law enforcement officer at any time (CDCR, 2009a).

A second defining feature of California parole is that the path to becoming a parole agent is typically by way of working as a Correctional Officer (CO) in either a juvenile or adult state custodial facility. This is unusual–in most other states, the paths to working in prison versus parole are completely separate. Eight out of the nine agents interviewed for this project had previously worked in prison–seven out of the nine had previous careers as COs; another agent had worked as a nurse/custody officer in prison, while the remaining agent had previously worked in the state's Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. This is consistent with what other scholars of California parole have noted (Grattet et al, 2008; Werth, 2013). The agents in my sample who had worked in adult state prisons had done so for an average of nine years before either being promoted or receiving a lateral transfer to parole. Agents had also been with parole for an average of nine years, with total years with CDCR averaging 17 years. I found that agents bring this prison-to-community perspective with them in various ways, which I examine in Chapter 4.

[32] To qualify for Non-Revocable Parole, an individual cannot be required to register as a sex offender, she cannot have a prior conviction for a sexually violent offense, she cannot be a "validated" gang member, and she cannot have scored as "high risk" on a validated risk assessment tool (CDCR, 2009a).

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Lastly, parole agents are represented by what is arguably the most powerful correctional union in the country. However, the change fatigue noted in interviews with agents–in particular, their ambivalence toward Realignment, the latest in a long string of agency mandates–can partially be attributed to the apparent lack of political capital that parole has had in comparison to other criminal justice agencies. In his book *The Toughest Beat* (2011), Joshua Page traces the rise of the California Correctional Peace Officers' Association (CCPOA), the union that represents both state Correctional Officers (COs) and parole agents.[33] During the mass incarceration boom of the 1980s and 1990s, the CCPOA became one of the most powerful interest groups in California politics: it hired lobbyists, combined forces with other "tough on crime" groups such as victims' rights advocates, and formed political action committees to promote punitive legislation. Most notably, the CCPOA was instrumental in the passage of 1994's Three Strikes and You're Out law, which further fueled the mass incarceration machine and thereby ensured the employment of its membership. The CCPOA also successfully thwarted a push for parole reform between 2003 and 2005 (Page, 2011).

However, as mass incarceration began to fall out of favor in the political arena, CCPOA reversed course under new leadership. A signal of this change came in 2012, when CCPOA declined to oppose a ballot initiative to reform the Three Strikes law. In exchange for a new contract, the CCPOA agreed to support Realignment (Page, 2013). Essentially, debate over Realignment placed parole agents' interests at odds with those of COs, and in the end, parole lost

[33] CCPOA representation can be understood as being comprised of a 34-slice pie: each of California's 33 prisons gets a "slice" of the pie; the 34th slice is allocated to parole agents (personal communication with Josh Page, 5/29/2014) by way of the Parole Agents Association of California (PAAC), which directly represents parole agents and has been an affiliate of the CCPOA since 1981. In this way, parole agents have substantially reduced decision-making power in the CCPOA in proportion to their CO counterparts.

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the fight–namely, through massive layoffs.[34] Meanwhile, in counties across the state, Probation and Sheriff's Departments, to varying degrees, were allocated the responsibilities and therefore the resources associated with the implementation of AB 109 programming (Lin & Petersilia, 2014; see also: Bird & Hayes, 2013).

Realignment has led to a dramatic reduction in the parole population: in May of 2011, the month during which *Plata* was decided, there were 130,000 individuals on parole in California (CDCR, 2011b). As of December of 2014, 42,000 people are on parole (CDCR, 2014b). Scholars and practitioners alike–including the parole agents interviewed here–agree that this is a good thing. For decades, there has been a consensus among scholars that California's parole system is in dire need of an overhaul (Lynch, 1998, 2000; Grattet, Petersilia, Lin, & Beckman, 2009; Simon, 1993). Yet under Realignment, the overhaul has been more downsizing than actual change in practice. Parole agents are not carrying out the new policies of AB 109; probation gets that task, and the media publicity–and accountability–that accompanies it. Thus, parole agents are viewed both internally and externally as relics of a previous era. In interviews, several agents speculated that they are a "dying breed."

While probation has scrambled to bring on more staff under AB 109, parole has been severely downsized. Some laid-off agents have been hired by probation, but the ability of parole agents to adjust their approach to supervision to align with probation's mission has been debated among policy makers and administrators–essentially, the concern is that parole agents, who have been steeped in a culture of law enforcement and who are accustomed to being armed in the field, may

[34] Evidence of this is available in the Governor's Budget summaries. From the 2011-12 budget to the 2012-13 budget, the allocation for Adult Corrections and Rehabilitation Operations–General Security increased from $2.79 billion to $2.98 billion; Security Overtime–a key CCPOA negotiating point–increased from $115.8 million to $206 million. Meanwhile, the allocation for Parole Operations–Adult Supervision decreased from $500 million to $306 million.

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have a difficult time adjusting to the (arguably) more rehabilitative culture of probation (Petersilia, 2013). When I conducted interviews with parole agents in September of 2013, a recurring theme was these layoffs and the massive caseloads now carried by the surviving agents. In the restructuring that accompanied Realignment, parole implemented a "53 to 1" caseload system, a substantial change from the previous point-based system.[35] None of the agents I interviewed had come close to seeing this ratio; several reported that their caseloads had recently been as high as 110.

At the time of my parole interviews, a new case management model, complementary to the aims of Realignment, was being implemented. In both offices in which I conducted interviews, agents were currently undergoing training. The new model, the California Parole Supervision and Reintegration Model (CPSRM), according to an evaluation of its pilot implementation, signals "a move away from a 'surveillance' model of supervision towards an approach that emphasize[s] both the quality of supervision and the engagement of the parolee in the supervision process" (Turner, Braithwaite, Tatar, Omori, & Kearney, 2011, p. 1).

The heart of the CPSRM approach is agents' use of "active listening, motivational interviewing, and role modeling" (Parole Reform Task Force, 2010, p. 27) techniques to identify the "criminogenic needs" of their parolees, which in turn forms the basis of individualized case plans (Braithwaite, Turner, & Hess, 2013; Parole Reform Task Force, 2010; Turner et al, 2011). Image 2.3 is the official CPSRM flow chart through the bulk of the community supervision

[35] The old parole caseload structure was based on the following point system: high control=3 points; control service=2 points; minimum service = 1 point. Second-strikers and EOP (mental health)=5 points. Each point level carried different specifications. A regular caseload would be 156 points, which one parole agent described as being "tough but manageable" although the agents I interviewed recalled that their points typically fluctuated between 205 and 220, and got as high as 300.

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phase (excluded is the process for discharge from parole). The analysis presented here focuses on key aspects of the model that pertain to agents' direct work with their parolees.

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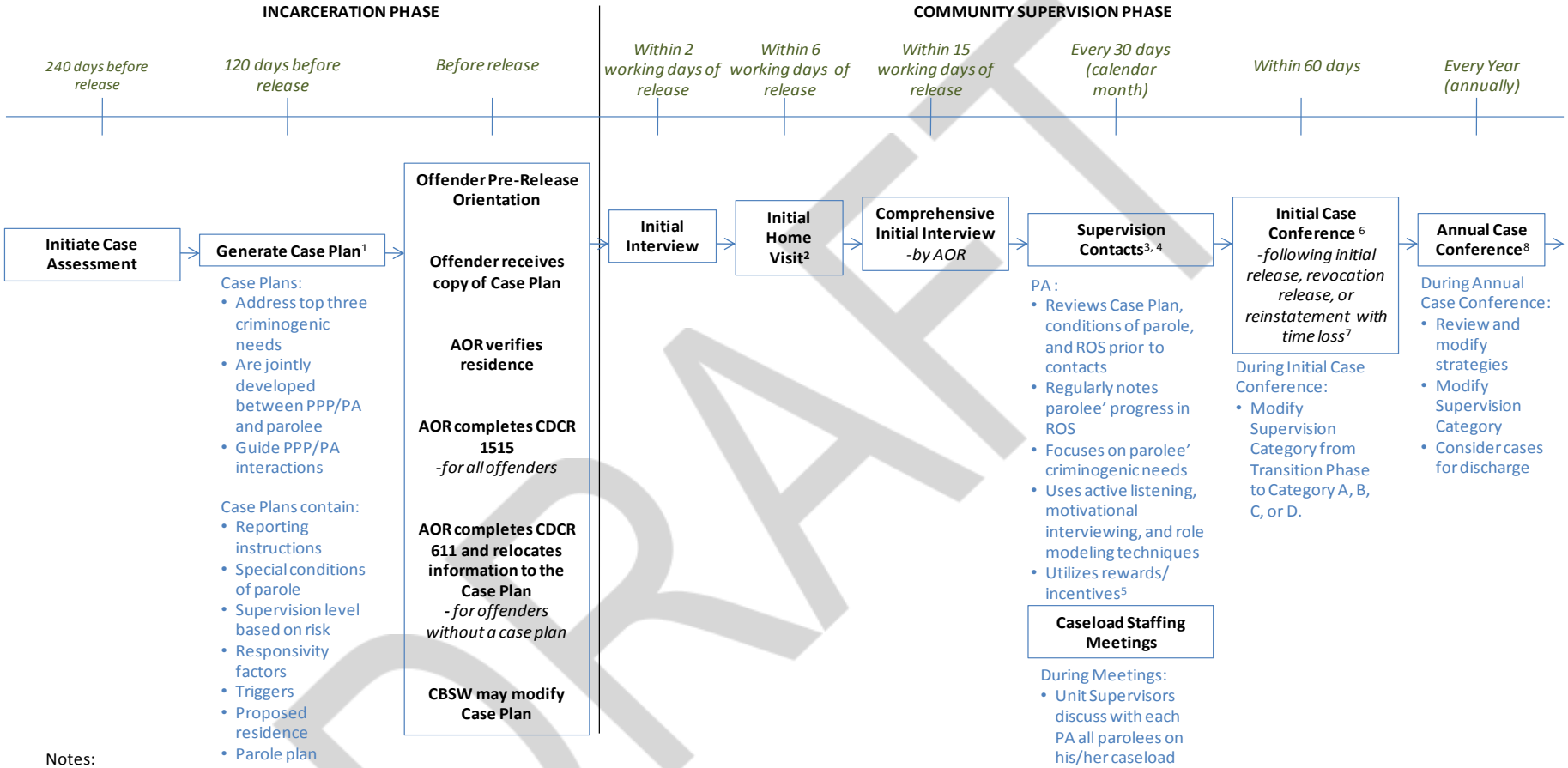
Image 2.3: CPSRM Flow Chart.

California Parole Supervision and Reintegration Model (CPSRM)



Notes:

1. PPP/PA continually reviews and modifies Case Plans whenever there is a change of parolee circumstances (i.e., positive progress; conditions that suggest elevated risk).
2. Beyond the initial home visit, case contact specifications are based on the Supervision Categories Contact Schedule.
3. If the parolee is released after the 20th of the month, only an initial interview (within 2 working days of release) and an initial home visit (within 6 working days of release) shall be conducted during the month of release from custody.
4. Contact specifications differ by Supervision Category (Transitional Phase, A, B, C, D). Contacts may include home contacts, other face-to-face contacts, significant collateral contacts, and resource contacts (see the Supervision Categories Contact Schedule).
5. See the Behavioral Incentive Chart.
6. Key participants in case conferences include: Unit Supervisor, Agent of Record, District Administrator, Parole Outpatient Clinician, parolee support networks, and parolee (if he/she chooses to attend).
7. All Supervision Category changes become effective the first day of the following month.
8. Case conferences will be conducted annually following initial release, revocation release, or reinstatement with time loss until the maximum statutory period of parole has expired. Case conferences can also occur upon the request of the AOR, Assistant Unit Supervisor, or Unit Supervisor to discuss further modifications to parolee's program goals, conditions of parole, and supervision category.

January 13, 2010

Parole Reform Task Force, 2010, p. 49.

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Parole supervision today

The work: A typical day for a parole agent involves a mixture of field work and office work. Some agents prefer to get the field work–typically, unannounced visits at parolees' homes–done in the morning, then they come into the office to do paperwork; others prefer to catch up on paper work before going out into the field and producing the need for more paper work to document these visits. Under the CPSRM, agents are required to do an initial comprehensive interview with a new parolee within two working days of their release and an initial home visit within six working days of release. The agents interviewed for this project noted that the initial interview takes at least an hour to complete. During the initial 60-day "transition phase," agents must conduct one unannounced home visit per month, one "significant collateral contact"[36] per month, one contact related to a parolee's criminogenic needs per month, and one random and unscheduled drug test per month. Additional contact may include team compliance searches, further facilitation of programming based on needs, and contact at a parolee's place of employment. After the transition phase, the intensity of prescribed monthly contacts will vary based on a parolee's risk level (Parole Reform Task Force, 2010).

During the initial home visit, the agent is to use active listening, motivational interviewing, and role modeling to assess the parolee's "appearance, mannerisms, mood, and behaviors." In this way, the agent is expected to employ both a more personal and personalized approach, which will facilitate the establishment of positive rapport with her parolee. However, the enforcement mandate is still very present: the agent is to make "visual, auditory, and other sensory observations of the parolee's environment, residence, and surrounding property,"

[36] These collateral contacts are either information-gathering efforts about the parolee done in-person, by phone or email, or through accessing non-departmental databases; or referrals to programming or services.

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including where the parolee sleeps. During home visits in general, agents are also to "observe, inquire about, and document" any new vehicles, new construction/additions to the residence, new cohabitants, and any other substantial changes to the surroundings (Parole Reform Task Force, 2010, p. 28).

The initial interview involves forms that the parolee must fill out about the circumstances of their release (e.g., if they received their gate money; if they were released with medications), where they will be living, details about any car they might drive, and whether they have a job. An agent typically repeatedly asks parolees if they have difficulty reading the forms–as parolees who cannot read understandably are slow to admit this–and will help them to fill them out as necessary.

The agent then conducts the comprehensive initial interview, in which she asks the parolee a series of questions meant to assess her criminogenic risks and needs. These questions include, for example:

- Do the people you reside with know about your criminal history?
- Who is the most important/supportive person in your life?
- Who should you avoid in the community to not be sent back to prison?
- Does anyone in your family or residence use drugs or alcohol?
- What is your plan now that you are out on the street? (Parole Reform Task Force, 2010, pp. 76-80).

The information collected in this interview, along with other information the agent has gathered on the parolee–including information contained in his//her prison file and criminal history–is then used to calculate the parolee's risk level.

Key texts: The primary "evidence-based' risk assessment tools used by parole agents is the Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions (COMPAS) and the Parole Violation Decision-Making Instrument (PVDMI). The COMPAS is rooted in the "Risk-Needs-Responsivity" model of correctional treatment (Andrews, Bonta, & Hoge, 1990; CDCR,

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2009b), which prescribes a systematic assessment of an individual's risks and needs. COMPAS is used throughout CDCR, for individuals both in prison and on parole. As Werth (2011a, 2011b) notes, although the scholarly literature on actuarial risk tools draws a distinction between risk management and rehabilitation, parole uses COMPAS in an attempt to achieve both goals. This assessment is then used to develop a response: a case plan which matches the prescribed intensity of services to an individual's risk level, targeting services to reduce this risk and thereby the likelihood of recidivism. The COMPAS measures 18 risk and need "factors," such as substance abuse and education history, family background, criminal activity, and social functioning (Andrews, Bonta, & Hoge, 1990; CDCR, 2009b; Parole Reform Task Force, 2010). The agent then reviews with the parolee this case plan as well as the conditions of her/his parole and provides them with a copy of each.

The other key decision-making tool agents use is the PVDMI, which was developed and validated using a sample of California parolees. Agents are alerted to parolee arrests by law enforcement agencies via a data-sharing program called Pivots. Once alerted to an arrest, an agent uses the PVDMI to make a decision about how to respond to a parole violation, based on the parolee's risk level and the severity of the violation. The PVDMI uses the California Static Risk Assessment (CSRA) tool to generate a risk score based on a parolee's criminal history. Thus, according to CDCR, the PVDMI allows agents to "scientifically weigh an offender's risk level and the benefits of alternatives to prison as part of their decision-making process" (CDCR, 2014c).

How the reentry process and rehabilitation are to be facilitated: A central source of information about the services and resources available for parolees is the Parolee Information Handbook, which is also accessible online (CDCR, 2014d). Notable is how the reentry process is

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conceptualized in this handbook, which informs parolees that succeeding on parole is "your choice," and that "a good attitude is a key to success:"[37]

> Attitude is important. You are in charge of your attitude. A good attitude can help you while you are locked up and when you get out. Attitude says how you see people and how they see you. People react to you based on your attitude. A good attitude can make good things happen. A good attitude can help you get a job. A good attitude can help you with your friends, family, and loved ones. A good attitude will help you feel better about yourself (p. 1).

In this way, the handbook espouses the expected values of personal responsibility and eventual independence from state assistance, framing a successful reentry process as being primarily dependent upon elements such as the parolee's positive attitude much more than the resources and services that might also be necessary to facilitate the process.

However, the handbook does point to an array of services, and claims that they are available at most parole offices–this is something I found to not be true in speaking with agents at two offices in South Los Angeles, as well as to the women in my sample who were on parole. The online version of the handbook notes that links to further descriptions of these programs are unavailable and that parolees should ask their agents if they are interested in any of the services. My sense in speaking with agents is that a lot of these programs have been cut in the downsizing, and that those that do remain are not at every office. For example, there are only a couple of Parole Outpatient Clinics (POC) in all of South Los Angeles (see: CDCR, 2014e). The POC is the central outlet through which parolees can receive mental health services such as individual counseling, therapy, and medication (CDCR, 2014f). In some locations, parolees can also receive substance abuse treatment services. In addition to parole-sponsored programs, the handbook provides general information about potential benefits such as General Assistance, Food Stamps,

[37] Interestingly, this wording–and perhaps the entire handbook itself–has not changed since Lynch (2000) did her fieldwork in a California parole office in the mid-1990s.

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and Social Security/Supplemental Security Income.[38] It is important to note that the state parole offices in L.A. County have no connection to DPSS, and agents are unable to offer any guidance in how to apply for sources of DPSS assistance beyond listing applying for GR and/or food stamps as a goal in parolees' case plans.

These rather superficial efforts to connect parolees to services, which my data indicate have become even more sparse under Realignment, are nonetheless consistent with what other scholars have noted during different eras of California parole (see, for example: Simon, 1993; Lynch, 1998, 2000; Werth, 2011a, 2011b, 2013): there are never enough resources. As others have recently noted, in this way, the rehabilitative ideal in parole has always been largely rhetorical (Lynch, 2000) and symbolic (Werth, 2011a, 2011b): parolees are expected to carry out the difficult work of succeeding on parole largely by themselves. Chapters 3 and 4 will show how women on parole and parole agents, respectively, operate within these parameters.

Despite being unable to promote rehabilitation in substantive ways, findings from this project indicate that agents apply a personal touch in their supervision and in doing so, offer a modicum of support in lieu of more tangible resources. Arguably, agents are becoming better equipped to do so as they are trained to employ more "personal" modes of interaction–most notably, Motivational Interviewing. Devised as an alternative to the more confrontational style utilized in the disease model of addictions treatment, the core of the Motivational Interviewing approach is the belief that change happens when it is elicited from the client, not when it is imposed upon them. Thus, Motivational Interviewing uses approaches such as expressing empathy, rolling with resistance, and supporting self efficacy to establish a collaborative relationship in which client

[38] These services are listed without phone numbers or links to websites–arguably, because the policies governing the availability of some these services vary by county. Of course, this is not true for federal programs like SSI and Food Stamps.

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goals can be set and achieved (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Notably, parole's adoption of the Motivational Interviewing approach represents a clear departure from more classically control- or enforcement-oriented approaches to supervision that dominated previous eras of parole.

Post-Release Community Supervision: "It's not parole and it's not probation"

A new stop on the institutional circuit for many crime-processed individuals in California is now a county probation office rather than a state parole office. In our current era of the possible decline of mass incarceration, probation has been widely suggested as a viable alternative to imprisonment. However, probation can be understood as both an alternative to incarceration and a net-widener, responsible for keeping some people in the crime-processing system who otherwise would not be (Phelps, 2013; Tonry & Lynch, 1996). Researchers have consistently documented the ways in which the conditions of probation–which often include mandatory meetings, home visits, and drug testing–in combination with monitoring by probation officers and, under AB 109, local law enforcement, risk setting probationers up to fail (Petersilia & Turner, 1993; Petersilia, 1999, 2002; Stemen & Rengifo, 2009).

The same concerning elements are readily visible in the new form of supervision prescribed by AB 109, Post-Release Community Supervision (PRCS). A training presentation retrieved from the Chief Probation Officers of California website (CPOC, 2014), entitled *Criminal Justice Realignment: What Counties Need to Know to Implement*, contains a slide that says: "Post-Release Community Supervision: It's not parole and it's not probation." This is a key distinction for understanding not only how the new model works, but also how it is perceived by the people carrying it out.

Key context

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In addition to initial outlays from the state to the counties to implement Realignment, AB 109 contained a provision for a portion of the state's sales tax revenue and Vehicle License Fees to go to the counties to sustainably pay for the new programming (Bird & Hayes, 2013; CDCR, 2013b; Misczynski, 2011). In all 58 of California's counties, probation departments have primary responsibility for administration of Post-Release Community Supervision. Beyond that, however, counties have quite a bit of spending discretion in how this supervision actually happens, and thus there is wide variation among counties in terms of who else is involved in administering AB 109. Recent research has examined the political, historic, and social contexts of California's counties to understand how and why some counties have chosen to emphasize enforcement while others emphasize treatment (Lin & Petersilia, 2014)

Under Lin and Petersilia's (2014) taxonomy, Los Angeles County is classified as a "control-oriented, high crime county:" it consistently has high rates of drug arrests, high incarceration rates for drug crimes, high serious crime rates, and a high–and growing–number of law enforcement personnel (p. 46). While exceptional in its size,[39] L.A. County is right in the middle compared to other counties' spending choices for AB 109: it ranks in the top half (26th) of counties in terms of the relative size of its allocation for sheriff and law enforcement spending, while it ranks 28th in terms of its allocation for programs and services spending. This indicates that L.A. County is reasonably moderate in how it is spending its money on Realignment: it is neither excessively enforcement-oriented nor is it solely focused on the social service component of AB 109.

The model

[39] As of 2013, the population of L.A. County was 10,017,068, accounting for over a quarter of the entire state's population of 38,332, 521 (ACS, 2013b, 2013c).

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Image 2.4 shows the official account of how Post-Release Community Supervision (PRCS) happens in L.A. County. Here is a narrative of these steps as they pertain to the work that probation officers and people on PRCS do:

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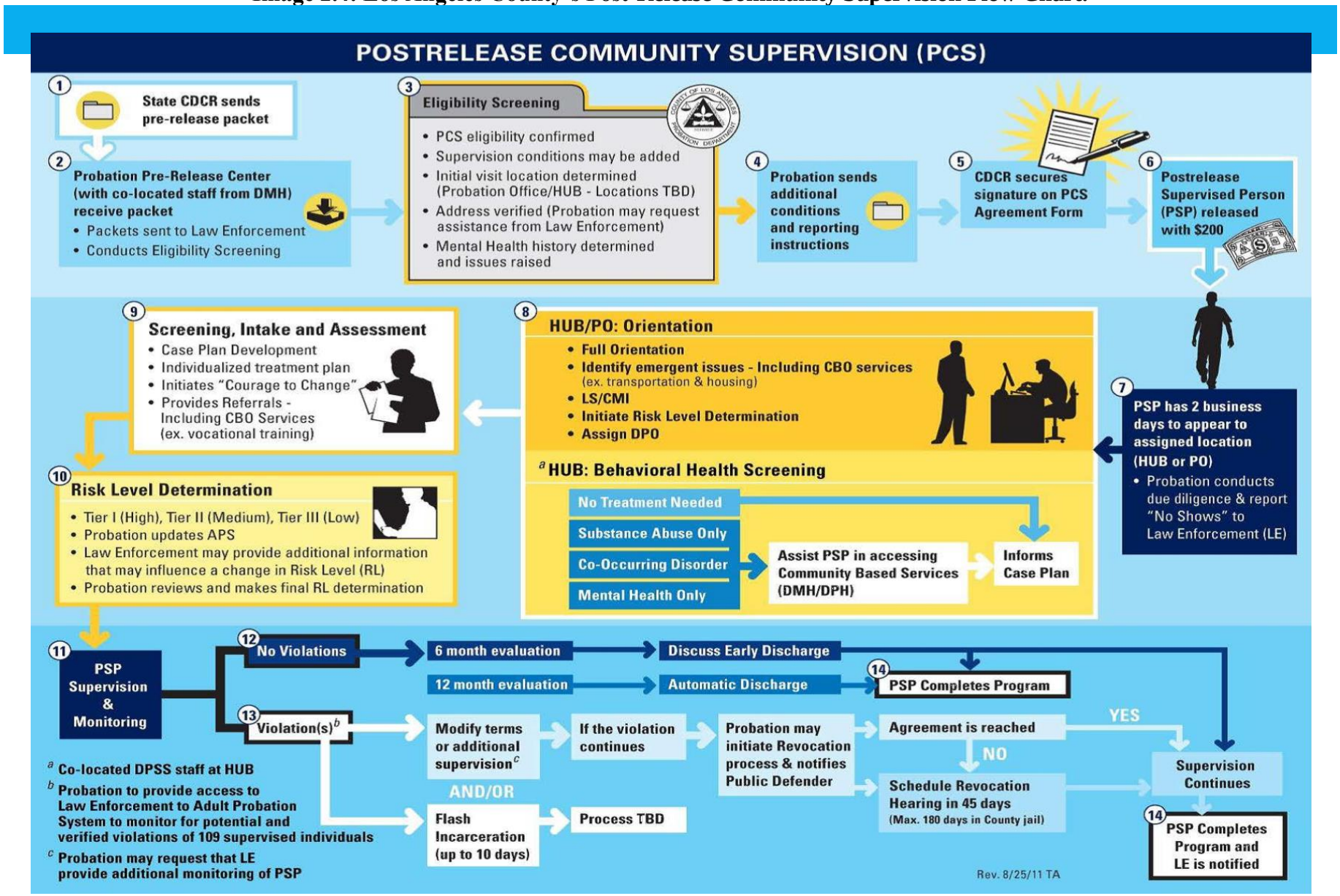
Image 2.4: Los Angeles County's Post-Release Community Supervision Flow Chart.



Community Corrections Partnership, 2011, p. 5.

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1-2. *Pre-release:* CDCR sends a pre-release packet to the probation pre-release center; this packet is also sent to local law enforcement.

3. *Eligibility screening:* The client[40] is screened for eligibility; once approved, the client's initial visit location–to a Probation "HUB" office–is determined based on the address to which the client intends to return. This address is verified by probation, with assistance from local law enforcement. At this point, the client's mental health history is also investigated.

4-7.: *Release:* The client signs an agreement that they will comply with the conditions of PRCS. Most notably, the client must agree to waive her right to a court hearing before a period of flash incarceration in county jail of no more than 10 days if they violate a condition of their supervision. The client is then released with $200 of "gate money."[41] She must appear for the initial meeting at the HUB office within two business days of release; if she does not, law enforcement is alerted that the client is not in compliance.

8. *Orientation:* At the HUB office, which may not be the field office where the client will regularly see her probation officer, the client receives an orientation to the PRCS program, the Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI) assessment instrument is administered, and the she receives the name and office location of her probation officer. Like the COMPAS instrument used in parole, the LS/CMI (Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2004) is based on the "Risk-Needs-Responsivity" model of treatment (Andrews, Bonta, & Hoge, 1990).[42]

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[40] This is where a "prisoner" becomes a "client," as this is how probation officers refer to the individuals on their PRCS caseloads.

[41] With some regularity, this money is not actually given at the gate; several women in my sample had to fill out paperwork to obtain this money months after their release.

[42] Interestingly, the field of probation's current obsession with risk assessment is readily visible in a recent analysis of all California counties' AB 109 implementation plans (Abarbanel et al, 2013). Because of the vast diversity of the counties in terms of population, existing resource infrastructure, and other variables, counties varied substantially in the extent to which they prioritized spending on items like electronic monitoring, flash incarceration, partnerships with community-based organizations, and employment support. However, risk assessment was a consistently significant part of all counties' plans.

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Also at the HUB, behavioral health screening to determine if the client has mental health issues, substance abuse issues, or both (a co-occurring disorder) may happen. However, in practice, these assessments are often outsourced to providers holding contracts with probation to provide these services. Based on my observation of how these assessments happen, and in speaking with probation officers, this is where a key gap in service provision occurs: as I discuss in Chapter 5, individuals diagnosed with co-occurring disorders, in practice, can only receive services for one of their disorders–either mental health or substance abuse. A DPSS employee is permanently stationed at each of the HUB offices. This person helps clients determine what assistance they are eligible for–General Relief (GR), Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF), and Food Stamps. However, the DPSS representative cannot process applications for these programs, meaning clients still have to go to a DPSS office to go through the process.

9. *Screening, intake, and assessment:* The client's probation officer receives her prison file, other criminal history information, risk level determination, and information about any other issues, and develops a case plan based on these risks and needs.

10. *Risk level determination:* Based on these multiple sources of information and interactions, the individual's risk level is determined. Law enforcement may contribute information that could prompt a change in the risk level, although probation makes the final determination.

As Abarbanel et al (2013) note:

> What distinguishes risk assessment from the other broad categories that we tracked is the fact that most counties did more than merely mention risk assessment in their AB 109 plans. In fact, 44 plans spent at least one paragraph discussing risk assessment, and 21 counties spent two paragraphs or more. The focus on risk assessment seems to stem from the fact that counties are worried about resource management, particularly considering that they believe that the AB 109 population is going to be higher risk and higher need than the state anticipated (p. 50).

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11.-13. *Supervision:* In an initial meeting with the client, the probation officer creates an individualized treatment plan, using the "Courage to Change" curriculum.[43] It is at this point that the officer is to "identify the dosage of rehabilitative services that are required to promote intrinsic change that will support meeting the case plan stated goals" (County of Los Angeles Community Corrections Partnership, 2011, p. 21). A client is typically on PRCS for one year. At the discretion of probation, she may be discharged at six months. If the client violates the terms of her supervision, she may be on PRCS for up to three years. When a violation occurs, the client may be flash incarcerated for up to ten days, at the discretion of her probation officer.

The police as community correctional agents

One of the ways in which PRCS is not like parole or probation is in its heavy involvement of local law enforcement. As indicated in Image 2.4, local law enforcement agencies are involved in multiple steps of AB 109. Information-sharing amongst law enforcement and community supervision agencies is standard in most jurisdictions. However, extent to which law enforcement has been integrated into AB 109 renders them part of the community supervision apparatus in a new and troubling way.

Compliance checks, which are regularly carried out by teams of parole agents to verify parolees' whereabouts,[44] have been "outsourced" to local law enforcement agencies–police and sheriff departments–for individuals on PRCS. This is because, unlike parole agents, probation

[43] According to promotional materials, the "Courage to Change Interactive Journaling System" is an "outcome-oriented supervision model incorporates research-to-results and evidence-based practices for addressing the needs of participants working to successfully reintegrate into their communities" (Change Companies, 2014a). The curriculum uses a common technique in cognitive-behavioral therapy–interactive journaling–to help clients address "individual problem areas" within the "Big Six" criminogenic needs: antisocial values, criminal personality, low self-control, criminal peers, dysfunctional family ties, and substance abuse (Change Companies, 2014b).

[44] Parole agents informally refer to these checks as "sweeps," and they often involve local law enforcement. However, according to Werth's (2011a, pp. 212-215) ethnographic descriptions of these checks, the extent of the disruption is much less than that of these PRCS compliance checks.

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officers are not armed,[45] though there were also political reasons for this policy–namely, that Realignment needed to succeed and not be sidetracked by a rash of high-profile crimes committed by people on PRCS who otherwise would have been in state prison.[46]

Law enforcement-administered compliance checks involve two to four cars and four to eight police officers, depending on the location and type of residence. Typically, the individual is handcuffed outside of her residence and questioned by a pair of officers while the remaining officers search the premises, flipping over mattresses, emptying dresser drawers, and so forth. As Chapter 3 will show, for people who are in compliance with the requirements of their supervision, such a disruptive event is scary, surprising, and potentially stigmatizing.

Pence's (2001) institutional ethnographic work on the use of processing interchanges in the handling of domestic violence calls is informative here. As Pence observed, "much of the ideological work of the system is buried in the text" (p. 202). In the "official" account of PRCS (Image 2.4), there is a coordinated process between the police and probation, but the actual subjects of the process are reduced to shadowy figures. Under AB 109, police agencies have been tasked with verifying the addresses of people on PRCS and at various points along the way,

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[45]There is one exception: the Special Enforcement Operations (SEO) unit. Officers in the SEO unit are armed and often accompany law enforcement agencies during compliance checks (Probation annual report, 2012). By some accounts, L.A. County Probation has tripled the number of officers who are armed in response to concerns about the "riskiness" of the N3 population (Villacorte, 2013).

[46] For example, in a 2011 *Los Angeles Times* article (Lin, 2011), L.A. County supervisors were vocal in their criticism of AB 109:

> 'It's a system that's meant to fail,' [Supervisor Michael] Antonovich said, 'and who is it going to fail? Every neighborhood, every community where these people are going to be running around….It's a Pandora's box. It's the bar scene–a violent bar scene that you saw in *Star Wars*–except they're all crazy and nuts'... "It's irresponsible for us to turn around and dump these [prisoners] into our communities with an ankle bracelet and hope they don't re-offend," Antonovich said. Without finding a way to increase prison time, Antonovich said, "I believe we'll have a spike in crime." Local politicians' protest of AB 109 can be seen not only as fear mongering, but as an objection to a massive, highly publicized policy shift that they felt was unfairly thrust upon them by the state (see also: Brand & Martínez, 2012a, 2012b; Mehta, 2013).

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the police are notified if someone on probation has "no showed" or is not complying with the terms of their supervision.

Probation officers spoke matter-of-factly about the compliance checks, stating that it is law enforcement's "style" to conduct the checks in a heavy-handed manner. They acknowledged, however, that the compliance checks as they are currently carried out, might alienate an otherwise compliant client. Officers advise their probationers not to "run from the cops," because this just creates more problems–namely, they can receive a violation for absconding. Officer Perez, a veteran probation officer who now works in administration, acknowledged that there is a disconnect between probation's rehabilitative mission and law enforcement's perspective–in his words, "they're looking for violations." He noted that during early discussions about how to implement AB 109, some politicians balked at allowing probation to take over AB 109, so it was a political move to give law enforcement control of the compliance checks: it is a visible indicator that Realignment is serious about ensuring public safety.[47] In this way, discourses around public safety trump efforts to reintegrate individuals who are on PRCS.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to lay the groundwork for subsequent chapters, which show the tactics used by formerly-incarcerated women, parole agents, and probation officers to manage their work. In particular, this chapter has highlighted the ways in which institutions define their "helping" and "control" goals as a means of setting up analyses in subsequent chapters of the ways in which women and workers manage the fact that either: there is a mismatch between

[47] Some early media coverage spread misinformation that Realignment would mean that state prisoners would be let out early, fueling public concern about the new law. All agency websites and Realignment-related documents now explicitly clarify that no one is being let out early.

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clients' goals and the goals that institutions have for clients; or, the goals of institutions and clients align, but there are minimal resources for achieving them.

Chapter Three

How women manage post-incarceration work

This chapter examines the ways in which formerly-incarcerated women grapple with various priorities–both their own and those that are imposed upon them. In the critical first weeks and months post-release, women must manage:

1. Themselves–specifically, the emotions associated with reacclimating to life post-incarceration;
2. Their interactions with peers in "intermediate spaces" like New Beginnings; and
3. Their encounters with public institutions, particularly with workers within those institutions.

These facets of post-incarceration work often compete and conflict with one another. My analysis reveals the work that women do to survive involves the collision of personal and public interests. To get the assistance they need, women strategically disclose intimate details of their lives in both public settings like welfare, parole, and probation offices and in what I call "intermediate spaces" such as transitional housing and substance abuse treatment programs.

As noted in Chapter 1, while the public-private divide has been amply examined in the feminist literature, here, the concept is modified by using the term "personal" rather than private to denote such settings and forms of disclosure. This accounts for the fact that people on community supervision have no privacy under the law, and very little actual privacy in the temporary spaces in which they typically live and work immediately post-release. The personal is defined as including intimate information, emotions, and spaces that one would choose to keep private if their social status permitted them to do so.

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This chapter unfolds in three sections. The first section examines the sorts of personal struggles that women manage in their post-incarceration work. Women do this work under trying circumstances, in "intermediate spaces" governed by complex rules about emotional displays. The second section shows that, in addition to these struggles, women must manage how they present themselves to the various institutions with which they must interact. My examination focuses on the tactics that women employ–including emotion management and personal disclosure–to get the assistance they need. The final section examines how women's post-incarceration work has been newly challenged by the changes implemented under California's Realignment.

Post-incarceration work in intermediate spaces

Intermediate spaces, which are conceptualized here as including drug treatment programs and sober living homes like New Beginnings, are quasi-public settings in which women are expected to share emotions and other intimate details of their lives for the sake of their own rehabilitation–specifically, their "recovery." This is consistent with understandings of the current landscape of diverse prisoner reentry services that exemplify our current era of carceral devolution, as reviewed in Chapter 1.

Recovery is a broad term that denotes both healing–from various forms of addiction and/or trauma–and setting one's self on a better path in which these past experiences do not negatively affect one's well-being or functioning. As Grace describes it, "in treatment they tell us, like the stuff we've been through, they tell us to get it out and put it out there and get past it." Unsurprisingly, recovery looks different for everyone, which makes group residential settings like New Beginnings tricky to navigate. Just as people in prison deal with the fact that they have little privacy in cells which they often share, residents of sober livings and other shared housing

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settings have minimal private space in which to process the many emotions associated with the chaos of post-incarceration life.

New Beginnings' founder and director, Ms. B., cycled in and out of the crime-processing system for years before permanently "getting clean" from drugs and opening her home to other women who were trying to do the same. Over time, she purchased three other homes[48] in the area and rented office space nearby to serve as the program's headquarters. In interviews, when asked who had helped them the most since they had gotten out of jail or prison this most recent time, several women talked about Ms. B. as being "like a mother" to them at a crucial moment in their lives. Yet many of the women also spoke critically of the "tough love" that she frequently dishes out to ensure compliance with the program's rules. During the months in which I spent time at the program to both observe and recruit participants for my study, I heard about and witnessed several such conflicts–typically over suspected drug use–that often resulted in women leaving the program. Recent research has examined both the strengths and conflicts that arise when "wounded healers" (White, 2000) are positioned as facilitators of the reentry process for others (Heidemann, 2015; Lebel, Richie, & Maruna, 2015; see also: Brown, 1991). These complexities are ever-present at New Beginnings, which is part of a growing movement of programs run by and for formerly-incarcerated people.

Within intermediate spaces like New Beginnings, there are three types of work in which I regularly observed women engaging: the *internal* work of processing the emotions associated with the difficult task of rebuilding one's life after a period of incarceration; the work of

[48] For the purposes of contracts with state institutions, New Beginnings' homes are termed "sober living homes," a category that is specific to California. Sober living homes are typically small facilities with a single-family home "feel," though three to four residents often share each bedroom. In California, sober living homes function as transitional housing between either incarceration or a substance abuse treatment facility and permanent housing. Residents must maintain their sobriety and are typically expected to participate in Twelve-Step meetings (Heslin, Singzon, Aimiuwu, Sheridan, & Hamilton, 2012).

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interacting with peers who may or may not be on similar paths to "recovery"; and the work of *selectively sharing* elements of their internal work–often, ironically, in order to receive other forms of assistance. My larger point in illustrating these forms of work is that women are simultaneously doing all of these tasks while navigating the public institutions which will be examined in the following section.

Internal work

As Maruna (2001) has shown, formerly-incarcerated people must confront and be able to work past feelings of shame, blame, and guilt if they are to successfully rebuild their lives. A well-developed literature on the rehabilitation of crime-processed people recognizes that rebuilding one's life post-incarceration is a difficult process (see, for examples: Braman, 2002, 2004; Irwin, 2005; Lerman & Weaver, 2014; Maruna, 2001, 2011; Pager, 2003, 2007; Petersilia, 2003; Travis, 2005; Western, 2006). Yet while the scholarly literature argues that to be successful, formerly-incarcerated individuals must strive to build stable social and emotional lives (Berg & Huebner, 2011; Cobbina, 2009, 2010; Cobbina & Bender, 2012; Leverentz, 2006, 2010, 2011; Visher & Travis, 2011), there is little consistent support to do so as women move from highly structured prison life to the anarchy of life post-release.

A common struggle encountered by the women in my sample involved working through grief intermixed with guilt over being absent for important events in one's social network while either still "in her addiction" or incarcerated and thus not able to fully engage with what has happened. At the time of our interview, Sally shared that she is still coming to terms with her behavior around the time of her father's death five years earlier:

> Even with my dad before he passed. My dad was never on drugs but he had come from the streets. He knew that if I wasn't coming around, he knew what I was doing. So he would want me to come by and I would say 'Well Dad, you know that if I'm doing whatever, I'm not coming around. I'm not going to disrespect you like that.' It was hard. Because he wanted me

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> to come home and I felt if I go home he's going to die for sure. Because he told me he wasn't going to leave me until he knew that I was going to be okay. I was selfish. I didn't go. And I got a phone call that he had passed.

Sally's grief over the loss of her father–a difficult emotional process on its own–is complicated by the fact that she was still using drugs at the time of his illness and death. While she struggles to forgive herself for her past behavior, she is also reconnecting with her emotions–both positive and negative–after having spent years suppressing them with drugs.

This complex internal work makes it difficult for women to figure out how to reintegrate with their social networks. At the time I first met Gail, she struggled not to cry throughout our interview as she described relapsing on drugs after she was released from prison, before she came to New Beginnings. She felt immense guilt over how she had treated her boyfriend, who continued to support her and her grandchildren throughout Gail's incarceration, in addition to struggling to regain her self esteem during her recovery:

> I have to stop blocking out my surroundings, the ladies here. I need to start socializing more with them, get to know them. So they can get to know me and then we can work together, help each other. But I'm fine. I'm glad I'm clean. Man, I'm so glad I'm clean, because when I got out of prison I didn't even call my boyfriend. The stuff was calling me before I even got out of prison. I knew he had been looking for me and then when he did finally catch up with me, he tried to come see me. I came up with an excuse. He wanted to take me out, but I feel so bad. He's been taking care of me and my four grandkids since I've been in prison. He hasn't missed a beat, hadn't missed a birthday, haven't missed nothing since I went in prison. I couldn't even go see him. Call him and let him know that I'm home. Who does that? The reason why I end up going to prison, because of all the bad stuff I started doing to him and stuff. I don't have a reason to do it… It just took over me all of the sudden. Then I told him I don't even see why he is even messing with me today. If I was him, I wouldn't even mess with me. The way I treated him and things I did to him. It was so horrible… He said he's not going to stop loving me until I love myself.
>
> At least now that I'm clean, I can sit and talk to him. We get along better. He's glad to see me. He says I'm an entirely different person. But it's just me working on trying to get out into the world. Get into life, live it. Learning how to live. It won't come overnight… I'm telling you I got a hell of a boyfriend. He's a good person. He's only been clean seven years. When he went and got clean he came straight back home. When he went home I was selling dope… A lot of times I feel like I'm not good enough for him. I shouldn't feel that way. He loves me for who I am. Not how smart I am or whatever. He's very smart. He's well-educated. The

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> whole nine yards and I made me feel less then. I shouldn't put myself down like that. I'm learning not to put myself down like. Because it must be something he's still with me.

Sally's and Gail's narratives pinpoint a particularly difficult post-incarceration task–self-forgiveness–and underscore the internal nature of such work. Gail in particular recognizes that the consuming nature of this work pulls her away from other work she should be doing: she needs to connect with the other women at New Beginnings and with her boyfriend, who wants to be a source of support to her.

The internal work of recovery involves not only self-forgiveness, but a reframing of what one wants out of life and who one wants to be. As Abby, who at 27 was one of the youngest participants in my study, struggled to come to terms with the crimes she had committed, she also sought to redefine her goals:

> I think about all of the stuff that I've stolen from people or took from people like they were just random people and when I was at [a different sober living] I got a bunch of my jewelry stolen and the feeling that I had stuff I paid for. You know what I mean? That feeling made me feel like now I know how it feels when I took shit from other people? Like, hard working people paid money for those cars or those systems or those rims. And I took it from them and fucking basically ruined their whole life. I don't feel like that's–I'm not that type of person, but when I'm on drugs, I am, you know? I don't really give a crap about anybody. But now I know how it feels and I don't wish that upon anybody.
>
> So I just want my own stuff. Stuff that I bought. Stuff that I worked hard for. Something that I'm gonna appreciate because a lot of people take stuff they have for granted. I won't ever be one of those people ever. 'Cause I've never had anything. If I die today, if they look back on my life, like 'oh she had a job?' 'No, she didn't have a job.' 'She had a house?' 'No, she didn't have a house either or a car or anything.' (Laughs.) You know what I mean? So I wanna be able to have somebody say something great about me. Not just she's a fucking thief drug addict, you know? Parolee.

What is striking in Abby's narrative is her ability–somewhat in contrast to Sally and Gail–to envision other possibilities for her life beyond her past behavior of stealing to support her drug habit. Arguably, Abby is able to more readily see these possibilities because she has experienced fewer years of substance abuse and incarceration.

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The variations reflected in Abby's, Sally's, and Gail's narratives are indicative of the wide range of emotional states in which women enter intermediate spaces like New Beginnings. Over time, I observed that this complicated women's experiences at New Beginnings, as women managed both their internal work and their interactions with each other.

Interactions with peers

Some women found ways to benefit from living with other women in similar circumstances. Gail, Lucy, and Randi would wake up at 4:30 each morning and walk together to a nearby park, where they would exercise. While all three women cited weight loss as their primary goal, it also served a larger purpose of facilitating emotional wellbeing. As Gail put it, "it keeps my mind clear of a lot of things. I don't stress that much, I just let it go. If I go work out in the morning, I feel so good. I come back, I eat, I take me a shower, and then get my day started."

Most of the women I spoke with, however, found navigating social interactions with their peers at New Beginnings to be fraught with difficulty. Part of this is simply due to a lack of personal space: like most transitional housing programs, the women at New Beginnings typically lived in shared bedrooms with up to three other women. There were other contributing factors too, however. These related to cultural conflicts as well as women's perceived readiness to do the real work of "recovery."

The racial and ethnic backgrounds of the women in my sample[49] were roughly reflective of the demographics of the South Los Angeles neighborhood where the program is located. The numerous conflicts I observed at New Beginnings were both inter- and intra-racial, and only a couple of the women directly cited racial differences as being a source of tension. Abby

[49] See Table 2.1, previous chapter, and Table A.1, Appendix A.

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described a culture clash that cut across race, which led her to spend as little time at the program as possible to avoid conflict:

> I'm a little uncomfortable here 'cause I'm the only White girl, but whatever. It is what it is. They're all nice. I'm never here. I stay out all day but it's just out of my element a little. But I mean I'm from [nearby city]. It's the same shit, you know? But I came from Mexicans…

Interestingly, although Abby identified racial differences as a source of alienation, women in the dominant racial group also struggled socially. Zara, a Black woman with a bubbly personality, found it difficult to form bonds with the other (mostly Black) women at New Beginnings and often lamented this fact to me during our time together in the field. When asked to describe someone whom she thought would help her in her reentry process but didn't, she described her roommate at the program, another Black woman:

> That happens a lot. With people standing in your way. And they think that they're being helpful, but then they're not, they're causing more harm than good. Like for instance, if I'm braiding your hair and then one of these ladies walks up and says, 'oh, oh my homegirl braids hair, girl, and she's the bomb and she gets down. She got her own shop!' What is that? What does that do to the person that is actually braiding hair? They don't even realize that they're being harmful. And maybe they actually do know they're being harmful and they're doing it intentionally. But no matter how mean she is, I'm nice to her. It's hard when someone's mean to your or rude to you or come at you in a certain demeanor not to respond to 'em. You wanna react. But if you really really kill 'em with kindness, that attitude they're not gonna expect. They not gonna expect that. So somewhere down the line maybe they'll get it together.

Zara's narrative illustrates the difficult work of living in a shared housing situation post-release: she expects to develop friendships forged through common experience, but instead feels like she is in a constant competition with the other women. This makes getting on with the work of recovery–a task which is supposed to be socially facilitated through personal disclosure–more difficult.

Zara is typical of one of the two ways in which women come to New Beginnings: straight out of prison, like Abby and Sally; or from a post-prison in-patient drug treatment facility, as in Gail's case. The multiple ways in which women can come to be at New Beginnings,

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unsurprisingly, contributes to the conflicts experienced among them, as women perceive each other to be at varying points of readiness to do the real work of recovery.

Selective sharing

The rules of intermediate spaces[50] dictate that in order for a woman to accomplish the deeply emotional work necessary in recovery, she must disclose–in one-on-one and group sessions–various intimate details about her addiction and/or trauma. These may include aspects of herself that she would prefer to keep private. For example, it is well known that women involved in the crime-processing system are more likely than their male counterparts to report a history of physical and/or sexual victimization, and thus to have high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (Moloney et al, 2009). The narratives of the women who participated in this study certainly confirm these statistics. Those of us who are not under the control of the crime-processing system enjoy the privilege of keeping our emotions private unless we choose to disclose them to friends, loved ones, and/or paid professionals, as we are not mandated to share our emotions in exchange for our housing and other resources.[51] The reality of being forced to do so leads

[50] In this section, my analysis includes women's narratives both of the programming at New Beginnings and at outside agencies. True to the sober living model, New Beginnings runs various group meetings which the program claims to be helpful in facilitating recovery, but most women talked about the real work of recovery as happening at programs external to New Beginnings. Most women participated in groups at both New Beginnings and outside agencies because they were often required to do both as a condition of their community supervision. New Beginnings' program documents state that attendance at these meetings is mandatory, though in practice, this rule is not enforced, and the meetings are often cancelled because no one is available to run them. I facilitated one such group, called "Woman to Woman," a couple of times during my fieldwork; others are Big Book [AA]-focused meetings. When the meetings do take place, women are encouraged to talk about their feelings associated with the day-to-day experiences of living at the program (grievances amongst residents are often aired).

[51] This is not to discount the therapeutic benefit of disclosure, which has been shown to be helpful particularly for women with histories of abuse (see, for example: Hunter, Robison, & Jason, 2012), but rather to make the point that such a benefit may be diminished when disclosure is mandatory rather than voluntary.

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women to do the work of what I call "selectively sharing" elements of their internal work with each other.

Reflective of what we know about women's involvement in the crime-processing system since the advent of the war on drugs (Bush-Baskette, 2010), most women at New Beginnings are required to participate in substance abuse counseling as a condition of their parole or PRCS. Interestingly, even those women in my sample who did not have a drug-related conviction–like Dawn–participated in such programs so that parole[52] would pay for their housing:[53]

Dawn: When I was working, I used to wake up and leave the house at 5am, get to work at 7am, and get back at like 9pm because I had to do my SASCA right after work. We have to do a one-on-one once a week and then we have to do two groups. So it could be either family reunification or anger management or just open case management.

Megan: So what do you usually do?

Dawn: Family reunification and anger management.

Megan: What's the family reunification about?

Dawn: It talks about building a positive relationship with your family after coming from prison or after being away from them whether you're in jail or whatever. It talks about ways that you can build better relationships with them, and then we also talk about how we've been hurt by our family and how we get past it. Certain things I don't talk about, certain things that I know that they can't hurt me no more I will talk about... With my drug and alcohol counselor, we talk about everything. I'll talk about how I feel, I can really talk to him a lot. He knows a lot. But I talk about how I feel, what's going on with me, because you know there's times when I feel like I wanna smoke week or drink... I just need a shot of Hennessey or something. Sometimes I feel overwhelmed so I wanna do stuff but I know that that one drink–I

[52] In contrast, the women in this study who had been released via AB 109 had few substantive things to say about their substance abuse counseling. Based on my observations–notably, I accompanied Jane and her two young children to her substance abuse counseling assessment, which took the better half of a day–the intake and assessment process is far more rigorous than the actual programming, though to be fair, this was within the first year of AB 109's implementation, when services were not operating at full capacity. The standard intake process for this sort of programming involves a lengthy series of multiple choice questions posed to the client by a worker who is inputting the responses into a computer. Throughout the interview, certain questions about the client's substance abuse history are asked repeatedly in an effort to determine whether the client is lying.

[53] The program through which parole can pay for an individual's housing in California is called the Substance Abuse Services Coordination Agency (SASCA).

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> know how I am with alcohol–that one drink is going to take me to a whole different place… So when I feel overwhelmed I go and talk to him about it. He's a recovering drug addict too, and he's been clean for a while, so he gives me the best advice he can, like he explains to me, you have a free will, you can do what you want to do, but you have to look at the consequences after it. That guilt is going to hurt you more than anything, 'cause once you do it, that guilt is gonna keep on wanting more and more and more until you're in a rut, and I don't want to go back there, I know how it feels to have that guilt…

At the time we first met, Dawn was 24 years old–the youngest participant in my sample. She had recently served four years in prison, but prior to that, she had been in and out of the juvenile system since the age of 13: juvenile hall, group homes, boot camp, and eventually, the California Youth Authority. Dawn's father had been absent for most of her growing up, her mother was an active drug user, and her grandmother, with whom Dawn had been very close, had died around the time of her most recent arrest. What is striking in Dawn's narrative is that she keeps her true emotions guarded in group sessions–things that "won't hurt [her] no more"–but she feels like she can talk to her drug counselor about anything, at least partially because he is in recovery too.

Interestingly, Grace has an inverse experience to Dawn's with the groups and one-on-one counseling in which she participates:

> My counselor, she's alright but–ok, in recovery they said one story can help another person's life, and when I sat down to talk to her for the first time, she told me that she don't believe in sharing her story because she don't believe that something she's been through could help me. So I don't really know nothing about her, but most counselors who work there, they're in recovery, they're ex-addicts and they'll share a story, but I don't really know anything about her because her thing was 'I work for you, I'm your counselor so there's no reason for you to know anything about me.' Well, how does she know something she might have told me I could identify with or it might help me in my life? So when I first talked to her I was like, it's not going to work for me. When she told me that I really put a wall up….
>
> I like hearing people's stories, because even though I'm an addict, but not of drugs. So at first, when I got in treatment I would say that I don't need to be here, I can't really identify but then it was like everybody is an addict of something so I had to look at it from that aspect, not just from the drug aspect and then a lot of people been through the same thing I been through as far as molestation and rape and just their relationship with their parents. Like me and my mom we have don't have a good relationship so even though they did drugs and I didn't we still got the same fucked up issues and stuff in common and so I just look at it like that. But the meetings, I just like hearing people share, I really don't get much from it like that. Basically I go because I have to and that's a requirement for my SASCA.

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Perhaps unsurprisingly, Grace yearns for her counselor to share details about her personal history in service of helping Grace to come to terms with her own past. Grace is looking for that intimate, trusting connection that Dawn feels with her counselor, based on the common ground they share as people in recovery. When this doesn't happen, Grace "put[s] a wall up" with her counselor and shares the bare minimum to stay in the program. Interestingly, Grace does find it helpful to hear other people's stories during her group sessions–though she herself does not share very much. Ultimately, Grace only goes because she has to in order to get help with her housing. This was a common sentiment among the women I interviewed, and underscores the fundamental way in which women's post-incarceration goals are often distinct from those imposed upon them by the institutions responsible for carrying out rehabilitation. Women are expected to share elements of their internal work in these quasi-public intermediate spaces in order to receive other forms of assistance, such as transitional housing, yet the assistance they receive for processing their emotions–a key aspect of sustaining the benefits of rehabilitation–is uneven at best.

This points to an important gap in post-release support: women typically do not have access to helping professionals whose formal role is to guide them through the emotional aspects of the reentry process. As the narratives of Dawn and Grace illustrate, substance abuse counselors and support groups offer some assistance, though it is narrowly focused on recovery from addiction. Similarly, for women who have a mental health diagnosis and access to mental health services, these services are typically focused closely on managing the symptoms of a mental illness,[54] not the broader work that accompanies a recent period of incarceration.

[54] See Chapter 5 for further discussion of gaps in mental health and substance abuse services.

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Only some of the women I spoke with found ways to cobble together the emotional support they needed. For some women, family was a source of support, but this was tricky too, as some family members remained active in the sorts of behavior that the women were trying to avoid. A few, like Sally and Zara, found guidance and comfort from Ms. B, who had "been there" herself. Ms. B was a polarizing figure, though, and some women went to great lengths to avoid her. Dawn found support in her drug counselor, but Grace only met with her counselor so that she could maintain her assistance. Gail found her exercise sessions to be helpful as she struggled to let her boyfriend give her the support she needed, while Abby felt culturally isolated at the program as she tried to maintain a distance from family members who were still involved with drugs and crime. These varied experiences speak to the need for a more formalized source of support for the complex internal work associated with post-incarceration life.

Institutional encounters

In observations and interviews, I came to understand that there are two ways in which encounters on the institutional circuit are difficult for formerly-incarcerated women:

1. When there is a mismatch between a woman's goals and an institution's goals for her; and
2. When the woman's goals and the institution's goals align but there is minimal support for achieving them.

Because women intuitively know not to expect institutions to fulfill the promise of their stated "helping" goals–and because they have already experienced the full force of crime-processing institutions' "control" goals–I argue that women's work centers around minimizing any harm done in being involved with the institution while maximizing the meager benefits. The following two sections examine the tactics women use–which include emotion management and selective personal disclosure–to get the assistance they need from the institutions of welfare and community supervision (parole or probation).

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Welfare

Within the first week or so of a woman getting out of prison and enrolling in the program at New Beginnings, she is asked to go to the welfare office and apply for cash aid and food stamps. At first, I thought that the program required this activity for the women's own benefit–to have some money in their pockets to be able to buy clothes and other necessities. It wasn't until the social worker asked me one day to bring the woman's EBT card (Electronic Benefit Transfer–the way welfare benefits are disbursed to recipients) to the office when we were done at the welfare office that I realized the program used the women's food stamps to purchase food for the program; if the woman had no other source of income for her rent,[55] her cash aid went directly to the program as well. In this way, although New Beginnings prides itself on being a grassroots organization, it relies on the welfare system–and the women's interactions with it–to cover some of its expenses. Haney (2010) found a similar process in the programs she studied, underscoring the pervasiveness with which state programs and priorities have infiltrated non-state entities in this way. I grew critical of this process and my role in it because of the toll it took on the women. Particularly for those who had been incarcerated for longer periods of time, the emotional and often physical[56] traumas of incarceration coupled with the shock of having just gotten out made the harsh reality of the welfare office difficult to manage.

[55] Most of the women at New Beginnings at any given time are either on parole or probation, which pays for women's housing at sober living facilities. Women are allowed to stay at the program beyond their time on community supervision, however, and at that point they must find a way to pay rent.

[56] Many of the lawsuits that precipitated Realignment were filed because of prisoner deaths that had occurred due to lack of medical care (see: Simon, 2014). It is not unusual for inmates to be released from prison and jail with critical health care issues. During my volunteer work in the welfare offices, I encountered a man with a gaping wound in his mid-section. His gallbladder had been removed in an emergency surgery in prison, but he had received no follow-up care. It was now likely infected, as he had been suddenly released (under AB 109) and was currently homeless. Reggie, a woman in my study, had been confined to a wheelchair for her last two years in prison because of a botched knee replacement surgery she had while in prison. Several other women had chronic illnesses that went either untreated or mistreated while they were incarcerated.

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I began my study of welfare and women's encounters with it through Dawn, a self-professed experienced welfare client who was happy to show me how things worked in exchange for a ride to the office. On the day we are to go, I pick Dawn up at 7am and we drive to the welfare office where she has previously received assistance. Due to a change in Dawn's "status"–she is no longer pregnant and she recently got laid off from her job–Dawn needs to apply for cash aid and make sure that she is still receiving her food stamps. The office opens at 8am, and Dawn wants to be there before it opens. I quickly realize why: when we arrive there at 7:30, a long line already wraps around the outside of the building. Once inside, we pass through a metal detector while security guards check our bags (see Image 2.1 in the previous chapter).

Young men of color are the dominant demographic at offices that only process GR (General Relief) cases, and they all shuffle through the metal detector while holding their pants up. Once inside, they cluster around the security guard's desk as they scramble to put their belts back on. As I watch this scene, Dawn confidently walks over and stands in a line for one of about ten windows lining one wall of the building. Here, as with most of the public service buildings visited during my fieldwork, bulletproof glass covers each window, separating the clients from the workers. Some signs posted around the office ironically caution us that standing is not allowed, while others display the mug shots of people who have committed welfare fraud. I ask Dawn how she knows which window to stand at, and she points to a cracked, faded sign that says "non-appointments." Other people walk up after us, confused about which line to stand in, and we direct them.

After signing in, Dawn receives a thick packet of paperwork, which she fills out while I watch and ask questions. Through the volunteer work I was simultaneously doing with a legal aid organization, I was aware that the welfare application forms are written at a 12th grade reading

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level. It is unsurprising, then, that as I sit with Dawn, I notice several people around us struggling to fill out the forms before giving up and leaving most pages blank. At one point, a young woman asks us a question about one of the forms, which Dawn is able to answer. Then, we wait for two more hours.

Around lunch time, I notice that the line to get in the building has dissipated, so I go outside to buy us fortifications from a lunch truck. While I'm gone, Dawn is called back to one of the interview booths. She texts me instructions about how to find her amongst the roughly 50 interview booths that comprise the back half of the building. When I return, I find Dawn seated across from a middle-aged man of South Asian descent, a window of bulletproof glass separating them. Aside from going outside to buy lunch, which I quickly learned was a violation of the "code" of these offices, I repeated this process at least ten times with the other women at New Beginnings, and witnessed it dozens of other times through my volunteer work with legal aid.

In an interview with me afterward, Dawn and I discussed the eligibility interview that ensued:

Dawn: He was rude to me, and I don't know, he already knew from the last time I had applied… everything's in the system and they made me bring a letter from my parole agent, so they know I'm on parole, you know? And it was just… he was rude. First of all, I was just texting to tell you that I was back there, and he was like "you can put your phone up or you can come back at 2 o'clock…" So I hurried up and sent it and put it up. And then he said…

Megan: "You can't eat."

Dawn: Yeah! Because you came back with the food, "you can't eat or you can come back at 2 o'clock," and "just sign here" and threw the papers out the window. And then he's all, "your food stamps are about to be terminated." And I was like, "how is that?" And he was like, "because you didn't do the community service for your food stamps," like, "you gotta work for your food stamps." They try to make it nice, they call it a work program, a work requirement program, so you go freaking work all these hours a week, you're saying that this is to help us get back on our feet, but you're making it… you're like slaving us for it or something, like what if I have other things to do?

Megan: And the time spent doing that is time you can't spend…

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Dawn: Working, looking for a job.

In order to perform the thankless work of applying for welfare, Dawn has to set aside her awareness of being exploited in order to get the help she needs. Not surprisingly, it is difficult for Dawn, who is situated within her own particular experience, to understand how a larger set of relations is contributing to her circumstances (D. Smith, 1987, 2006), though she can sense that it is there. This increases the work she must do to get through the interview.

The fact that Dawn has to provide her welfare worker with a letter from her parole agent is an example of what Haney has referred to as "penal-welfare convergence" (2004): should Dawn violate the conditions of her parole at any point, she will become ineligible to receive assistance (DPSS, 2014d). Dawn and the other women I interviewed resignedly accept the intrusion of multiple institutions in their lives, but, as Dawn expresses in the passage above, having to disclose involvement with one institution to another feels like a violation of privacy. Dawn is forced to relinquish her privacy to get the welfare assistance she needs, even though there is no coordination between welfare and parole to provide her with any sort of special help.

When Dawn says "you're slaving us for it" when she's talking about the welfare-to-work program she has to participate in for 20 hours per week, she is voicing her frustration with a system that doesn't know how to handle the fact that she has a criminal record. Dawn, who has cycled on and off welfare several times in between periods of incarceration, recognizes that the program is a waste of time–ironically, it is a distraction to actually getting a job.[57] It is important to note here that in this way, Dawn's situation falls into the second goals–resources category I described at the beginning of this section: her goals align with those of the institution, but there

[57] As I noted in Chapter 2, of the 23 out of 24 women in my sample who were on welfare, none found work through the welfare-to-work programming in which they were required to participate.

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are inadequate means available to achieve them. Dawn shares welfare's goal of independence: she wants to work, but recognizes that the mandatory welfare-to-work program is an impediment to, not a facilitator of, this goal.

Although the worker starts off being "rude," in the course of his interaction with Dawn, he seems to soften his approach later on. Dawn informs him that she had been working until very recently, and thus should not have been required to participate in the welfare-to-work program while she was employed–thus, her food stamps should not be in danger of being terminated. Dawn also discloses that she recently had a miscarriage. This disclosure places her into a different category–one that makes it possible for her to get the help that she needs:

Megan: But then, after that initial thing, he seemed to try to help you, right? Because he was like…

Dawn: 'Ok, I'll put it in the computer that you were pregnant and that you were working at this time, so you had good cause not to [participate in the work program], and if your food stamps don't come on the 3rd, call your worker and get it settled.' So yeah, afterwards, but initially he was all rude at first, I guess maybe because I didn't get rude back, maybe he was like 'ok, she's not gonna be rude back.'

Megan: Yeah, yeah. 'Maybe she's gonna be cool about it.' But the way he took that pile of papers and just shoved it through the window, and they didn't quite fit but he just shoved them through…

Dawn: If I had done that to him he would have been like, "come back at two," you know?

Dawn recognizes that, in this instance at least, "not getting rude back" is the most effective approach. In this way, she controls her emotions as an effective means of controlling the worker's emotional response to her. Dawn's ability to do this is commendable, given that two very stressful things have happened to her: until recently, Dawn had been working at a telemarketing firm–a low-wage position in which she had no job security. She was laid off for not meeting her quota of calls, though she speculated that it was really because her supervisor found out that she was pregnant. Dawn had also recently suffered a miscarriage from her first

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pregnancy, and is reminded of this painful fact throughout the eligibility interview,[58] as the worker asks her to confirm that she has no dependents and is not currently pregnant. She shares with her worker that she had a miscarriage because she had previously disclosed that she was pregnant so that she could sign up for Medi-Cal, California's medical assistance program for low-income families.[59]

Dawn's encounter with this eligibility worker reflects two ways in which public institutions manage the emotions of their clients: through the regulation of discourse and the scripting of events (Schwalbe et al, 2000). After a day spent applying for welfare, another woman in my study, Abby, succinctly summed up these tactics when she described her worker as "putting on a robot face" during her eligibility interview.

The regulation of discourse in the reproduction of inequality involves "formal or informal rules about what can be said, how it can be said, and who can say what to whom" (Schwalbe et al, 2000, pp. 435; see also Potter & Wetherell, 1987). In a similar fashion, scripted events are designed to evoke a certain emotional response. In an eligibility interview for cash aid and/or food stamps, for example, an applicant presents her completed packet of forms and an eligibility worker reviews them and asks questions–following the script provided by the forms–regarding the applicant's income, housing status, familial attachments, and criminal record. The questions are geared to elicit certain emotional responses from the applicant and to exclude others. In this way, through a standardized form of discourse, the interviewer regulates the interviewee's emotional register (Schwalbe et al, 2000). Whatever emotions Dawn might have about her recent

[58] Dawn is applying for General Relief, a state-run assistance program for "Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents" (ABAWD) instead of the federally-funded program for adults with children (Temporary Aid for Needy Families, or TANF). See Chapter 2.

[59] At the time of this fieldwork, after her miscarriage, Dawn was not eligible to receive Medi-Cal because she was not pregnant and thus categorized as ABAWD. This law changed under the Affordable Care Act. As of January 1, 2014, most General Assistance recipients are able to enroll in Medi-Cal (DPSS, 2014a).

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layoff and her miscarriage are not permitted during the eligibility interview, and thus she suppresses them.

Interestingly, however, as Dawn's experience shows, the client also has some power–albeit limited–to manage the worker's emotional response. Dawn's selective disclosure of personal details of her life–parsed out from the emotions associated with them–successfully re-routes her case and ensures that she gets the help she needs.

Dawn's eligibility interview also illustrates that even in a "successful" interview, in which one is deemed eligible, little is actually resolved with any certainty: her application was processed for General Relief, but she would have to wait 30 days to start receiving the cash aid. She also must wait and see if her food stamps actually come through on the 3rd of the month; if not, she must call her primary worker and ask for them to be reinstated. The suspense of not knowing when one's food stamps would actually come through was a constant source of stress among the formerly-incarcerated women and other welfare applicants I met during my fieldwork. A typical interaction with someone other than one's primary worker (as was the case here) involves the interviewing worker dismissing immediate problems by telling the client to call his or her worker to sort it out. Workers generally do not answer their phones or return messages, further heightening the frustration. Such uncertainty is stressful for any welfare applicant, but particularly so for formerly-incarcerated people, whose social and economic support networks have often been strained–if not decimated–by a recent period of incarceration (Cobbina, 2009; Leverentz, 2006, 2011; Morash et al 2014; Richie, 1996, 2001, 2012). Thus, encounters with the welfare system underscore a constant theme in post-incarceration life: the difficulty associated with obtaining any sort of personalized response from a public institution.

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Although Dawn loathes the welfare office, she exhibits a deep understanding of how things operate, and this works to her advantage: as the preceding encounter demonstrates, Dawn is able to effectively ask for the assistance she needs through her selective disclosure of personal information that might help her, as well as by managing her emotions and in turn managing the worker's emotional response to her.

Other women in my study, however, struggled to grasp the logic of the welfare system. This typically occurred when a woman's case got stuck in one of the many crevices in which welfare policies as they are actually carried out make things more difficult for the people who need assistance the most. The disjuncture between what people understand about the help they need and the restrictions places on such resources understandably leads them to at times conceptualize the welfare system as a ruthless adversary. Rowena puts it this way: "I believe if you don't stand up for yourself, they'll do whatever they can to intimidate you–they really try to intimidate you to keep you from getting on [welfare]." Arguably, in understanding the welfare system as an adversary, Rowena makes things more difficult for herself. She recounted a recent experience (prior to her time at New Beginnings) in which the amount of cash aid she was receiving was lower than the amount for which she was qualified because the friend with whom she was living started receiving SSI–Social Security's Supplemental Security Insurance for individuals with disabilities.

Rowena's worker told her that because her friend started receiving these federal benefits, she had to pay back the county welfare money she had received,[60] and that they could reduce Rowena's county benefits (to also pay back this money) because she was living with her. This is a common difficulty among welfare recipients, who frequently cohabitate to minimize expenses.

[60] Applicants are repeatedly reminded that their cash aid is a "grant" which they will have to pay back (DPSS, 2014a, 2014d).

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Even though Rowena had since moved to New Beginnings, her cash aid was still being reduced. Although Rowena wants to advocate for herself–and does so in the only ways she can, by asking questions in-person and by frequently calling her worker–doing so is particularly frustrating amongst the various confusing rules of the welfare bureaucracy. Rowena's worker, typical of other welfare recipients' experiences, did not return her calls, so at the time of our interview, Rowena was trying to figure out a day when she could go down to the office and wait to see her worker. This too often proves difficult, as a worker may not be in on the day one tries to see them.

As the experiences of Dawn and Rowena illuminate, the tactics women use to get the assistance they need from the welfare system partially determine how successful they are. Personal details must be leveraged strategically to facilitate one's case, and one's emotions must be managed so as to also manage workers' emotional responses.

Community supervision

In contrast to welfare, community supervision offers slightly more space for a personal connection, likely because women see their parole agents or probation officers more regularly and thus are able to establish a rapport with them, though even this was highly variable among the women in my study. It was also not unusual for the women in my study to have three or four different parole agents during a typical three-year term of supervision, which required constant adjustment by the women to each agent's particular supervision style (see Gabrielle's story in Chapter 4).

The women I spoke with universally agreed that being on community supervision is more of a hindrance to them than a help. However, they were simultaneously alert to the ways in which being on supervision stigmatizes them and to the minimal ways in which it can actually be

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helpful. Women navigate this tricky terrain by selectively leveraging personal details to get the assistance they need. Randi, for example, advocated for herself to stay on parole as long as possible so that parole would continue to pay for her housing at New Beginnings:

> I'm up for a review for parole, I tell them I don't want to get off parole because my resources stop. I told my psychiatrist and she's going to suggest that I stay on for a little while longer. It might be another year. I'm dealing with that. I don't want him to come up and surprise me one day and say, "You off parole." And then immediately, your resources just stop and you have to go other avenues… I tell him how I feel. Why he ain't checking on me? He's supposed to come to the house. He said that he was coming out here and he ain't made it out yet. That'll be the second time he didn't come. But, he's a good parole officer. I don't give him no problems. I'm not a problem child when I'm on parole. Just don't take me off parole. I even wrote it down on my monthly report when I was there. He didn't tell me to write one. I wrote one because he wasn't there. He called me one day and that was the extent of that. He just called to see how I was doing, but other than that, since he's been my parole officer, he really don't check on me.

It is ironic that Randi wants to stay on parole longer than necessary, even though her reason for doing so is understandable. This underscores Haney's (1996) finding that–contrary to much feminist theorizing about state institutions that says that institutions try to foster and perpetuate dependency–in some situations, clients will actually work to maintain their dependent relationship in direct opposition to workers' efforts to discontinue the relationship.

Randi is able to advocate for herself through her status as someone with a mental health diagnosis–she openly discloses and uses this personal fact with anyone who might help her. Randi asks her psychiatrist to recommend that she stay on parole longer so that she is able to continue living at New Beginnings, and this tactic proved to be effective for her. Interestingly, Randi says her parole agent is "good," though he doesn't come to see her when he says he is going to. This troubles Randi for two reasons: one, her parole agent is a possible source of assistance; and two, she wants him to check on her so that she can show she is in compliance.

In this way, Randi's interaction with parole can be categorized into the second goals–resource category, similar to Dawn's interaction with welfare: Randi's goals for herself align with those

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that parole has for her. She wants to demonstrate her rehabilitated status to her parole agent. However, this doesn't necessarily make her circumstances any easier. Randi wants to stay on parole because she hasn't been able to find long-term housing. Under parole's stated goal of rehabilitation, this is something her agent should be able to help her with, but he likely does not have the resources to do so.

In contrast to Randi, due to parole's severe lack of resources–and the corresponding high caseloads that agents carry, particularly since Realignment (see Chapter 4)–some women in my study who were on parole often talked about supervision as something they had to endure, but which was not helpful in any way. Alice describes a typical interaction with her agent like this:

> Our conversations are brief. When she comes to visit me, she's here for two minutes. That's the way they all are, they don't come in and sit down, you know… Like they come in, they say 'how ya doing?' I say 'ok.' 'I'll see ya later.' 'See ya next month, bye.' So, it's like that.

Dawn has a slightly different take on her parole agent:

> He's cool or whatever, but he's stern. 'This is what you have to do, this is when you have to be here, and this is it.' But if I needed something, he would go out of his way or try to get me the assistance to obtain what I need. I've noticed that about him… I think he knows that I'm trying, he wants me to succeed. I feel like if I was just a fuck-up and not reporting or not coming to test or just not doing anything, I think he would be really hard on me and treat me like, be really on me, but since I've been out I haven't had no violations, I haven't came in contact with the police, I haven't gave no dirties, I was working–I was working 2 jobs at one time–I do everything I have to do. And one of my parole officers said, 'it got to the point where I forgot to come visit you.' So I think when you try, it's better. You know, if they feel like you're not trying or if they just don't want to give you that chance of trying, then…

Interestingly, while Alice is ambivalent about her agent–she doesn't trust her, but she likes that their interactions are brief–Dawn views her agent positively, arguably because *he* views *her* positively.

The narratives of Alice and Dawn seem to support Lemert's (1993) argument that regardless of policy change, community supervision agents tend to consistently operate the same way: by directing the bulk of their attention to the clients they are believe to be the most at risk of re-

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offending and minimizing their attention to the rest. Alice, a Black woman who was 59 at the time of our interview, had been a nurse for 20 years prior to her incarceration. She was taking courses in basic computer programs such as Microsoft Word at a local adult education center with the hope of becoming an administrative assistant. Alice was determined to find a job, and made looking for work her full-time occupation while she was at New Beginnings. Likewise, Dawn, who was Alice's roommate when I first met both of them, demonstrated that she was "trying" by working multiple jobs on top of attending the drug treatment classes mandated by her parole. Arguably, Alice and Dawn are able to have neutral to positive interactions with their parole agents because their agents view them as "trying" and thus are not terribly concerned that they will commit a new crime.

"Trying" in this way is more than compliance with parole's requirements: as Dawn observes, she is not only avoiding contact with the police and testing negative for drug use, but she has also worked multiple jobs and through that, has demonstrated that she wants to succeed. Because she has put in the effort in this way, she views her agent as also wanting her to successfully complete her term on parole. Both women presented themselves well–they dressed neatly, spoke articulately, and were able to bring their emotional registers in line with their agents' expectations during home and office visits. They were able to do this–Alice especially so–in spite of being critical of their agents and the institution of parole in general (see Alice's story in Chapter 4).

This is an interesting contrast to Yasmine, who is also "trying" but whose relationships over time with multiple front-line workers–including but not limited to her parole agents–have been fraught with difficulty. As I will suggest here, both individual and structural factors contribute to Yasmine's difficulties: at times, Yasmine refuses to bring her emotional register in line with

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what institutions expect of her. At the same time, Yasmine's circumstances fit into the first goal–resources category I laid out at the beginning of this section: there is a mismatch between the goals she has for herself and those that parole has for her. Yasmine's goals are to regain custody of one of her children and to become trained as a cosmetologist; parole's goals for her are to demonstrate that she is rehabilitated through drug testing and attendance at substance abuse counseling sessions.

Yasmine's story is typical of other women in my sample who were simultaneously on welfare and community supervision while also seeking family reunification. During her time at New Beginnings, Yasmine would take a three-bus trip from the school where she was studying to become a cosmetologist to go to the substance abuse counseling meetings required as a condition of her parole. On other days, she take would take the bus to the parole office to take a urine analysis test and then to another location to take classes required because of her DUI conviction.

In addition to these obligations, Yasmine was also trying to regain custody of one of her children–her son, who was in foster care.[61] Thus, some days were consumed entirely with trips to family court, which is a mere 30 minute drive from New Beginnings by car (in moderate traffic), but which takes close to 2 hours to reach by bus. At the time I met her, Yasmine was doing the complex work of sorting out how to simultaneously present herself as "putting her son first" (as expressed to her by her family court attorney) while meeting the requirements of her parole and gaining employment training so that she can get a job–which would also help in presenting herself as a "good" mother.

[61] Yasmine had chosen not to pursue custody of her two daughters because they lived nearby with her sister, so Yasmine is able to have regular contact with them without institutional intervention. This is in line with other research which has shown that although formerly-incarcerated women want to reestablish relationships with their children, many postpone pursuing custody because they fear their strained financial situations would make it difficult to fulfill the primary caregiver role (O'Brien, 2001).

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Throughout her descriptions of her encounters with workers who were the "faces" of multiple institutions–her family court attorney, her parole agent, her welfare case manager–what is striking is that Yasmine strongly advocated for herself and what she viewed to be her rights–with mixed results. In the following passage, Yasmine recounts an instance prior to her most recent incarceration in which she has a tense encounter with her new parole agent after her previous one (whom she liked) got promoted and thus had to transfer Yasmine's case to another agent:

> She came out to my house, she was like, 'yeah I was gonna arrest you.' I'm like, 'for what?' She was like 'because you hadn't reported, but luckily I found your monthly.' So you was just gonna come lock me up? So that was a bad start right there. You know what I'm saying? Because I was a good girl. I did everything that I was doing everything that I was supposed to be doing on parole so why would you come at me like that? Read up on me before you come at me foul like that... She had me up like 2 o'clock in the morning one night trying to write a 602. I did not like that lady.

Yasmine's interaction with her new parole agent gets off to a rough start when the agent assumes the worst of Yasmine, likely because parole's paperwork was out of order. Yasmine also shares with me that she does not like that this new parole agent told her that she had to stay on parole for two years. This prompts Yasmine to file a "602" form (CDCR, 2009c), which she explains to me is the grievance process for people in prison (a pink form, which Yasmine would use to complain about lack of medical care while she was in prison) and on parole (a green form). Filing these complaints proved effective for Yasmine while in prison, but arguably could jeopardize the ongoing relationship she must maintain with her parole agent, particularly if she loses her request to get off parole early. This ended up not being an issue, as Yasmine was rearrested for a new offense.

Even though she got off on the wrong foot with this parole agent, Yasmine was able to successfully convince her agent and her agent's supervisor to keep her new landlord and neighbors from learning that she was on parole:

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> I had moved into my place and [my parole agent] was going to give me a check for my move-in 'cause they used to pay for you to get a stove and all that stuff, they don't do that no more. But they gave me a check that says 'The Department of Corrections.' That ain't my landlord's business. I ain't murdered nobody and I ain't molested nobody. So that's not her business. I said 'no, I want to talk to your supervisor 'cause I don't want this.' So I went to the supervisor and he told them to tear that check up. To write a new check. And to write it out to me for me to go cash it, go get a money order, and bring him the receipt… That's not my landlord's business to know that I'm on parole. And I told [my parole agent], 'don't come to my house with your badge and stuff on. Don't do that. Don't disrespect me like that.' Cause my business ain't everybody's business. And I always stay in a nice little neighborhood. I always scope my neighborhoods out before I'm actually moved. You know what I'm saying? So I stayed in a real nice building, you know, don't come over here like that. These people are quiet, they're respectful. And they don't know what I did in my past.

Yasmine's narrative here centers around respect and privacy–two aspects of life which crime-processed people must regularly relinquish in order to get the assistance they need. Yasmine rejects parole's way of doing things, which would disclose her past criminal involvement to her new landlord. In doing so, she successfully negotiates for a new check to be issued to her directly so that she can pay the security deposit herself. Beyond that, she also tells her parole agent to be discreet when she visits her, out of respect both for her privacy and for her new neighbors, who are "quiet, respectful" people. As Yasmine sees it, these are things that she has the right to ask for, particularly because her criminal behavior has involved substance abuse, not interpersonal violence that would pose a threat to her landlord or neighbors.

Standing up for herself in this way works for Yasmine in this instance, but in other ways it makes things more difficult for her. Even though she is spread very thin complying with parole's requirements while trying to go to school and reunify with her son, Yasmine's parole agent doesn't do anything to make this process any easier on her–arguably, because Yasmine stands up for herself, at times at the expense of the relationship. In a similar way, at the time of our interview, Yasmine was struggling to manage her relationship with her family court attorney, who had recently chastised Yasmine for choosing to go to her cosmetology class rather than

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going to family court to meet with her. When Yasmine objected to what her attorney told her to do, the attorney stopped returning her calls to reschedule their meeting, leaving Yasmine to worry about the status of her reunification case.

Yasmine's story underscores two important points about what makes post-incarceration work so difficult. First, there is the structural factor: the goals that Yasmine has set for herself–namely, to go to school so that she can get a job–conflict with the goals imposed upon her, both by family court (to put her son "first") and by parole (to engage in parole's definition of rehabilitation). It is unlikely that either family court or parole actually object to Yasmine's goals, which, once she has achieved them, will render her both a better mother and a more rehabilitated parolee. Yet by failing to support Yasmine's goal as well as by failing to work together to facilitate its achievement, these institutions make her work much more difficult.

Then there is the way in which Yasmine manages both her emotions and her interactions with workers that arguably makes things more difficult. As noted in Chapter 1, I noted much of the scholarship on emotion work has focused on how feeling rules perpetuate gender and racial inequalities (DeVault, 1999; Harlow, 2003; Hochschild, 1979; Kang, 2003; Lively, 2000; Mirchandani, 2003; Ong, 2005; Wingfield, 2010). To be sure, Yasmine's position as a Black woman likely shapes how she is perceived in her interactions with workers. In addition, however, her situation as a woman on both welfare and parole, and with family court involvement, also imposes additional restrictions on how she can ask for the help she needs. In choosing to push the boundaries of these rules as she does with her parole agent and her family court attorney, she sometimes gets what she needs; at other times, doing so makes her circumstances more difficult.

AB 109 compliance checks:

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The collision of public and personal concerns at New Beginnings

The last section of this chapter is about how institutional interests are colliding with those of intermediate spaces in a new way which further complicates women's post-incarceration lives. Although New Beginnings' ability to substantively help the women it houses is uneven, the implementation of California's Public Safety Realignment has forced the program and its staff to define post-incarceration work and the program's role in protecting and facilitating it. As noted in Chapter 2, local law enforcement agencies–police and sheriff departments–have been tasked with conducting compliance checks on individuals released under AB 109's Post-Release Community Supervision (PRCS). During the period in which I was conducting fieldwork at New Beginnings, the police attempted or completed compliance checks on all eight of the women in my sample who were on PRCS.

Rowena describes the experience like this:

> They get a list and your name is on the list and they come out. And my address been on there. I told 'em, when I first came home, I paroled to [inpatient drug treatment program]. So my mom's address was never on an AB 109 list. But they started going to my mom's house, checking my mom's house and my mom told 'em 'she doesn't live here.' So they harassed her for a while and then they stopped when she went down to the police station and complained…
>
> They came, they searched the house. Tore the house up. They had first tore up the front part of the house and me and Sabrina were in the back. And we didn't even know they were in here. So when they kicked the door it was like 'what are ya'll?!' We were still asleep. And they shined the light on Sabrina and she told 'em that she was a parolee. And she told 'em her name and he looked over at me and he said 'they told us nobody was back here, what's your name?' I said I'm Rowena. He said 'oh, you're the one we're looking for.' 'I been here all the time, why would you pick 6 o'clock in the morning to come over here and kick a door in?' So I told 'em, 'well, I need to get up.' He said, 'well get up then.' And I'm like, 'ok but I need ya'll to step out so I can get up.' They stood there. So I just went on and got up, whatever, just whatever. And they stood there while I put my pajamas on and walked into the living room. It was four police officers and one probation officer. And my thing is, if you're looking for females why don't you have female officers, when you're coming into a female facility. So if you're looking for females, why, is it all men and not no women?

Rowena experienced this jarring event even though she was regularly meeting with her probation officer and otherwise complying with the conditions of her supervision. She struggled to make

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sense of why the police were conducting these checks in the first place, but also why they were conducted in such a degrading manner. In addition to the obvious discord of male officers in a women's only home, the small amount of personal space that Rowena has–in a bedroom she shares with two other women–is now abruptly and dramatically turned into a public space.[62]

Then there is the clash between what police officers know and do–they are trained to look for crime–and the more rehabilitative approach of probation, which is designed to be a less disruptive punishment than incarceration. When I asked probation officers about this, they said that it is not unusual for people to run from the cops because of past negative experiences, "but that this just creates more problems." In this way, the use of new state actors in community corrections is redefining the boundary between personal and public space for people on probation.

Interestingly, women uniformly held positive views of their probation officers–and of PRCS in general–even though being on PRCS means negative encounters with the police. Rowena describes her officer as helping her "in any kinda way that she could." Despite her startling and unpleasant encounter with the police–which Rowena proactively tried to avoid–she learns that this event is quite disconnected from the relationship she has with her probation officer:

> I've been here since [six months ago]. Every time [the police] used to come out here for Patricia, I used to ask them, 'uh, am I on the list?' And one of the officers remembered, and he was like, 'yeah you did.' I said, 'so what makes ya'll start now and I'm ready to get off next month?' He said, 'well, we just have to do what we have to do and we have to make sure that you're in compliance.' 'You ain't been making sure I been in compliance since I been here!' I got on the phone and called [my probation officer] that morning. And she was like, 'long as you was in compliance don't worry about it. They gonna do what they do.'

[62] It is important to note here that throughout my time at New Beginnings, I neither witnessed nor heard mention of parole agents doing analogous searches–as mentioned in Chapter 2, agents refer to these as "sweeps" (Werth, 2011a)–of the women who were on parole.

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It is likely that the police officers could not do their check of Rowena at the same time as they checked Patricia because the element of surprise is considered to be an essential element for the effectiveness of the compliance checks. What is striking here is that Rowena's officer is rather unconcerned about what the police are doing; as long as Rowena is complying with the terms of her supervision, there is nothing to worry about. Like Rowena, Zara takes the issue of the checks up with her probation officer:

> We had an issue here at the house where the police came. And they weren't too happy. And it was a Mr.___ came, probation officer. And he wasn't too happy. So, I had already let her [primary probation officer] know my words that I exchanged with him 'cause I told him I felt like he was a bully. (Laughs). He showed up there and he was trying to be very– I felt–very intimidating.

As noted in Chapter 2, Zara's encounter with a probation officer during her compliance check is reflective of the approach of officers in probation's Special Enforcement Operations (SEO) unit, who are armed and accompany local law enforcement in doing these checks. Zara perceives this officer as being like the police–in her words, "he was a bully." Interestingly, she trusts her probation officer enough to complain to her about this encounter, which she seems to intuitively recognize is distinct from their ongoing relationship. Even those these two sets of front-line workers are part of the same state apparatus, Rowena's and Zara's narratives underscore the disconnect between their probation officers' approach, which they perceive as being geared more toward making sure they succeed, and that of law enforcement personnel, whom they perceive as intimidating.

After the first few negative encounters with the police during these checks, Ms. B. instructed staff to lock the gates to the program's houses and to not let the police in when they came for future checks. As I tried to piece together why these checks were being conducted and how New Beginnings was dealing with them, I conducted an informal interview with Marissa, a part-time

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staff person who worked at New Beginnings as part of a welfare-to-work program. In this passage, Marissa references an attempted compliance check on Jane, a resident of New Beginnings who has two young children, and the very first check conducted at the program, on a woman named Patricia:

Marissa: Ms. B. [reentry program director] went off on them and she told them she was mad because they had handcuffed [Patricia][63] outside of [one of New Beginnings' homes] and she didn't do nothing wrong, and Ms. B. went off on them and they wasn't supposed to come back out here, but they came that day for Jane, they said it's protocol. Well, [Ms. B.] don't want no police coming in and messing with these ladies because they're supposed to feel safe here. And that's why I had to call again this morning.

Megan: Well, the weird thing is that it's not a police issue, it's a probation issue.

Marissa: Right, and her probation officer wasn't even with them today so I didn't understand that. But you know, I told Jane, I said lock the gate, just lock it up and go on back in the house. They can't get in that gate. They hop that gate, they better have a search warrant, but she was scared. She didn't know if she should ask anybody to come get her kids. And she's not doing nothing wrong. But they said it is their protocol, but Ms. B's gonna get to the bottom of it. She really is. This morning, I said [to Jane] get out of here and go in the house… It was two police officers and some other guy, and I asked him was he a probation officer and he said no, he works with the police. So Ms. B. asked me, 'how did you feel about that?' I said, 'they can't intimidate me.' I told them that they couldn't go in and every question they asked me, I said 'I don't know, I don't know.' They kept saying, 'well what's the address where Jane is?' 'I don't know. I have no idea.' I didn't let them intimidate me… There ain't no right in it, and they don't care. They don't care because they got that badge, and they got the gun, and they can do what they want to do. They feel like they can do whatever it is they want to do so they don't care how people feel or whatever. I'm a police. I'm big, I'm bad, I got this gun and this badge. Well, I know my rights, sir.

Marissa's narrative illuminates precisely how the use of police to conduct compliance checks is so confusing to the people on the receiving end. Marissa's negative perception of the police is sadly typical of residents of heavily-policed neighborhoods (Brunson, 2007; Cao, 2011; Carr,

[63] Patricia's compliance check was the very first one at New Beginnings, which, through Ms. B.'s advocacy, received prominent coverage in the local media. As of this writing, this media attention remains the only critical coverage of these checks.

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Napolitano, & Keating, 2007; MacDonald, Stokes, Ridgeway, & Riley, 2007; Roussell & Gascón, 2014), and is undoubtedly due in part to the highly visible way in which people of color are regularly policed in South Los Angeles. Police helicopters regularly fly overhead at all times of the day and night, and young men of color being handcuffed up against police cars is a common sight.

As Marissa's narrative illustrates, by refusing to let the police in to conduct their compliance checks, New Beginnings has situated itself firmly outside of the state governing apparatus. Ms. B wants women to feel physically and emotionally safe in her program, and this means not letting the police in; as Marissa indicates, her staff are more than happy to follow suit, though they all risk being charged with obstruction of justice. The women all greatly appreciated Ms. B's willingness to stand up to the police on their behalf, and proudly shared instances in which the program locked the gates and protected them.

Throughout the period during which I was regularly at the program, I witnessed several attempted–and thwarted–compliance checks at New Beginnings, but interestingly, there were no consequences to the program for not letting the police in. This is likely because Ms. B has loudly protested the compliance checks in the local media and at community meetings, bringing many of the women with her to public forums where she speaks about the topic. I observed one particularly raucous community forum in which Ms. B. confronted the local police precinct captain. She played a video that a staff member recorded of Ms. B's heated discussion with three police officers outside of one of New Beginnings' homes after Patricia's compliance check took place. Ironically, the captain tried to redirect the discussion to arrests being down in the precinct, which he attributed to an increased emphasis on community policing.

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By vocally protesting the use of law enforcement to conduct compliance checks on its clients, New Beginnings resists institutional definitions of personal and public, which dictate that crime-processed people under community supervision have no privacy. In doing so, New Beginnings–which I have shown is an intermediate space where public and personal issues collide–communicates that it is a non-state actor concerned with protecting its residents from state interests.

Conclusion

This chapter has traced the social organization of women's post-incarceration work through the lens of the personal and often emotionally-laden tasks that women carry out in intermediate and public spaces in order to rebuild their lives. In doing so, this chapter sheds light on how the multiple institutions with which women must interact regulate women's work in ways that, at worst, make the post-incarceration process more difficult, and at best, do not interfere with the work that women have to do largely on their own.

This analysis offers a way to conceptually organize formerly-incarcerated women's work by distinguishing between the intermediate spaces and public institutions which women must navigate. In making this distinction, I show that women navigate these settings with an awareness of how variously employing tactics of emotion management and personal disclosure will facilitate getting the help they need.

My data indicate that women experience varying degrees of alienation as they try to undertake the work of recovery, which prescribes that they must share experiences and emotions that they may prefer to keep private. This alienation means that women typically selectively share their emotions in intermediate spaces like transitional housing and drug treatment programs, and they often share just enough to comply with the requirements of the program so that they can keep

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their assistance. Thus, women often do the real emotional work of reentry–the truly difficult tasks which often involve introspection and self-forgiveness–on their own, in the small space and time they can set aside for personal reflection. In public institutional encounters, that the work that women undertake to apply for public assistance and comply with community supervision requirements requires women to bring their emotions in line with the varying expectations of each institution–and that some women comply with these emotion rules, while others resist them.

In some respects, this analysis presents an alternative viewpoint to other feminist ethnographic work of prisoner reentry settings, most of which, unlike New Beginnings, are state-run facilities. As discussed in Chapter 1, critical scholars have argued that these settings constitute "grey spaces" through which various forms of surveillance and "therapeutic punishment" can be carried out in the community (Caputo, 2014; Kilty & DeVellis, 2010; McKim, 2008; Haney, 2010; Leverentz, 2006, 2011). For example, Kilty & DeVellis (2010) examine how the concept of space serves to perpetuate the surveillance and control of crime-processed women in a Canadian halfway house. These scholars argue that there is a "transcarceral" effect in which the social relations of prison are reproduced by halfway house staff–they act as extensions of the women's community supervision agents by monitoring their compliance with the conditions of their supervision and reporting any violations to the state. In various ways, other feminist researchers have reported similar findings (Hackett, 2013; Haney, 2010; McCorkel 2004, 2013; McKim, 2008, 2014; Opsal 2009, 2014).

My data have led me to take a slightly different stance. The "transcarceration" literature, which draws from Cohen's (1979) vision of the "punitive city," seems to suggest some sort of coordinated effort to supervise clients across a "help-control" continuum (Lowman, Menzies, & Palys, 1987, p. 9). While it is undeniable that the cumulative effect of the presence of multiple

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institutions in people's lives is hypersurveillance, my findings suggest that siloization trumps any sort of sinister, concerted effort in the institutions encountered by the women in my study. Repeatedly, I witnessed instances of a decided *lack* of coordination which made women's circumstances worse–for examples: Dawn's recognition that parole and welfare "know about each other" in her cases with each of them, but this doesn't mean she gets any extra support to succeed; and the difficulty Yasmine experienced in juggling the tasks of going to school, complying with her parole requirements, and reuniting with her son. At the root of this lack of coordination, as I have argued here and in previous chapters, is the inability of institutional goals to align with and substantively support those of women. This finding was repeatedly confirmed as I later interviewed front-line workers within these institutions.

In my fieldwork at New Beginnings, I also did not find support for the emotional control and manipulation that feminist scholars have shown to regularly occur in state-run community-based settings (see: Caputo, 2014; Haney, 2010; McCorkel 2003, 2013; McKim, 2008, 2014). In this way, my data suggest that feminist examinations of prisoner reentry have to-date been quite limited by the sorts of organizations that have been studied. I root this claim in Kaufman's (2014, 2015) finding that prisoner reentry organizations are quite a bit more diverse than we have previously given them credit for, particularly in terms of their alignment with state policy goals.

Unlike the mandatory halfway house model that has served as the basis for many feminist examinations, New Beginnings is a voluntary program with very loose ties to the state. The program, though well-intentioned, lacks the resources to help the women carry out the substantial institutional work required to reestablish oneself "on the outside," while, as in the case of welfare benefits, it simultaneously relies on the women obtaining these benefits for a small piece of its operational funding. However, I am reluctant to be too critical. Arguably, New

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Beginnings and programs like it–in lieu of a more holistic approach, which I discuss in the conclusion of this dissertation–represent a far more desirable model for ensuring women's post-release wellbeing.

New Beginnings' barebones staffing structure thankfully means that even if it wanted to, it couldn't police women's emotions in a coordinated way–this work is relegated to women's interactions with each other, which are complicated by the various ways in which women arrive at the program. Furthermore, for better or worse, New Beginnings' activist focus means that it is more concerned with raising awareness about mass incarceration and challenging policies that are harmful to all formerly-incarcerated people than with individual-level service provision. As a social worker, this was initially frustrating for me to observe, but over time, I came to recognize the broader usefulness of targeting limited resources at policy change. For example, during the fieldwork presented her, in addition to the fight against compliance checks, New Beginnings enlisted its women to attend community meetings and city council hearings on a proposed ordinance to ban sober living homes in Los Angeles, which was eventually defeated. Although the women were too preoccupied with the work of rebuilding their own lives to deeply engage in such campaigns, they spoke proudly of their participation, underscoring the program's feminist aim of empowerment.

Perhaps New Beginnings' macro focus can also be attributed to a recognition that "success" for formerly-incarcerated people still means a life at the margins.[64] Marina, a former social worker at New Beginnings and a member of its board of directors, struggled when asked if she could think of an example of a "success" story among the many women she had worked with. An

[64] See, for example, Bumiller (2014) on the "precarious work" lives of crime-processed individuals.

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admitted cynic, Marina eventually concluded that "my idea of success is if a person is reasonably happy and they're able to meet basic needs."

Although my study was not designed as a longitudinal one, I keep in touch with some of the women in my sample–largely through text messages and social media–and sadly, their "outcomes" reinforce both Marina's modest definition of success and those noted by other scholars (Sered & Norton-Hawk, 2014). Two of the women who participated in my study have died, in addition to two New Beginnings staff members, one who was herself formerly-incarcerated. The oldest of these four women was in her early 60s. While volunteering in the welfare office on Skid Row, I reconnected with one of my earliest participants, Patricia, who had been kicked out of New Beginnings a year earlier for using drugs. She is marginally housed and still using drugs.

My very first informant, Dawn, has a two-year old baby girl who was born prematurely and has serious health issues, as well as a healthy newborn daughter. They live in a two-bedroom apartment for which Dawn got a Section 8 voucher[65] through a special program for homeless young adults. Dawn dreams of getting her GED and enrolling at UCLA. For a few months, she attended a for-profit trade school to become a dental hygienist, but she was unable to get a job after completing the program. She cobbles together enough money to survive month-to-month from welfare[66] and support from friends and family.[67] The circumstances of the women I've kept

[65] In yet another irony of the limitations of state assistance, even though Dawn's Section 8 voucher means she can afford her rent, the security deposit to actually move in was another matter. The deposit was $2,000 for the two-bedroom apartment for which she had been approved. After a lot of searching, she was able to cobble together enough for the deposit through several donations from family members, friends, and local charities. This was a struggle also experienced by the two other women in my study who eventually obtained Section 8 vouchers.

[66] Recent cuts to food stamps have made things even more difficult for Dawn and other women who participated in my study (Dean & Rosenbaum, 2013).

[67] This underscores the empirical findings of other scholars that individuals receiving welfare cannot and do not live on this assistance alone (Edin & Lein, 1997; Stack, 1975).

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in touch with are reflective of the poor health care that crime-processed women receive, and, beyond that, of the immense social distance that is all but impossible to transcend in order live a life that is anything but marginal.

Lastly, this chapter has shown that AB 109, through its troublesome use of local law enforcement agencies to do community supervision work, has challenged programs like New Beginnings to redefine both their relationship to the state and how they view their role in the broader process of prisoner reentry. This finding has important implications for stakeholders on all sides of this policy: as discussed in Chapter 2 and the conclusion to this dissertation, local government officials need to consider the long-term procedural justice implications of involving the police–the main mechanism by which people *enter* the crime-processing system–in the community supervision process, which claims to have rehabilitation as a main goal.

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Chapter Four

Empty promises and mismatched goals:

Parole agents' coping strategies

> The revolving door was small, it was spinning fast, but now it's bigger, it's spinning even faster… Like cattle, going in, going out. Everybody just passing the buck even quicker.
>
> –California state parole agent Nelson

In California, the Department of Adult Parole Operations (DAPO) often appears to bear the brunt of shifting political expectations about punishment and rehabilitation. On one hand, parole's diverse set of goals makes it versatile (Werth, 2011a) and perfectly poised to respond to these shifts. However, it also means that parole seems to constantly be in the midst of an identity crisis in which the department–so as to not be rendered obsolete–attempts to devise a plausible and coherent account of its distinct role in the criminal justice system (J. Simon, 1993).

It is unsurprising, then, that recent ethnographic work on California parole agents reflects the evolution of this struggle, particularly as it relates to agents' interpretations of policy and discourse around parole's goals. Writing before California's public effort to revitalize its goal of rehabilitation in the mid-2000s,[68] Lynch (2000) finds that although rehabilitation remains a politically appealing goal for parole to espouse, the resources to actually do so are largely unavailable. In light of this reality, agents employ the rhetoric of rehabilitation to justify their jobs, but assign the actual responsibility for rehabilitation to their parolees. Meanwhile, agents rely heavily on the punitive tools they do have available to coerce parolee compliance. This is consistent with recent trends toward the "responsibilization" of crime-processed people that

[68] As noted in Chapter 2, in 2005, California's Department of Corrections (CDC) became the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) (Werth, 2013).

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others have noted both across the U.S. and internationally (Garland, 1996; Hannah-Moffatt, 1999; Moore & Hirai, 2014; O'Malley, 1992, 1997).

After the push to publicly renew parole's rehabilitative efforts, Werth (2011a, 2011b, 2013) finds that agents employ a "tough love" approach in which agents prioritize surveillance in service of parole's public safety goal. Werth suggests that this emphasis compromises–but does not extinguish–the potential for the achievement of the goal of rehabilitation. Still, Werth notes, rehabilitation is an endeavor to be achieved by parolees themselves, as agents view this as neither an achievable goal nor a worthwhile use of their time.

The in-depth interviews with parole agents two years post-Realignment that were conducted for this project sought to discover whether anything has substantively changed in how agents understand and do their work in what has been widely touted to be a new era of punishment in California. As discussed in Chapter 2, the parole policies imposed alongside Realignment are intended to move DAPO even further toward more "evidence-based" and rehabilitative techniques of supervision. Also, strikingly, the main punitive tool agents previously had to coerce compliance–parole revocations that send parolees back to state prison–has been all but eliminated. In light of these seemingly substantial changes, how do agents understand their role now? Do they see themselves as carrying out rehabilitation, or, as Lynch and Werth have previously found, does public safety remain the primary goal? Either way, what is agents' interpretation of what they are *actually* doing, and how does it line up with parole's stated goals?

The findings presented here indicate that little has substantively changed in in how agents understand their role, and that if anything, the changes that have occurred alongside Realignment have made it more difficult for agents to buy into rehabilitation as a revitalized goal of parole. The agents interviewed for this project see their ability to ensure public safety as being eroded by

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Realignment-era policies aimed at reducing the state prison population. Meanwhile, agents are resistant to the latest push toward rehabilitation, which, as discussed in Chapter 2, is premised on agents having lower caseloads–a promise that has yet to be fulfilled. Thus, the "growing pains" documented in the data presented here point to ways in which other states seeking to mimic California's efforts to scale back incarceration might modify their approach.

Agents continue to be critical of the managerial techniques of both risk management and rehabilitation that have been imposed upon them, which they see as being fundamentally at odds with what they define as real work of supervision: ensuring public safety through surveillance. Worse still, agents continue to be given a rehabilitative mandate without adequate means of achieving it, which I argue further undermines their investment in such a goal. As a result of the mismatch between stated DAPO priorities and the resources available to meet them, agents develop coping strategies to meet their own self-defined goals, which they view as more realistically feasible to achieve.

The analysis presented here seeks to respond to the challenge of scholars such as Liebling (2004) and Cheliotis (2006) who have called for understandings of how front-line workers approach their work in the managerial era. As Cheliotis (2006) argues, "a more holistic analysis of penal currents would comprise an examination of whether, and the degree to which, professionals actually resist subordination to illegitimate systemic techniques and goals, and, if so, the forms such acts of resistance may take" (p. 318). This chapter presents the concept of "teamwork" as agents employ it in their varied approaches to supervision, suggesting that the notion of teamwork–which is imbued with agent's personal values and experiences–represents agents' efforts to bridge the gap between unachievable departmental goals and their own more modest goals.

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The data presented here are limited in that they only provide a snapshot of agents' work experiences post-Realignment, thus restricting the conclusions that can be drawn on the direct effects Realignment has had on their work. This limitation is partially offset in two ways. First, this study's sample of agents is heavily skewed towards veterans of CDCR (the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation)–those with seniority who had survived the recent waves of layoffs. Table 4.1 illustrates the demographic composition of the sample as well as agents' previous work experience. The majority of agents had long careers as Correctional Officers (COs) in California state prisons prior to coming to DAPO. Agents had been with DAPO an average of nine years at the time of our interviews. Thus, in interviews, I asked agents to reflect on what their work was like before Realignment as compared to now.

Table 4.1 Parole agents' demographics and work experience.[69]

Pseudonym	Gender	Race/ethnicity	Previous work experience
Cain	M	White	CO
Carrillo	F	Latina	CO
Gorman*	F	Black	CO
Harrison	M	Black	CO
James	M	White	CO
Marin	M	Latino	CO
Mendez*	F	Latina	CO
Nelson	M	Asian	Nurse in prison
Ramos	M	Latino	Dept. of Rehab

*Parole agent supervisors

Secondly, wherever possible, this chapter draws on recent ethnographic work conducted in California parole offices prior to Realignment to better contextualize my findings and provide

[69] The demographics of my sample are roughly consistent with those noted by others doing research on California parole: Grattet et al (2008) described the demographics of agents as being the following: 72 percent male, 28 percent female; 35 percent White, 32 percent Black, 25 percent Latino; 83 percent had previously worked in a CDCR correctional institution. Where my sample diverges with Grattet et al's is in work experience: 48 percent of their sample had fewer than three years' experience with parole. In my sample, only one (Marin) had been with parole less than three years, and overall the sample averaged just over nine years of parole experience.

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insight into what the effects of this policy shift have been (Lynch, 1998, 2000; Werth, 2011a, 2011b, 2013).

This chapter first describes how agents understand the current context of parole, paying close attention to how agents talk about their work to determine what hasn't changed since Realignment as well as what has. The second section examines how agents define the goals of parole supervision in contrast to DAPO's stated goals in order to build a theory of what agents are actually doing as well as the tools they use to do it. Lastly, a typology of agent approaches to supervision is presented which represents agents' efforts toward achieving their self-defined goals.

Parole agents' understanding of the current context: The illusion of change

Realignment has been hailed as a "dramatic transformation" (Lin & Petersilia, 2014, p. 5) of the penal landscape in California. This section seeks to illuminate precisely how much of this change has trickled down to the front-lines of parole. Arguably, as in past eras, parole has borne the brunt of the current push toward decarceration, yet for the most part the department has been excluded from public discourse around these changes; as Chapter 5 will show, the spotlight has been on county probation departments as they implement a new form of supervision under Realignment.

The political marginalization of parole

A consistent theme in interviews with agents was a sense that parole is undervalued and marginalized in relation to other criminal justice agencies. Arguably, this has always been the case, as parole continuously battles to distinguish itself from the particular goals and skill sets of other criminal justice agencies (J. Simon, 1993). In this way, Realignment can be understood as simply the latest in a long string of new policy mandates to which agents have had to adapt.

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As discussed in Chapter 2, in the political maneuvering around Realignment, parole lost out in the "intra-agency competition" (Cheliotis, 2006)[70] for potential resources and responsibilities related to the supervision of the N3 population.[71] The agents interviewed for this project attributed this to a consistent lack of representation of parole in the media, which has led to minimal public awareness of the role parole plays in criminal justice administration. As Agent Carrillo put it,

> I don't feel that we've ever had support, for example, on the news media. When you see incidents on TV, you always see Mr. Baca (the now-former head of the Sheriff's department) out there representing his department. You always see Beck (LAPD commissioner) out there. You never see anybody representing us.

As agents understand it, parole's lack of publicity begets limited political capital when policy changes are afoot. This is a perennial problem. As rehabilitation fell out of favor in the "tough on crime" era of the 1990s, parole supervision came under attack as being too soft and ineffective at managing parolees, most notably during the California governor's race in 1994 (Lynch, 1998).

Today, in contrast, the agents I spoke with speculated that they are becoming a "dying breed" as the pendulum shifts even further back toward rehabilitation–at the expense of public safety. Agents were quick to express concern about the effect that Realignment will have on the crime rate. As Agent James put it,

> the [N3s] are the butter on my bread. The number of parolees has always justified my job, but now they're giving all the parolees to the county. Ok, that's fine. But you've seen the crime rates, how they're going up–especially the property crimes.

---

[70] Cheliotis (2006) contends that such competition is a defining feature of the managerial era which seeks to "mould professionals into patterns of conformity to systemic goals" (p. 318). In other words, intra-agency competition serves to pressure agencies into being ever more fiscally efficient–doing more with less–in order to demonstrate that they are deserving of resources and responsibilities.

[71] As mentioned previously, as of October 1, 2011, these are individuals who have been convicted of non-violent, non-serious, and non-high-risk sex offenses.

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In citing rising crime rates,[72] the implication in James's remarks is that parole would do a better job of supervising the N3s. A common sentiment among agents was that "they're (probation's) gonna have trouble with them." These remarks lend insight into not only how the N3s are constructed as a risky and troublesome group (see Chapter 5), but also how agents view the ensuring of public safety as being central to their role in the administration of criminal justice–a topic that will be explored in-depth later on in this chapter. First, however, the following sections detail the three main ways in which agents understand their work to have changed under Realignment.

Layoffs, caseload sizes, and job stress

Interestingly, while agents voiced concern over Realignment's effect on public safety, they also expressed relief over no longer having to supervise the N3s, whom agents universally agreed are the most difficult cases to manage. In reiterating Agent James's concern about Realignment's effect on public safety, Agent Ramos observes that this shift, if implemented properly, would free up agents to do more of the "real work" of parole:

> I think [Realignment's] a good thing. If we're gonna reduce the population of parolees and inmates then that's good but if you're sacrificing public safety while you're doing that then it's not good. Because a lot of the caseloads we had–I think it was about half violent and serious crimes, other half drug offenders, petty theft, the those type of things. And those types of crimes, those cases would really bog us down 'cause they were so needy, so-to-speak. So we'd have to focus our attention on that and it was pulling us away from the more serious cases. And now that we just have the most serious and violent offenders, they've reduced our staff. So we're back to square one.

[72] Agent James's concern about the crime rate, while not entirely unfounded, is debatable. The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), which is tracking Realignment's effect on crime, initially attributed substantial increases in certain property crimes such as motor vehicle thefts, which increased by 14.8 percent between 2011 and 2012, to year one of Realignment. However, in assessing year two counts, PPIC reports that after a 6.6% increase in property crimes overall in 2012, they then declined by 3.9% in 2013, reaching close to the 50-year low seen prior to Realignment in 2011. Likewise, California's violent crime rate is at its lowest since 1967, although at a rate of 422 violent crimes per 100,000 residents, it is still higher than the national rate of 387. There is substantial variation in violent crime trends among California counties, but for L.A. County, violent crime decreased by 10% between 2012 and 2013 (Lofstrom & Martin, 2014).

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Ramos touches on a key–but largely unpublicized–issue in the implementation of Realignment: the cuts to parole funding which necessitated fairly massive layoffs across the state left the surviving agents to manage larger-than-normal caseloads of the most "dangerous" parolees. Some agents interviewed for this project were carrying caseloads as high as 110, while most had caseloads of about 80; none had seen their caseloads dip to the "53 to 1" ratio prescribed by the CPSRM (the California Parole Supervision and Reintegration Model–see Chapter 2).

Agents spoke frequently of increased job stress as a result of this change. This stress most often manifested in worrying about cases "blowing up in your face": having a high caseload means that they may not be able to see everyone on their caseload as frequently as the "specs" require.[73,74] Arguably, this has always been a problem–high caseloads are an inevitable part of most front-line work (Lipsky, 1980) and of parole supervision in particular (Solomon et al, 2005). However, agents talked about this concern as being exacerbated by Realignment. Agent Marin, a veteran CO who came to parole only months before Realignment went into effect, describes it like this:

> I have been more stressed this last year than I have in my 24 years working for California Department of Corrections whether as an officer or as a sergeant. This last year I felt my greys coming out and I've aged, I know I have. My wife has noticed the change… I'll give you a good example: the news comes out and there's breaking news in South Central L.A. You know what that does to my blood pressure? Oh my god, please don't let that be one of

[73] In speaking about this concern, several agents, like agents in Werth's study (2011a, 2013), referenced the Jaycee Dugard case, in which an 11-year old girl was kidnapped by a parolee, Phillip Garrido, and held captive for 18 years, from 1991 to 2009. Dugard was repeatedly raped and bore two children during this period. Garrido was under parole supervision for 10 out of the 18 years Dugard was held captive (La Ganga & Goldmacher, 2010). This is not a new or isolated concern. Popular discourse around parolee dangerousness has long been connected to recent focusing events. During her field work in an earlier era of parole, Lynch (1998) makes reference to the kidnapping, rape, and murder of Polly Klaas by Richard Alan Davis, a parolee, in 1993. This case was later used as a catalyst for three strikes legislation in California in the 1990s. The looming possibility of another such event is a constant concern for agents.

[74] These specifications were in transition at the time of my interviews, as agents were still being trained on the CPSRM. Under the new model, case contacts vary by parolee risk level, but typically one face-to-face contact in the form of an unannounced home visit is the minimum (Parole Reform Task Force, 2010).

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> my guys. Not that my work is not in order, but it's just my conscience. It can happen to anybody.

At one parole office where these interviews were conducted, agents were quick to attribute recent instances of illness and death–one agent had suffered a stroke; another had died of a heart attack–to the particularly stressful work climate post-Realignment.

The staffing of parole is an area in which states looking to replicate California's decarceration efforts might consider doing things differently. At the time of these interviews, in September of 2013, there was talk of some of the laid-off agents being hired back, as the state sought to recalibrate how much funding CDCR–which oversees both the state prison system and parole–should receive versus the counties. Recent reports from the parole agents' union, PAAC (the Parole Agents Association of California, a branch of the California Correctional Peace Officers Association, or CCPOA), indicate that, with some union pressure, CDCR has agreed to re-hire agents who lost their jobs in the first four waves of layoffs (PAAC, 2014). At the time of this writing, however, caseload reductions still remain an empty promise: one recent estimate suggests that more than 60% of agents state-wide still have caseloads that exceed DAPO maximums as prescribed by the CPSRM (Flores, 2014).[75]

"Goals and promises": Documenting public safety and rehabilitation through paperwork

Concern about the effectiveness of parole supervision and how it has been undermined by the changes enacted alongside Realignment was a consistent theme in interviews, not just on the point of parole revocation, but about CPSRM overall. As reviewed in Chapter 1, throughout the managerial era, there has been a proliferation of paperwork such as risk assessment tools and case plans to document the management of individuals on community supervision. Paperwork

[75] PAAC has publicly endorsed a department-conducted study of the effect of the CPSRM on agents' workload, stating that it is "hopelessly optimistic this will result in caseload reductions" (PAAC, 2014).

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serves a two-pronged purpose: to track the management of risk through surveillance, and to document efforts toward rehabilitation through evidence-based practices. Previous studies of California parole have found that some agents reluctantly deal with the burdensome reality of paperwork (Werth, 2011a, p. 66), while others overtly resist it (Lynch, 1998, p. 856).

Under the CPSRM, agents use the COMPAS (Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions–see Chapter 2) tool to assess parolees' risks and needs. In the initial interview with each parolee, agents identify needs and produce a quarterly "goals and progress report" which prescribes that the parolee spend a certain number of hours over the course of the following three months to address the need. For example, if a parolee has no source of income, a goal will be to go to the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) and apply for cash aid and food stamps; if a parolee is homeless, s/he might be "assigned" a certain number of hours to work toward finding housing. Unlike before the implementation of the CPSRM, agents are able to consult a database of resources that they can use to make referrals and otherwise point parolees in the right direction to accomplish these tasks.

Agents were quick to point out that through its emphasis on individualized case planning, which requires much more "face" time per parolee, any potential rehabilitative benefit yielded through the new model is lost through the additional time and stress it places on agents–at the expense of public safety. As Agent Ramos put it, "you're talking about spending a minimum of an hour with somebody and you have a caseload of–you're supposed to have a caseload of 53. Right now we're like at 80-something." Thus, agents are distracted from the most important aspects of their jobs. Agent Carrillo puts it like this:

> They push this paperwork on goals and promises where we're always going on the computer having to input this, input that. We're just too much in the office. And at the same time, they're stressing that they don't want us in the office. But how else are you gonna be [other than] in the office when you got all these convicts basically violating because with the AB

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> 109 kicking in they don't care? All my guys are testing dirty, they don't care, what are you gonna do?

Apparent in Carrillo's remarks is the fact that agents receive conflicting messages about what they should be doing–they have to be in the office (doing paperwork) too much, but they're not supposed to be in the office (rather, out doing home visits). Worse still, from agents' perspective, without any sort of major deterrent tool–such as the threat of parole revocation–addressing a parolee's "needs" won't have much of a long-term effect. As Agent Carrillo sees it, because parolees do not have this threat, they "don't care" about their own rehabilitation, and thus the bulk of agents' time is spent dealing with violations that they can only "punish" through remedial sanctions.[76]

What has changed: A reduction in "coercion therapy"

The first–and arguably most significant–way in which agents' work has changed post-Realignment has been in the way parole revocations happen. As noted in Chapters 1 and 2, with rare exception, parole violators are now handled at the county level, serving time in local jail following revocation rather than returning to state prison (Bird & Hayes, 2013; CDCR, 2013a; Misczynski, 2011). This means that whatever deterrent power agents once wielded over their parolees–and this is debatable to begin with (see: Solomon, Kachnowski, & Bhati, 2005)–has now been diminished because agents cannot rely on the threat of incarceration to coerce compliance with the conditions of parole. Agents view this as a major change. As Agent Gorman, one of the two supervisors interviewed for this project, put it:

> Before, they would go back to state prison for a up to a full year (on a revocation). And now the most they can get is 180 days, which equates to 90 days, which equates to ten percent of that. So technically they can get 90 days and be out in less than 9. So before the ink is dry on the paper they're back out. And for most of them they're probably doing the same if not more

[76] Interestingly, many of these sanctions fall under the category of "treatment": they are typically various gradations of drug treatment programming, ranging from outpatient to locked inpatient, but can also include GPS (electronic) monitoring. This finding confirms Lynch's (2000) observation that rehabilitation for substance abuse has been transformed into another avenue for punishment in parole supervision.

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> of the same than they were doing before they went. So we're utilizing remedial sanctions even more so now. It was different because before they could get up to a year and they knew it. They did not like going back to state prison. Even though they liked those conditions better than the county jail of course, but they didn't wanna go back. 'I don't wanna go back on a violation. I'm a get a year.' Oh, that year was a deterrent.

The subtext to Gorman's description of this process is that because revocations are now being handled at the local level, the length of revocations is at the whim of county jail populations, which have been greatly affected by Realignment. Because people convicted of N3 offenses who previously would have gone to state prison are also now serving their time at the local level, many county jails–including L.A. County's Twin Towers–are dealing with overcrowding.[77] This means that jail inmates–those serving new sentences as well as those there on revocations–rarely serve anything close to the amount of time to which they are sentenced. Agents view this as undermining any legitimacy they still had on this front.

The threat of revocation as a tool for coercing parolee compliance has long been used by agents to keep their parolees "in line." In her ethnographic study of agents in one California parole office in the mid-1990s, Lynch (2000) observed agents' widespread use of what she calls "coercion therapy":

> The threat of arrest, and its follow up–placing clients in custody–appeared to be the most utilized resources available to the field agent, and it was put into action for a broad range of problems. Minor transgressions on the part of the parolee easily snowballed into arrestable violations... (p. 51).

Interestingly, agents view the change to the revocation process as detrimental not just to their work, but also to parolees themselves. When asked which job she enjoyed more–her past position as a CO or her present one as a parole agent– Agent Carrillo responded: "I enjoyed it (being a parole agent) when I first came out but once they started changing these policies and

[77] In response, several counties are considering using their funding from Realignment to build more jail space (Ducart, 2013; see also: Martin & Lofstrom, 2014).

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made it not really worthwhile for a parolee... It's not working because now the parolees don't care." In this way, agents view "coercion therapy" as an integral part of supervision: if there is no threat, then parole is not "worthwhile" for parolees, who need the threat of reincarceration in order to reap any potential rehabilitative benefit from being on parole.

How agents define the goals of parole

This section first places agents' self-defined goals of parole in contrast to the stated goals of the institution of parole, then focuses in on one particularly pervasive disjuncture between agents' understandings of their work and institutional definitions of parole: agents' use of anti-science discourse in how they understand aspects of their jobs, which is fundamentally at odds with institutional efforts to implement "evidence-based practices" to assess and monitor parolees' risks and needs.

Agents' self-defined goals

As discussed in Chapter 2, the stated goals of DAPO can be understood as ensuring public safety and facilitating rehabilitation through evidence-based practices. As shown in the previous section, agents view the change in the parole revocation process under Realignment as eroding their ability to do their jobs. So, what exactly is it that agents believe they should be doing? The following narratives from three different agents demonstrate that agents define the goals of parole somewhat differently from DAPO:

> As long as we on the same page and working together I'll never hurt you. That's not what I'm here to do. I have zero interest in sending you back. My challenge is to utilize the resources in the community to keep you here and keep the community safe while you're here. That's my goal (Agent Gorman).

> Our goal is to get you off parole. I think they pretty much understand that. I think they appreciate that (Agent Ramos).

> If they're gonna reoffend they're gonna reoffend. I mean, I don't think me being on them and saying 'hey, come in and get jobs' or 'are you going to school every day?' I don't think it's

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> really gonna work that much anyway, but at least I can document the way they want me to and say that I did talk to 'em and I did have 'em meet these goals and objectives that were set forth. That's the least of my worries now. I just wanna make sure these guys are at least around and if they need a warrant they're getting a warrant. I've always had to play more cop here then I've ever had to play social worker. Even though I'd like to help these guys if possible. I'd like to point them in the way of resources but if I had the numbers I could be on 'em. I'd be like, 'hey man, I told you to be here at 1 o'clock yesterday to get some employment resources.' I can't. It's hard for me to remember (Agent James).

As reflected in these narratives, agent's self-defined goals can be understood to encompass the following:

1. Ensuring public safety;
2. Getting people off parole; and
3. Documenting efforts toward rehabilitation.

Given agents' skepticism about the CPSRM, it is unsurprising that their self-defined goals are different from those espoused by the department. Agents view the work of parole to be shepherding their parolees through parole supervision, hopefully to completion. Primary in this task is, as Agent Gorman points out, to "keep the community safe." Gorman alludes to rehabilitation when she mentions that she will "utilize resources in the community to keep you here," though this is predicated on the parolee "being on the same page" with her. What is also striking in both Gorman's and Ramos's remarks is that they view parole as a collaborative process of "working together"–agents have responsibilities that they must uphold in the supervision relationship in order for it to be successful.

It is notable, however, that not only did agents seldom make direct reference to rehabilitation when talking about the purpose of their jobs, but some, like Agent James, overtly pointed out that it is not their primary concern. Agents were much more likely to emphasize that the surveillance aspects of their work–most importantly, home visits to ensure that parolees are complying with the conditions of their parole, and the issuing of warrants for parolees who have violated the conditions of their parole–were crucial to ensuring public safety. Inarguably, this is

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at least in part because agents understand that the stakes–both to them individually and to the broader community–are far higher if they fail to achieve the goal of public safety. In Agent James's words, rehabilitation "is the least of my worries."

As a secondary matter, is it is the *documentation* of goals–which may be rehabilitative in nature–that is important, in as much as it is a requirement of the job; the doing of the paperwork involved in rehabilitation is disconnected from the endeavor of rehabilitation itself. James admits that he would like to connect his parolees to assistance, and would likely do so "if he had the numbers"–if his caseload was small enough that he could manage this task in addition to the others which he views as more important. James is skeptical, however, that a true focus on rehabilitation would prevent his parolees from returning to criminal behavior. In this way, agents' self-defined goals do not align with departmental goals for two reasons. First, the means for achieving DAPO's stated goal of rehabilitation through evidence-based practices are unavailable, in part because DAPO has been unable to follow through on its promise of smaller caseloads. Relatedly, agents view the goal of rehabilitation as being neither worthwhile in its own right nor an effective means of ensuring public safety.

In 2013, the California State Office of the Inspector General (OIG) began issuing biannual reports on CDCR's progress toward implementation of its post-Realignment "blueprint" plan, entitled *The Future of California Corrections: A Blueprint to Save Billions of Dollars, End Federal Court Oversight, and Improve the Prison System.* Table 4.2 shows a striking gap between the number of parolees with particular risks and needs and parolees who actually participated in programming consistent with these factors.[78]

[78] Interestingly, the OIG notes that this gap exists despite CDCR actually exceeding its projected capacity of new community-based programming for parolees (OIG, 2014, p. 10).

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Table 4.2 Percent of parolees receiving services consistent with their needs during fourth quarter (April through June 2014) of Fiscal Year 2013-2014.

Source: California State Office of the Inspector General (2014, p. 12).

Individual need (Inmates may be in multiple categories)	Total number of offenders by need	Parolees with a risk and a need who participated in programming consistent with their needs	Parolees with a need who did not participate in programming consistent with their needs
Employment need	2,453	805	1,648
Education need	2,051	760	1,291
Substance abuse need	1,967	863	1,104

These data can be interpreted in two ways: one, that parolees are being referred to these programs by their agents, parolees are not attending the programs, and agents are unable to do much about it because of their reduced coercive authority; or two, that agents do the bare minimum by identifying parolees risks and needs, but do not actually refer parolees to programs to address these issues. Either explanation–and indeed, the truth may be somewhere in the middle–speaks to the broader disconnect between the department's mandate and the realities of agents' actual work.

Anti-science discourse

A particularly profound source of discord between how agents understand the goals of parole and how DAPO defines its goals centers around the use of "evidence-based practices" to assess and monitor parolees' risks and needs toward the achievement of both goals–public safety and rehabilitation. As discussed in Chapter 2, the main tool that California agents are required to use to calculate parolees' risk of reoffending is COMPAS. It is important to mention here that

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although much of the literature on this topic has treated actuarial risk assessment tools as distinct from rehabilitation, California parole agents are also expected to use COMPAS for rehabilitative purposes–an irony that Werth (2011a, p. 140) also noted. As the narratives presented thus far in this chapter reflect, agents are reluctant to fully buy into the usefulness of COMPAS because they see it as distracting from more important tasks; as will be shown here, agents also don't believe in COMPAS as an effective means of either predicting risk or addressing needs. These findings suggest that this has implications for how agents understand and achieve their self-defined goals.

Previous scholarship on this topic has shown that intuition (Lynch, 1998) and "gut feelings" (Werth, 2011a, 2011b) are an essential component in agents' evaluations of risk. Furthermore, they tend to trust these internal mechanisms more than the actuarial tools they are required to use. As Werth (2011a) noted in his ethnographic study of California parole agents just prior to Realignment,

> while no one explicitly questioned or challenged their status as 'objective' or 'scientific,' several agents do not view them as useful tools, and the vast majority of agents devalue these techniques in comparison with more experiential–as well as intuitive–ways of knowing and appraising clients (pp. 144-145).

Indeed, as Corbett (2008) observed, professional culture in corrections typically discounts what he calls the "parallel universe" of scholarship on correctional practice. A similar theme emerged in the interviews conducted for this project: agents' use of what could be called "anti-science" discourse in how they understand and justify their work. Building on Werth's (2011a) analysis of how agents construct risk, the discussion here examines how anti-science discourse about risk is intertwined with a similar discourse about rehabilitation. While agents may at times make conscious decisions to discount the more "scientific" way of doing things, it is important to bear in mind that agents do so in part because DAPO–and indeed, the State as a whole, in adjusting its

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funding priorities under Realignment–has, through a series of largely empty promises, failed to provide the means through which "evidence-based practices" can actually be accomplished.

When I asked agents how quickly they can tell if a parolee will succeed or fail on parole, not one of them referenced the risk score produced by COMPAS as factoring into this assessment, though some, like Harrison, did mention common criminogenic risk factors:

> When you do their pre-parole investigation when you go through their file, you kinda can get a feel of that. And their age. That's a big factor. It seems like the age of 50 is the magic number. Ha. It seems like if you're a lifetime criminal, if you're someone that's been in and out of jail most of your life, one of those guys that are habitual drug users or something like that, it seems like 50 is that magic number for some reason. One guy told me–he says, you know, 'Harrison, I'm tired of going back. I got into it with this youngster and it's not the same.' So what he's saying is he got beat up. Ha. That's what he's saying. So he's not able to move like he used to.

As Harrison indicates, agents rely on multiple forms of information to assess parolees' risk of future criminal behavior. Much of this information is available prior to meeting the parolee. Going through a parolee's file prior to their release involves reviewing their CDCR file, which includes information about the parolee's behavior while incarcerated as well as their criminal history ("rap sheet") and prior risk assessments. During the pre-parole investigation, the individual is also interviewed regarding their post-release plans. These are elements commonly understood to be good, scientifically-based predictors of risk: they structure the basis of most actuarial risk assessment questions. Yet agents vary considerably in how much they rely on this information to build an understanding of parolees prior to meeting them. In Harrison's case, he connects scientific evidence–that age is a major predictor of criminal behavior–to what he experientially understands from his years on the job.

Although science at times corresponds with what agents know experientially, most agents wait until they meet a parolee to fully form an opinion. Some, like Agent Ramos, don't look at rap sheets at all, in an effort to not bias themselves before they've met their new parolees. As

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Ramos put it, "basically to me, they've committed the worst crime possible and that's what I'm treating 'em as. I don't even have to look at what it is."

Agents consistently described interpersonal cues such as eye contact, body language, and the quality of verbal responses as being crucial elements of assessing risk. As Agent Marin put it,

> Just by their initial interview. If they're not paying attention, no eye contact just like I'm doing here, I'm not getting the respect. So I know right away 'oh, I lost 'em. Ok, I have to reach out to 'em.' Their body language. Just the way they speak. 'Yeah I know. Whatever. Do what you gotta do.'

Arguably, the training that agents have received under the new parole model (see Chapter 2) in Motivational Interviewing–a common, "evidence-based" technique in the fields of counseling and social work–has helped agents to better tune in to and respond to these cues, though agents more often attributed their attunement to such factors as being rooted in their years of experience.

The following passage from Agent Cain–who has been with parole for six years and who previously worked for eleven years as a CO in a men's prison–illustrates agents' typical thinking about risk, and the high stakes involved in getting the assessment right:

> It's up in the air, it really is. It takes more time than [the initial interview]. You can tell a lot about a person by their demeanor. So, you know, if they speak to you in a fairly respectful manner and there doesn't seem to be animosity and all that. In general you get the impression at that point that this might be an ok case. This might be an easy one. But sometimes the nicest-acting parolees are the ones that are getting in the most trouble too, telling you what you wanna hear... So it's just very difficult to judge whether they're gonna ever be on the right path...
>
> You have to show the paper trail. God forbid, say one of my guys committed a murder, they couldn't ever come to me and go, 'you made him do it.' No, I didn't. I never told him to kill somebody. What they'll do, though, is they'll audit the file and they'll find anything that you missed. If you missed a case review, then now you're dinged on it even though, had you done a case review, he still would have done it. They just basically audit the file and look for anything that they can get you on and then, knock on wood, I don't really know what the repercussions are of that 'cause I haven't had it happen… But I've had cases where I've had no control over what my guy did. But I feel horrible for the victim, you know?...
>
> I mean, I'll never see the victim, but you're like, god, could I have done something? Could I have done more than what I did? I had a case that–he's still fighting it. He's got a million

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> dollar bail. I think the victim is permanently disabled now. Brain trauma. So he'll never have a normal life. And when I got the call about that one, I felt horrible for the victim. It was a road rage incident. The parolee beat this guy to a pulp and ended up knocking him to the ground and split his head open on the pavement. And I felt horrible. I didn't know who the victim was and I never will, but it bothered me. I actually had a hard time sleeping that night just 'cause I was like, 'god, man, could I have done something?' But then ultimately I thought about it, and my wife told me, 'what could you have done? You weren't there. If you were there, you'd have stopped him.' And I said, 'yeah you're right.' She goes, 'you can't be there with 'em all the time.' So you know, it's one of those things where you can take the job home easily and then it affects your overall happiness 'cause you're always thinking about work.

In assessing whether someone will succeed or fail on parole, Agent Cain readily acknowledges that it's all "up in the air"–that he can never fully predict what is going to happen. Risk is also something that is constantly assessed (Werth, 2011a, 2011b), and thus extends far beyond the initial interview to include every interaction an agent has with a parolee. Cain accepts the fact that he has "no control" over what his parolees might do as a stressful reality of his job. This is what makes the "paper trail" so important: regardless of a parolee's formal risk level, Cain needs to ensure that the case file is up to date so that if something happens, he can show that he did everything he possibly could.

What is also striking is that when Cain remarks that it's "very difficult to judge whether they're gonna ever be on the right path," he is not only talking about risk; he is also expressing doubt about the efficacy of rehabilitation. In Cain's experience, although there are some key indicators he can rely on, "success" and "failure" are hard to predict. In agents' understanding, these terms have distinct implications which are tied to goals and how agents define them. Failure is singular in nature: it is a return to criminal behavior and thus to incarceration. Meanwhile, success is less clear-cut: it can be the absence of criminal offending and the completion of parole–a modest definition of success which agents strive to achieve; beyond this, success can also mean the completion of rehabilitative programming which will facilitate

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parolees' broader well-being. Agents are less likely to view themselves as influential in this sort of success.

Unsurprisingly, many agents were quick to attribute parolee failure to individual flaws and bad choices, as other researchers have found (Bosworth, 2007; Hannah-Moffat, 2000; Lynch, 1998; 2000; Robinson, 2008; Rose, 2000; Werth, 2011b, 2013). As Cain's narrative illustrates, these cases seem to reinforce agents' understanding that both risk and rehabilitation are difficult to predict. The same applied to those that turned out well: it was forces internal to the parolee that facilitated this outcome, not anything that the parole agent did to encourage rehabilitation. Given this perspective, it is unsurprising that agents frequently engage in discourse contrary to scientifically-supported best practices, which are rooted in the idea that at least some change can be influenced externally (see, for examples: Cullen, 2005, 2007; Cullen, Smith, Lowenkamp, & Latessa, 2009; Lipsey & Cullen, 2007; Ward & Maruna, 2007).

Agent James's description of a successful woman on his caseload illustrates this point. This woman had been convicted of several serious, violent offenses associated with a botched robbery, kidnapping, and murder, and she is thus classified as high-risk:

> So she did her time. She's got two or three children. I don't think she's got a drug problem. I don't drug test her. She was really young when she did this. She was in her early 20s I think. But now she gets out and she's very remorseful. She's very nice, well-spoken. A lot of these girls get loud when they wanna make a point. She's very calm. She loves her children. And she's carved her way out. She's smart enough to have used resources in her life. She has an aunt that drove buses. So I think she's got her GED or high school diploma. Not much more than that. Now she's driving buses and she's supporting her family. She lives with her kids... She's always available. She has her own cell phone. She's got her own place to live.
>
> So she really just handled business. She had a lot of time to think about it I guess is what probably happened. So, so far so good. She's only been out nine months but she's already looking into driving for the city. 'Cause she's driving for a subcontractor. They don't have as great benefits and they don't pay as much, but their restrictions are a lot less. Like she can be on parole. And they do background checks, but they allow it, whereas you drive for the city, I think at least you have to be off parole. So she was asking me, 'how soon can I get off parole?' I'm like, 'well, just keep doing good. For something like what you did you have to do at least 24 months. And they're probably still not gonna kick you loose. But at three years

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> you'll max out and you'll be off. She goes, 'oh man! That's like over two years.' I'm like, 'well, that's the price you pay.' So she seems to understand. She goes, 'ok, tt's alright.' She's very accepting.

Agent James's narrative indicates that there is very little that he has actually done to help this parolee; her success has been achieved through a combination of her internal attributes and work that she has done on her own and with the help of her family. Even though on paper she is high-risk, she exhibits all the "right" attributes of a "good" parolee: she is remorseful, calm, well-spoken, appears to be a good mother, and perhaps most notably, is "very accepting" of the fact that she has to remain on parole, even though it impedes her employment prospects. Perhaps most commendably, James's parolee already has her own cell phone and her own place to live–two hallmarks of post-incarceration success that are difficult to obtain, particularly in such a short time frame. James likely speaks highly of this parolee not just because of how well she has done, but because she makes his job easier by having a cell phone through which he can reach her and stable housing so that he knows where to find her. Thus, she has done the work of rehabilitation on her own–"she really just handled her business" and "she's smart enough to have used resources in her life"–without the assistance of parole.

This section has examined how agents draw on anti-science discourse to understand the precarious nature of success and failure on parole. Agents are reluctant to buy into evidence-based practices not only as they relate to risk, but also as they pertain to rehabilitation. In this way, anti-science discourse appears to be at the heart of the disconnect between the formal stated goals of DAPO and agents' self-defined goals.

In his critique of the managerial era of corrections, Cheliotis (2006) points out that one way in which the state seeks to ensure worker conformity to institutional goals is through an "increasingly hierarchical division of labor" (p. 318) which not only limits workers'

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responsibilities to a narrow set of tasks, but also serves to prevent workers from "gaining full comprehension of the overall strategy and the ultimate goals of the organization." In other words, the logic of institutions in the managerial era dictates that if knowledge is limited in such a way, workers will have limited ability to challenge goals and the means to achieving them. Yet, as Cheliotis points out, this logic fails to account for how highly workers value the intuitive and experiential knowledge accrued through their years on the job–which, in the case of the agents interviewed here, often leads them to discount evidence-based tools in decision-making–as well as the ways workers can employ this knowledge to resist institutional mandates.

Then there is the matter of worker resistance and goal reprioritization in resource-deficient settings, which further contributes to anti-science sentiment. In the case of California parole in particular, the department has failed to keep certain promises–such as the promise to reduce caseloads so that agents can carry out the "evidence-based practices" of the CPSRM. In order for the CPSRM to be effectively implemented as prescribed, agents must carry caseloads that are much lower than their current levels (Braithwaite, Turner, & Hess, 2013).[79] Unsurprisingly, this has further contributed to agents' skepticism on this topic, as it has in previous eras of the department (Lynch, 1998, 2000; Werth, 2011a, 2011b, 2013).

Teamwork: How agents accomplish parole supervision

Thus far, this chapter has argued that agents intuitively understand that they cannot rely on institutionally-prescribed goals and the means to achieving them, both because agents view these goals as not matching up with their self-defined goals, and because the department has a long

[79] It is important to note, however, that this is a complex issue: a recent outcome evaluation of CPSRM found that even when properly implemented, it had no effect on the12-month recidivism rates of parolees (Braithwaite et al, 2013). This reconfirms previous research that has shown that reduced caseloads lead to increased monitoring and the likelihood of more violations (Grattet, Lin, & Petersilia, 2011; Kubrin & Stewart, 2006; Petersilia & Turner, 1993).

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history of failing to follow through on its promises to provide the resources for achieving the stated goals. As a result, agents develop their own set of tactics–rooted in their personal experience rather than "evidence-based practice"–to ensure that they can minimally achieve the stated goals (in order to keep their jobs) while simultaneously making progress toward achieving their self-defined goals. Table 4.3 lays out the specifics of this situation.

Table 4.3 Parole agent adaptations to empty promises and mismatched goals.

	Public safety	**Rehabilitation**
Official means of achieving goal	• COMPAS risk and needs assessment • CPSRM prescriptions about initial interviews and home visits • Remedial sanctions–GPS tracking, outpatient or locked inpatient drug treatment	• COMPAS risk and needs assessment • Case planning goals and promises; program referrals • Motivational Interviewing
How goal achievement is blocked	• Reduction in the capacity to use the "coercive therapy" of threat of parole revocation • More paperwork means more time in the office, which means less time doing community surveillance of parolees	• Layoffs • High caseloads • Time-intensive nature of COMPAS and Motivational Interviewing
Agent adaptation: Teamwork		
Approach 1: Procedural justice	• Equity • Fairness • Professionalism	
Approach 2: Partnership	• Shared prison experience • Personal disclosure • Trust • Diffusion of responsibility through connections with parolees' social networks	

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I suggest here that agents employ what I call a "teamwork" approach to their work, and that this represents an effort to bridge agents' self-defined priorities of ensuring public safety and getting people off parole with the increasingly rehabilitative mandate of the department. Teamwork is defined as a blend of agents' on-the-job experience, life histories and identities that they value, and an understanding that getting someone off of parole requires cooperation between the agent and the parolee. Thus far in this chapter, agents' narratives have hinted at this process: Agent Gorman talks about being "on the same page and working together" as a key to successful parole supervision; Agent Marin mentions the need to "reach out" to a resistant parolee. The implication here is that supervision is an interactional process, ideally with both parties working toward the same outcome.

Agents employ teamwork as a means of facilitating the surveillance of parolees, which facilitates agents' central goal of ensuring public safety. Teamwork also gives the illusion of rehabilitation, in that the agent may disclose personal information or draw on other interpersonal tactics in an effort to build trust. Some agents intuitively recognize that personal disclosure in and of itself can be therapeutic (see, for example, Grace's experience in substance abuse treatment groups in Chapter 3). This comprises the limited extent to which these agents can facilitate rehabilitation. Teamwork was consistently present in how agents described their work, though two distinctive styles in which it is applied emerged in interviews, which might be understood as "procedural justice" and "partnership." The analysis presented here also examines how gender dynamics influence how the teamwork happens.

"Procedural justice"

A wealth of literature on procedural justice has shown that the most important factor in determining how an individual evaluates an encounter with a crime-processing institution is how

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fairly they were processed–regardless of whether the outcome was favorable or not (see, for just a few recent examples of this scholarship: Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler & Fagan, 2008; Tyler, 2010). By processing people in a fair manner, crime-processing agents–including police officers, court officials, and correctional staff–"create legitimacy and encourage general rule-following behavior in the everyday lives of people" (Tyler, 2010, p. 127).

The procedural justice style is typified by an emphasis on equity–treating everyone the same–as well as doing things in the right sequence, for example, following departmental guidelines on how to handle a parolee who has violated a condition of parole. However, this is not to be confused with fully buying into departmental policies, which as has already been shown, agents universally do not do. For example, as indicated in previous sections, Agent Carrillo is vocally critical of how the policies governing her work have changed under Realignment. For her, the more important matter–and one that it is her control–is how equitably she carries out these policies. In this way, she is arguably trying to make a rather unjust situation–as she sees it, parole is not worthwhile for her parolees–as just as possible.

Agents who described their style in this way often referenced elements of their personal identities and formative experiences which led them to value a procedural justice approach. Carrillo describes her upbringing in a "tough" neighborhood like this:

> I grew up where there were shootings and killings and I seen dead bodies and I seen all that stuff. But thankfully my father was in the military and just had me by the neck. 'You ain't going that way.' We had five girls in my family so he yanked every single one of us and... very much disciplined us like... you didn't act right, you got spanked. But that was just the way it is and you know what? I'm grateful for it.

As an adult, Carrillo fell on hard times after going through a divorce and raising her son alone–with "no help from nobody." She, like many front-line workers interview for this project across multiple public institutions, came to work for CDCR 23 years ago at the urging of a family

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member who worked elsewhere in the Department and who told Carrillo about the stability and good benefits a career in corrections could provide her. Carrillo attributes her ability to transcend the crime and violence of her surroundings during childhood, as well as later overcoming her financial struggles, to her father's use of discipline. She brings elements of this upbringing to how she supervises her parolees, describing her approach like this:

> I'm strictly by the book. I'm like, 'hey, new sheriff in town.' You better throw that mentality out. When I first received my second striker caseload I think I put about a third of 'em in custody. Because they're like, 'we don't have to see you.' Our last agent hasn't made us. I'm like, oh my goodness… Especially now with the AB 109. Oh, they're laughing. They're like, 'I'll do the 180 days with 90 days and then minus that we'll get 45 days. Yeah I'll go ahead and go to jail'… I did two remedial sanctions and had the [parole-affiliated drug treatment program] people pick 'em up, C.O.P. (Continue On Parole) 'em twice. This is what I'm doing because I'm doing everybody the same. I'm gonna give 'em two opportunities. If they wanna run from that van to go into a program, that's fine, but that third time, I'm sitting in front of the judge… The judge is giving 'em their time and making 'em go into the program and if they don't finish, it's gonna be a violation of their parole court order, I guess you could say. So that's really the most you can get. Because normally they would just do the time and you didn't have to send 'em. But the judge is doing it now.

Carrillo's description of raising her son on her own, with "no help," provides insight into how she sees parole supervision and her role in it: she is tough, she is not going put up with misbehavior, and she will not hesitate to use whatever disciplinary tactics she can. Prior to Realignment, Carrillo put a third of her caseload into custody for not complying with the conditions of parole. Even though she recognizes that her threats are now largely empty–and her parolees know it too–Carrillo still manages her caseload "strictly by the book": if a parolee violates the conditions of his or her parole, most often by failing a drug test, she uses the remedial sanctions at her disposal. If the parolee chooses to cycle in and out of drug treatment programs for the duration of their parole, then so be it. Yet Carrillo is also fair: she treats "everybody the same," giving them two chances to correct their behavior after violations as prescribed by departmental protocols (see Chapter 2). This is likely something that she learned to

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value from her father. She does this even thought she believes this approach is neither effective in deterring reoffending nor productive for the parolee. Interestingly, remarks that parole supervision is a "waste of time" were more common in my interviews with agents who aligned with a procedural justice approach. Arguably these agents adopt such an approach as a means of controlling a situation which otherwise feels chaotic and arbitrary.

The gendered aspects of the procedural justice approach

Carrillo's gender–and the gender composition of the parolee population–shape her supervision approach. Both male and female agents were consistently quick to remind me that women are a very small subset of their caseloads–most stated that women comprise roughly 6 to 7 percent of their parolees. This is in line with what we know about female offending patterns: women account for roughly 10 percent of the crime-processed population overall, and they also tend to be convicted of fewer of the serious and violent crimes for which one would be sentenced to state prison and then released on parole. This statistic seemed to be cited by some male agents as cover for not knowing much about how to work with female parolees, while for female agents like Carrillo, it provides context for aspects of her job that are difficult:

> I've worked with women in the institution and out. And I worked with the women at [state prison] before they got rid of them. Women are just more emotional. Men just try to be a little harder. Women are very manipulative. It's different when you deal with a woman because she basically tells you how [she feels] about a certain thing–you know, in their life, you can kind of relate to it. I'm not saying always use your personal experience but you kinda understand where they're coming from. When it comes to a man it's very different because a man doesn't wanna listen to a woman talk to him and tell him what to do. It's all about the insecurities. They need to be tough.

Agent Carrillo's description of men as being "tough," "harder," and worried about insecurities was confirmed by all the other agents I interviewed. Here is another instance in which scientific evidence corresponds with agents' experiences: young men, in particular, were repeatedly referenced as the most difficult group to work with–an observation that has consistently been

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confirmed in the criminological literature (Blumstein, Cohen, & Farrington, 1988; Moffitt, 1993). Carrillo also acknowledges the difficulty of being a female agent supervising mostly male parolees: many men don't want have a woman telling them what to do. This may further explain her procedural justice approach, which may help her to establish legitimacy with male parolees who are slow to view her as a legitimate authority figure.

Interestingly, for Carrillo, supervising women is just different, not any easier.[80] She acknowledges that she sometimes relates to women by drawing on her personal experiences–if not disclosing them, then at least using these facts to understand parolees' histories and choices. However, any benefits gained from women being relatively more emotionally open is cancelled out by the way this openness can become manipulative.[81] Thus, a procedural justice approach may protect Carrillo from women's manipulative tactics, which are likely geared toward trying to get her to bend the rules or otherwise make exceptions for non-compliant behavior.

Agent Ramos, who also takes a procedural justice approach, came to parole after working as a vocational rehabilitation counselor, in which he connected individuals with disabilities to resources that facilitate getting and keeping employment. Ramos was drawn to parole because of the "social work aspect" of the work–he views this as a crucial element of his professional identity and training. Thus, in his supervision style, he emphasizes equity and professionalism.

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[80] Consistent with the literature on this topic–as well as my own experiences working in the criminal justice system and the experiences of the women at New Beginnings–women were viewed by both male and female agents simultaneously as more drama and also lower-risk (Baines & Alder, 1996; Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 1992; Gaarder, Rodriguez, & Zatz, 2004). Thus, women's cases often get "bankloaded" (Lemert, 1993; see also: Erez, 1989, 1992): agents tend to focus less on the women on their caseloads, prioritizing the supervision of higher-risk, more dangerous male parolees. This was confirmed both in how the agents spoke about the women, and in how the women from New Beginnings described their encounters with their parole agents.

[81] Prior research with probation officers (Gaarder et al, 2004), correctional officers (Rhodes, 2006), and parole agents (Werth, 2011a) has also found that viewing clients–particularly female clients–as manipulative is common.

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He describes his approach like this: “I try to make it as comfortable for them as possible. I just try–not that we’re friends but–let them know, hey this is a professional thing, you’re the parolee.” Interestingly, Ramos values distinguishing the boundary between friendship and supervision–what he sees as “a professional thing.”

Ramos takes this approach a step further in his supervision of women: “I just try to keep it friendly and professional... and probably less friendly. More professional, only because I don’t want them to get the wrong idea and think ‘he’s flirting with me or something like that or he likes me.’” In keeping it “professional” and “less friendly,” Ramos’s narrative indicates that in some agent-parolee relationships, friendliness–a conventional means of establishing rapport and building trust–may be set aside out of concern that it could be confused with an inappropriate level of intimacy.

Agent Cain’s remarks on this point provide context:

> I think in some ways that they probably shouldn’t have men agents assigned females. Part of the reason for that is because we go on these home calls alone and they can make any kind of allegation. It’s like, how do you defend it if she’s saying I did this or said this? I’ll say no I didn’t but they’re probably gonna assume that she wouldn’t make that up, you know?
>
> It’s kinda the same like when you work in a men’s prison we have female staff that work there, female correctional officers. They do almost everything that the males do as far as supervising the inmates and custody and control. But unless it’s an emergency situation, they can’t work in receiving and release because that’s where they strip out the inmates. When I worked there I always thought it was kind of unfair ‘cause this is a nasty part of the job and they’re getting paid exactly what I am and they have the exact same training. But when you think about it, it is inappropriate. The inmates would feel uncomfortable. The inmates may get creepy and do something cause of the female being there and then of course the female she doesn’t wanna see that...
>
> I’ve never had a female parolee that gave me that instinct telling me you know what she seems like she might be the type. But I have always worried about it. One of the guys that I worked with at my last office had a female parolee, very pretty girl. And she had some serious psych issues. Well she actually started kinda stalking him. Telling him that that he was gonna end up being her husband and he told our supervisor, ‘you gotta transfer this case. Give this case to a female agent only. Because she this is what she’s doing.’ They ended up bringing her up on parole violation charges for what she was doing to the agent. He was scared to death... he had a wife and kids and he goes what if people start thinking that I was doing something? That was a train wreck waiting to happen.

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Interestingly, Cain views home visits–the task that agents universally agree is important, but which takes place in a highly personal setting–as being too risky with female parolees, who are often otherwise viewed as being lower risk. Perhaps, too, because agents adopting a procedural justice approach highly value professionalism, accusations of sexual impropriety would be particularly harmful both to their careers and their identities. Thus, for male agents in particular, a procedural justice approach emphasizing equity and fairness over trust and rapport-building is meant to protect them from women whom they perceive to be a threat to their reputation and livelihood.

"Partnership"

In contrast to the procedural justice approach's emphasis on equity, the "partnership" approach to supervision is implies a different power dynamic in the agent–parolee relationship, and also involves the use of different tactics by agents to conduct supervision. This approach is typified by the following elements: making connections with parolees' kin networks to diffuse responsibility for surveillance of parolees; identifying a shared experience of correctional settings and culture; and selective disclosure of personal information by agents to build rapport and trust.

Agent Harrison attributes his career in corrections to his brother, who had recently passed away after a long struggle with substance abuse, as well as things he "saw in the community" while growing up in South L.A. Harrison's partnership approach to supervision involves building rapport both with his parolees and their family members during home visits:

> Go to the home, talk to 'em, see what he's been up to. Talk to the girlfriend, wife, look around the house for any violations. See what other things they have going on, what's new. Are they upset, what mood they're in, what future plans they have. We talk about staying out of prison, of course, staying out of jail, staying out of trouble. 'What triggers make you upset?' I don't do that every time because then it's like 'wow, man you just–you not trying to get to know

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> me!' So they wanna do the small talk about the game and all that, what movies, and you know most people are personable. And they wanna know something a little personal. Tell 'em. I mean it's not you know really personal but personal. And you can tell 'em and they're ok with it. Then they let their shields down and like, 'ok, he's alright. He's not trying to hurt me.'

Harrison's upbringing, in a poor, high-crime area of Los Angeles is very similar to Carrillo's, yet their approach to supervision is quite different. Harrison recognizes that his parolees desire a personal connection with him–"they wanna know something a little personal" before he asks them sensitive questions about emotional triggers. They expect him to converse with them on topics beyond parole in order to establish rapport. Harrison also recognizes that speaking with family members is an important part of home visits, so that he can get a sense of the parolee's mental and emotional status. In this way, the partnership approach is used both to build trust and rapport and to achieve the goal of ensuring public safety through surveillance of parolees' physical and social environments.

Agents ascribing to a partnership approach, by virtue of their past careers as COs and other forms of work in prison, readily talked about drawing on these experiences in how they conceptualized their supervision approach. This facet of California parole has been noted in other research (Werth, 2013), but not investigated analytically. Interestingly, there was a sense of a common experience of having been in prison that parole agents felt they shared with their parolees, though they recognized the obvious difference as well. As Agent Nelson put it, "when you're in prison, you're doing time too." Agents also used phrases such as "that's the way I carried myself" during their time as COs. This type of emotional posturing is consistent with literature on the complex "emotional geography" of prisons (Crewe, Warr, Bennett, & Smith, 2014; see also: Crawley, 2004; Crewe, 2009, 2011; Liebling, 2000, 2011), and underscores agents' sentiment that only other people who have spent time in such a setting can truly relate to

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this experience. This geography is reflected in what Agent Marin, who had worked as a CO for 22 years before coming to parole two years ago, says to his new parolees:

> Ok. Put this badge and all this other stuff away. I don't know what you heard in the institutions but with me it's not that way and you're just gonna have to trust me. In the institution there's a saying, 'all you have is your word.' If my word's no good, you're not good in prison. So that would be my speech. I go, 'do you remember being in the joint? How we based our credibility was on our word.' Even though I was a correctional officer and you were an inmate or a convict–'cause there's a difference there–you gonna have to trust me. And I don't have to trust you but I am gonna trust you.

The theme of trust–that "all you have is your word"–was interwoven throughout Agent Marin's description of how he interacts with his parolees. Perhaps this is a reflection of the fact that he became a parole agent during the transition period leading up to Realignment: because he is so new, he is not accustomed to being able to rely on the coercive threat of parole revocation to ensure compliance. Instead, he describes his work with a parolee and his or her family as "teamwork," telling his parolees, "if you go to jail, that means I failed… We'll go to jail as a team." The trust that Marin seeks to establish, like Harrison, extended to his parolees' family members: he cited several instances in which parolees' husbands or wives called him to report that their spouses hadn't been home in a few days, asking him for help in finding their loved ones. In establishing this dynamic early on in the supervision relationship, Marin successfully diffuses responsibility for surveillance of his parolees, relying on a partnership with parolees' kin networks to alert him to potential trouble.

Agents who ascribed to a partnership approach acknowledged that there is a thin line between "us" and "them," and remained constantly aware of this reality.[82] This shaped how they

[82] This should not be confused with agents not differentiating themselves from parolees at all. Similar to Werth (2011a, p. 123), during interviews I experienced multiple instances in which agents reminded me that parolees are dangerous and dirty people. For example, one agent went out of his way to find a different chair for me to sit in for our interview in his office. When I said I was fine sitting in the chair across from his desk, he told me that that is where his parolees sit and that I don't want to sit in that chair

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accomplished their work. Interestingly, similar their counterparts who employed a procedural justice approach, these agents often referenced the difficult circumstances in which they grew up, and felt that these formative experiences helped them to understand the powerful draw of criminal behavior for young people in such areas, yet the way it shaped their approach to supervision was markedly different. Agents described in great detail the "speech" that they give to their new parolees during their first meeting, where the groundwork for the partnership is established. Here, Agent Nelson draws on elements of his personal history to build trust and rapport:

> Today I gave a really good counseling speech to a guy that just paroled. I do give 'em that side of me where it's like, I got laws that I can't break myself, and things of this nature. I say, don't worry about the badge or anything. We're men. We're people sitting here, talking. So I go through my interview, fill out the proper documentation, conditions of parole, and read it. Make sure they have no disabilities and so forth. And then I would go on as far as, 'don't sell yourself short.' I like to get the on the philosophical side of it. I said, 'don't sell yourself short. It's all how you perceive things.' I said, 'you know that patience that you had when you were in lock-up? Same thing applies out here, ok? Motivation–that doesn't last. It has to be a habit. When you get out, at this time you do this; at this time you do that. Same like in the institutions, you know?'
>
> I said, 'in life you have to create doors for yourself.' And so I tell these guys, 'you wanna create doors right now.' And I give 'em the little example of myself. I said, 'I was the bad seed in my family–I'm the black sheep.' But I think I turned out ok. I went from getting in and out of high school because I was one of those actually smart guys that didn't need to study. So by the time I was a senior I only needed like two classes or whatever… So I used to surf all the time. Next thing you know I'm getting booted out from my house at 16, 17 years old and all this other mess... From then, I went into the military. I was in Desert Storm. I was a gunner and all this stuff. And then I came out, Army College Fund, the GI Bill, I went to college. Earned a RN degree. So I was a nurse practicing postpartum, OBGYN, home health, convalescent homes, to then I worked in a methadone clinic. From the methadone clinic, I had clients that were heroin addicts and they were the ones who influenced me and told me, you should work in prison. You would like that. And that's how I got into corrections…
>
> I didn't know I was gonna go into the military. I didn't know I was gonna become a nurse of all things. I didn't know I was gonna be working in all these different fields in nursing. I didn't know I was gonna work in prison as a nurse/custody officer… So I said, you gotta create doors for yourself. I tell 'em, how do you eat an elephant? I told 'em one bite at a time. One step at a time, man. Don't overwhelm yourself. I said you can lean on me. I should be one of the best friends, so-to-speak on a professional level, that you know. Straight up. I said,

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because parolees are dirty. The agents expressing this perspective, however, most often aligned with the procedural justice approach.

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> if anybody–your old homeboys or anybody–they're giving you a hard time or anything like that, like 'roll out with us,' let 'em know, 'no my parole officer's on me. He's riding me. He got eyes on me.' You can lean on me like that. 'Cause quite honestly I think a lot of these guys are tired of all of that stuff. But that's all they know. From their peers. And then it goes back into the communities. Programs, education, then it comes along to family structure and, you know, if mom and dad was incarcerated at one point, using dope and that's all they saw that's probably where they're gonna go next. So I let these guys know, you don't have to be that way. It's your choice. It's in your hands…

Nelson contradicts himself in interesting ways which speak to the complexity of employing a partnership approach. His speech seems designed to remove any perceived social distance between him and his parolee by drawing on common ground: he's worked in prison, so he has some idea of what it's like "inside;" he also knows what it's like to be the "black sheep," to feel like you don't fit in and everyone expects you to fail. In acknowledging these shared experiences, Nelson transmits but also resists the expected tenets of present-day criminal justice administration (Bell, 2011), which promote values such as personal responsibility and independence from state assistance.

Implicit in Nelson's narrative is the suggestion that if he was able to succeed after difficulties in adolescence, so can his parolees. This implication neglects to acknowledge the obvious social distance between Nelson–a relatively well-compensated state employee–and his parolees, who are not only permanently marked with criminal records, but who also often fall into predictable categories of race and class which make their circumstances even more difficult. In urging his parolees to "create doors for yourself," Nelson communicates a belief that it not structural inequalities that limit his parolees' opportunities to build better lives for themselves, but rather, it's all about "choices." This is consistent with recent research examining the transmission of similar ideologies by COs, many of whom are from similar communities and familial circumstances as the inmates with whom they interact. In this way, parole agents–like their CO counterparts–can function as "the transmission points of broader ideologies that conceal

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fundamental inequalities" (Kramer et al, 2013, p. 538; see also: Crawley, 2004; Crewe, 2011; Lerman & Page, 2012; Liebling, 2000).

Yet in other ways, Nelson seems to recognize the limits of the values he espouses: in observing that "that's all they know," he indicates an awareness that, like himself in his younger years, his parolees are operating within a bounded rationality (H. Simon, 1957) which limits their ability to make good decisions. He observes that structural conditions such as familial poverty, substance abuse, and the absence of helpful community-based programs can contribute to criminal behavior.

A continuation of Nelson's narrative provides insight into how he constructs his relationship with his parolees:

> So I said, my life has passed. I've lived my dreams, so to speak. It's not always materialistic, but I'm on a different level, you know? So I kinda put that on the client, so-to-speak. And what I kinda find is people that make the best parole agents and probation officers are people that lived in the communities before or grew up in poverty. When you get hired in a position like this, nothing's ever black and white. You get paid to look in that grey area and make decisions. But in this day and age, quite honestly, the computer's making that decision. You have your check boxes and so forth and in a way it's maybe a little bit more rapid and you feel like it's too mechanical. And as far as that one-on-one with your parolee, that's where that professional relationship has to be something, really starting on a solid foundation.
>
> I didn't grow up rich. Everything that I have obtained, I worked for. Nobody's given me this stuff. Nobody said life was easy. So I tell these guys, I can break certain laws too. Don't you know I can end up in cuffs like anybody else, man? So I kinda show that part of me to where they can see where I'm coming from. We can develop some kind of trust and so forth. And I let 'em know, come to me before the cops get to you, man. If you're getting loaded, let me know. Maybe I can help you out in certain ways. But then of course, there's that other side. You wear two hats, right? If I have to come and get you, I'm gonna get you, but I've been kinda lucky… It's pretty intense, but then again, you can't just say, you're not gonna do this, you're not gonna do that, you're just gonna be nobody in your life and all that stuff. They already heard all that stuff before, man…
>
> So I say, well, I can give you some tools. Here you go. Check out this program. Check out this program. You like cars? You like mechanical work? What kind of stuff do you like? Check out this trade school. But that's been cut off too. We used to have the learning lab in here. Employment development departments, things like that. So we networked together. We used to have liaison meetings together with deputy sheriffs, law enforcement, social services, put things together. It's been years. The law enforcement, social services, all have to work hand in hand. There's no liaison anymore. That part needs to get filled.

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Nelson entirely eschews the rhetoric of personal responsibility when he encourages his parolees to "lean on" him–to use him as an excuse when they sense they are being lured back into criminal behavior. Implicit in his statement that "I should be one of the best friends… that you know" is the idea that no one can truly succeed on their own. This is in stark contrast to the rhetoric typically promoted in official accounts of parole (see, for example: the description of the parolee handbook in Chapter 2).

Another striking element of Nelson's narrative is his observation that much of parole work, particularly around the construction of risk, is now automated–"the computer's making that decision." Instead, Nelson sees his role as building a "professional relationship" based in trust. He accomplishes this through personal disclosure of his own experiences with poverty, which he believes sensitizes him to parolees' difficult circumstances and thus allows him to "look in that grey area and make decisions." Herein lies the distinguishing feature of the partnership approach: unlike his procedural justice counterparts, Agent Nelson views discretionary decision-making rooted in an understanding of his parolees' struggles as a defining element of what he brings to his work. This is what sets him apart from the computer. Lastly, Nelson's narrative highlights the resource-deficient environment in which he functions. Arguably, he works so hard to establish rapport through personal disclosure because he recognizes that this is the one modest way in which he can offer rehabilitative support.

The gendered aspects of the partnership approach

Perhaps unsurprisingly, agents who ascribed to a partnership approach were more likely to speak positively about supervising women than their procedural justice counterparts–regardless of agents' gender. These agents spoke about women as being are both easier to supervise and more likely to successfully complete parole. As Agent Nelson put it, "for the most part the

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women always do well... They really do much better, they're more responsible." When asked how he sees the difference between working with women versus men, Agent Marin responded like this:

> For the most part, women will open up. They're a little bit more emotional and they wanna do the right thing. Most of the cases that I've had have been drug-related and they love the drug more than their own kids, and that's the sad part. The thing about the women–they don't have a chip on their shoulder like the men. They know right from wrong. The guys will think, oh no, they know it all. They can't do nothing wrong. I mean hey, I'll never get caught. It'll never happen to me. Where the women–they'll think twice. And go well, Marin, if I go to that program I know I'll get better, but if I stay home I'm just gonna continue to use drugs. They see it. The guys will be like 'pshhh. I'll be alright. I'm cool. I'm cool.' They'll try to play it macho, and it doesn't work.

In sharp contrast to Cain, Carrillo, and Ramos, Marin sees women's emotional openness as an asset: unlike men, who "have a chip on their shoulder," women tend to know their weaknesses, and this helps Marin to establish a partnership in supervising them.

Similar themes emerged in female agents' narratives. Supervising Agent Gorman sees the difference between men and women as relating to gendered post-incarceration goals, pressures, and expectations:

> The women get out and for those that have children, they're really looking forward to regaining their parental rights and custody of their children and they become very frustrated when it doesn't happen fast enough. And often times before it comes to pass they tend to kinda revert back into they past criminal lifestyle. Men tend to find that it's a lot of pressure on them to get out. Those that have children and wives or girlfriends that they left behind, they feel the pressure of having to get out and have a steady flow of income coming in right away. So they tend to reoffend because if they don't get a job right away they go back to what they know. Selling drugs, hustling, pimping, whatever they do to bring in the income to help the family. That's because they feel the pressure from the girlfriend or the wife saying, 'hey, I been holding it down since you been gone. You need to help. You worthless.' So they get out with a sense of feeling worthless and feeling like they need to do more to contribute.

While acknowledging these differences, Gorman recognizes a pitfall shared by men and women as "trying to do too much too fast," which is related to expecting institutions that move slowly to respond quickly to their needs. In this way, Gorman simultaneously acknowledges both the

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structural conditions and the individual choices that can impede people's post-incarceration work. Gorman's understandings of these complexities are reflected in her approach both to parolee supervision and her supervision of agents:

> I had a situation with a female parolee and her child. She was trying to fight to get her child back and I think the child was in foster care. And then she found out that they thought the child probably had been molested and this really sent her spiraling. She started to use drugs and her whole appearance changed and eventually every day I would go by her house every single day on my way to work. That was my first stop... I can't say she was really suicidal but it just seemed like she was gonna do something that would get her caught up. Because she needed money to get her own place to get established in order to get her child back. So she was working really hard and the job that she had wasn't bringing in a whole lot of money. And she had a history of drugs sales in the past, so I was concerned with the fact that she would probably start to sell.
>
> So I would monitor her as closely as I can. I come in and didn't actually do a search but I was always watching and looking to see if anything new was in the home–any renovations been made, new furniture. 'Cause that would be a sign to me. 'Where you getting this money?' So I made more trips to her house than what's required. And we would talk a lot. I would tell her, 'this is what you need to do. Go to Section 8 housing. You need to do this. You need to do that.' I would call ahead of time to find out the information then give it to her and tell her what she needs to do.
>
> Because often times they don't know. And that's why I tell my agents all the time, 'you tell them to do things and you think that they can or you think that they should be able to, and they don't know how. That's why they don't do it. They seriously don't know how.' I would have to get the bus route for them. When they go on a job interview or I'm sending them to the Department of Rehabilitation, I would have to say 'ok this is it... you go to the southeast corner, you do this.' Because they don't know. We often times take for granted that they know, that you can just give them simple instructions or directions and they'll be able to follow it, and they can't.
>
> You have to hold their hands. I was known when I was a PA1 as being a parole agent that holds the parolees' hands. And now with my agents they call me the mother hen. My boss told me that. She was like, 'you know they call you the mother hen?'... I used to hold the parolee's hands when I was a 1. And when they would go to a different agent they would say 'I'm not gonna spoon feed you like Mrs. Gorman do. I'm not gonna spoon feed you.' So my agents would be like, the parolees be like 'I want you back!'... Everybody's got their own style... [some agents] are more like 'I'm not gonna play.' They look at their criminal history and 'I'm not gonna play with you.' But they been hearing that for forever. Try a different approach.

Gorman's approach was an outlier in my small sample: she spoke in greater detail than any of the other agents about specific steps she took to facilitate the rehabilitation of her parolee. Perhaps because she is so remarkable, Gorman's approach is constructed in a gendered way by

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both her boss and the agents she supervises: in taking a highly personalized partnership approach to supervision, she is called the "mother hen." Interestingly, the implication here is that "hand holding" and other techniques of providing actual, substantive rehabilitative assistance is a more feminine way of doing things.

What is also striking in Gorman's narrative is the way in which she moves easily between the enforcement aspects of her job–such as looking for evidence of money that might have been obtained through drug activity–and providing clear instructions for how to do a range of rehabilitative activities, from accessing subsidized housing to going on job interviews. In this way, Gorman goes above and beyond what is expected of her both by agents' self-defined goals and official departmental goals. While remarkable, Gorman's narrative provides a glimpse of what rehabilitation in practice might look like in parole, if the resources and goals were reprioritized to do so in a systematic way.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to build upon recent examinations of California parole by contributing insight into how agents have experienced policy changes made to parole in the midst of California's broader effort toward shrinking its state prison population. The narratives of the agents I interviewed speak to the pains of implementing large-scale policy change, and in turn offer insight into how decarceration policy might better account for all institutions involved in such an effort. While I find that little has substantively changed both in agents' working conditions and in how agents' understand the goals of their work as being distinct from those officially espoused by the department, my analysis provides two key insights into how agents conceptualize their work.

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First, my analysis of agents' use of anti-science discourse illuminates the fundamental disconnect between researchers' and policy-makers' well-intentioned efforts to bring "evidence-based practices" into community correctional settings. I show that while agents resist these practices when they do not align with what agents know intuitively and experientially, being given a rehabilitative mandate without the means of properly achieving–as others have shown before (Lynch, 1998, 2000; 2011a, 2011b, 2013–further erodes any possibility that agents will buy in to such a shift. Such tensions are perhaps even more profound post-Realignment, as agents grapple with a new reality of having diminished capacity to coerce parolee compliance through punitive tactics like parole revocation.

Second, my analysis lends additional depth to our understanding of the tactics parole agents use to supervise their parolees. My typology of these tactics shows how agents bring their personal values, histories, and experiences to their work in various ways, in an effort to juggle both effective surveillance of their parolees and what Lynch (2000) calls paying "lip service to the rehabilitative ideal" (p. 46). In examining how the personal is brought into public settings in this way, my analysis contributes complexity to existing theories of front-line community supervision work, which have largely focused on workers' professionally-defined identities and practices.

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Chapter Five

Recalibration of the personal touch: Probation officer adaptations to AB 109

Under AB 109, county probation departments have taken on the responsibility of carrying out a new form of supervision–Post-Release Community Supervision (PRCS)–which, as noted in Chapter 2, has been characterized by policy makers and administrators as being like neither parole nor probation. This chapter examines probation officers' front-line experiences of this new program.

The analysis presented here contributes two interrelated concepts in an effort to build an understanding of how front-line workers formulate their professional identities and supervision strategies in a changing political and programmatic environment. The implementation of PRCS has necessitated a "recalibration of the personal touch" as probation officers reckon with new policies and procedures in supervising their clients. In contrast to their counterparts in parole, the analysis presented here shows that officers' goals for supervision align with the official goals of PRCS, and further, officers' goals are at times loftier and more rooted in a belief in the potential of rehabilitation. Yet they are operating within a new program which is struggling to publicly emphasize its capacity to ensure public safety while simultaneously providing substantive rehabilitative opportunities. Officers readily identify the shortcomings of the program and thus develop tactics to cope with this reality. The concept of officers as "critical believers" in PRCS is suggested as a means of understanding how they internally reconcile the strengths and deficits of their work as well as the tactics they use to supervise their clients in order to manage this complexity.

This chapter first describes how probation officers are experiencing the current context of PRCS, with specific attention to what is new and different about this form of supervision and

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how officers are adjusting to it. Next, this chapter examines how officers interpret the goals and procedures of PRCS in doing their jobs. It is suggested that officers are recalibrating the personal touch they employ in supervision to cope with their new circumstances. Lastly, in showing how officers both buy into and recognize the limitations of PRCS, this chapter shows how the critical believer identity plays out in how officers apply a personal touch in their supervision.

Under the spotlight

As noted in Chapter 2, imagery of an impending disaster in the guise of former prison inmates running amok has frequently been invoked in order to cast AB 109 as a "system that's meant to fail" (Lin, 2011) and a threat to public safety (Mehta, 2013; Brand & Martínez, 2012a, 2012b). L.A. County in particular has been portrayed as "ground zero for prison realignment" (Brand & Martínez, 2012a) due to its massive size in comparison to all other California counties. Local government officials likewise have contributed to the concern: perhaps most notably, Sharon Runner, a now-former Republican state senator from northern L.A. County, advised Californians to "get a gun, buy a dog, and put an alarm system in" (Lagos, 2011) when AB 109 was passed.

This discourse has thrust L.A. County Probation into the spotlight as the department has scrambled to hire hundreds of new officers to supervise what it has called "some of the most sophisticated and seasoned criminals being released from state prison" (L.A. County Probation, 2012, p. 10). Table 5.1 shows the demographic and work experience profiles of the officers interviewed for this project. It is important to note that those with 1 to 2 years of experience with adults had previously worked in either juvenile probation or detention.

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Table 5.1 Probation officers' demographics and work experience.

Pseudonym	Gender	Race/ethnicity	Years working with adults
Armstrong	F	Black	1
Craig	F	Black	10
Jacinto	F	Latina	1
Jackson	F	Black	1
Martinez	M	Latino	1
Napier	M	Black	15
Perez*	M	Latino	20
Sanchez	F	Latina	7
Travis	F	Black	1
Wilkinson	F	Black	2

*Now works in probation administration

The pressures placed on probation under AB 109 are not merely to manage what is perceived to be a more "sophisticated" and "dangerous" population; according to its most recent annual report (L.A. County Probation, 2012), probation is also expected to facilitate rehabilitation by establishing "a comprehensive and holistic approach towards supervision" through collaborations with providers of mental health, substance abuse, and welfare services (p. 10). In doing so, probation is to

> Implement an evidence-based supervision model which includes establishing appropriate supervision ratios based on assessed risk-levels; and developing case plans that address criminogenic risks/needs, mental and physical health issues, substance abuse, housing and employment needs, while employing the use of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and graduated intermediate sanctions, when applicable (L.A. County Probation, 2012, p. 10).

Thus, a similar tension between the goals of ensuring public safety and facilitating rehabilitation exist for PRCS as they do for parole. As this chapter will show however, probation officers' understandings of these official goals and how they interpret them in their work are quite different.

The burden of the new

The implementation of PRCS had to happen quite rapidly: counties only had about six months

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to prepare between the passage of AB 109 in mid-March of 2011 and its implementation on October 1 of the same year. The highly publicized pressures placed on PRCS, in combination with the scramble to implement it quickly, have meant that in its early years, officers have been operating in a chaotic environment defined by constantly changing expectations. As Officer Wilkinson put it, "every day something is changing. Like if it's court reports or if it's the way we do this, the way we do that. They're not on the same page. You talk to someone at another area office, they're doing something else way different."

The ability of officers to cope with this hectic situation understandably varied based on officers' level of experience. As Officer Armstrong, who was new to adult probation after previously working as a juvenile probation officer, put it: "there's a lot of improvement I think that needs to take place with AB 109. For example, we can't keep deputies. Everybody wants to get out. Majority of people wanna get out. Especially at this office... It's a new program so people aren't adaptable to change. Me, I'm a little different. I just roll with it."

Part of what makes PRCS so overwhelming–and also potentially promising–is the idea that it is "complete supervision." This was a term used frequently by Officer Napier, a veteran of adult probation:

> You get a client, you have to start giving the client the service that is required. Housing–you know, regular supervision, we don't get involved in housing; drug treatment program; we find them employment, job training. So now we are going to help them, for instance, [with a] clothing allowance. We do bus tokens. So a lot of things we do. We supervise, we go out to their homes... we have a lot more contact with outside agencies... DA, police departments. We are involved in them... so it's more intense than regular supervision... AB 109 is totally different. You do a lot more.

Implicit in Napier's description of the difference between traditional probation and PRCS is that efforts toward rehabilitation can and should be happening alongside surveillance toward the goal of ensuring public safety. In this way, Napier understands PRCS to be more "intense," and that

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the intensity in part stems from officers' interactions and coordination with outside agencies–a theme that will recur throughout this chapter. The idea that PRCS is "complete" in this way also applies to the types of presenting issues of clients that probation officers are seeing and trying to address. In describing his transition to the new program, Napier sees this as an asset:

> For me it was much easier to roll over to AB 109 because this is what I been doing; it's just a little bit different... to me it's a good experience especially to young deputies coming out to the field. When you learn, if you start with AB 109, believe me you'll be a complete deputy. You will be because you're supervising everything. In regular supervision it's kind of divided. If you're doing domestic violence you're doing domestic violence. If you're doing NTU [narcotics testing unit], you're doing NTU. If you're doing family violence, you're doing family violence. But in AB 109 you do everything. So that's what I tell the young deputies. That if you learn with AB 109 you'll be a star.

Napier's narrative touches on a key facet of PRCS: although officers may carry a caseload that is specialized based on risk level (for example, Napier carries a "high risk" caseload), AB 109 clients have a wide range of risks and needs–which can include histories of substance abuse, domestic violence, and other issues. Thus, officers must learn a vast array of services and resources quite quickly so that they can provide effective supervision. This is challenging, particularly for newer officers, though as Napier suggests, the payoff is becoming a "complete deputy" who can supervise any sort of client.

Defining dangerousness and modifying surveillance

In addition to the new challenge of doing "complete supervision," officers must also grapple with how to approach their work with clients who have been constructed both publicly and by the department as riskier than individuals who are on traditional probation. Officer Napier describes his clients like this:

> Even though we classify them as AB 109, most of them are sophisticated. We are adjusting because of the way it's set up, but these are sophisticated people that have been to prison. I'll show you an example. This is a report I'm doing now. Look at this guy. These are his arrests for one year. He's been arrested twelve times. Ten of them are about drugs. He's been to prison four times. So these are the typical people that we are dealing with. They've been in

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> prison. They've been exposed to a lot of things. They can call you if you're not an experienced deputy. They can manipulate you. Some of them haven't been on probation in their life. Everything's been prison, parole, prison, parole. They don't know about AB 109. They haven't even been on regular supervision, probation supervision. So you can imagine their mindset. It's all about parole and prison. They don't deal with County, they deal with big boys.

Napier's narrative reiterates a common concern about AB 109 that has been widely covered in the news media: that "sophisticated" criminals are being released from state prison (see also: Abarbanel et al, 2013). Because of this, Napier has adjusted his approach in working with his AB 109 caseload, which he perceives to be comprised of "sophisticated people" who have had much different interactions with the criminal justice system than the people he previously supervised. It is important to note, however, that point is debatable: on demographic characteristics, at least, parole and probation populations are not all that different (Herberman & Bonczar, 2014), although no any comparative studies on this particular topic could be located.

As noted in Chapter 2, because PRCS clients are viewed as more dangerous and sophisticated than traditional probation clients, probation officers' surveillance work is procedurally different in the new program. At the time of my interviews, more than two years after AB 109 went into effect, officers were only just beginning to do home visits; prior to this, they had only interacted with clients in the office. These visits are quite limited in scope because a probation officer, unlike a parole agent, does not carry a firearm in the field.[83,84] Working in pairs, officers' field

[83] The one exception to this is the Special Enforcement Operations (SEO) unit. Officers in the SEO unit are armed and often accompany law enforcement agencies during compliance checks (L.A. County Probation, 2012).

[84] The Los Angeles County Deputy Probation Officers Union, AFSCME Local 685, has been active in pushing for probation officers to have firearms. Per AB 1968, passed unanimously in 2012, probation officers may carry firearms, but the final decision is left up to the Chief Probation Officer of each California county. Both the Chief Probation Officers of California and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors opposed this bill. As of this writing, L.A. County officers (except the SEO unit) are only trained and approved to carry pepper spray. Officers also wear bulletproof vests while out in the field. However, since the passage of AB 109, at least five other California counties have armed their officers (Villacorte, 2013).

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visits involve going to their clients' residences, knocking on the door, and briefly speaking to their clients without entering.[85] As discussed in Chapter 2, local law enforcement has now taken on the work of doing actual home visits–compliance checks–to examine clients' living environments.

Understandably, some officers were frustrated by this situation. Officer Sanchez, for example, explained to me that she was making arrangements to transfer back to juvenile probation because she had become disheartened by PRCS's procedures.[86] Initially, Sanchez came to PRCS because she viewed it as an opportunity to "protect the community by putting away the ones that need to go back and really helping those that want to be helped." Yet she quickly became disillusioned with the new program because of what she viewed as too much paperwork and not enough time spent "out in the community, working with them directly." To Sanchez, this means that in effect probation is "failing the community":

> I feel like I have no power because I should be out there seeing what my girls are doing. We're working with females. I wanna know what my girls are doing. I wanna know if they're actually waking up, taking their kids to school. Are they interacting with the kids? Are they actually going to the classes, you know? All that stuff. 'Cause I know a lot of issues [are] with family stuff... So that's where I'm at. 'Cause [juvenile probation] is still gonna be screwed up. It's gonna be a lot of work. But at least I'm not gonna be on the on the four o'clock news.

Like her counterparts in parole, Sanchez views being "out there seeing what my girls are doing" as a crucial aspect of her job. This is where she can not only ensure public safety, but also monitor her clients' family situations to ensure that they are caring for their children. Sanchez

[85] It is important to note that officers working in traditional adult probation also conduct home visits. Depending on the risk classification of the client, officers may go inside the home or simply do these more superficial visits in which they do not cross the threshold.

[86] It is important to note that Sanchez was the only officer in my sample to disclose that she was actively trying to leave PRCS. I include her comments here because I have reason to believe they are more representative of how some new-to-adults officers feel about their jobs than was indicated in my sample. Both of the veteran officers–and a few of the novices–in my sample spoke at length about new officers struggling to adjust to AB 109, mentioning that several in each of their offices were requesting transfers back to juvenile probation.

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links her inability to do this sort of work to the likelihood of ending up "on the four o'clock news" if one of her clients commits a new crime–an allusion to the highly-publicized nature of PRCS as well as the riskiness of her clients.

Officers also talked about how these very limited interactions in the field are oddly disconnected from the personal relationships they have often worked hard to established with their clients during office visits, and that clients are in turn confused about what to expect. Officer Travis describes a typical conversation with her clients about these visits:

> Well, I can say my clients want me to come. They're like, 'so, Miss Travis, you said you started doing field visits. When are you coming to my house? My girlfriend wants to meet you, my wife.' So I'm like, 'you're a little too eager for me to come to your house. I don't know if I'm gonna come to your house. Haha.' He's like, 'oh, Miss Travis, I wouldn't do anything to you.' But all my clients are like, 'so we when are you coming? Are you gonna call me? Are you gonna come beforehand? Are you gonna come in? How long are you gonna stay? Well, if I cook for you…? 'No.' 'What about some coffee?' 'No.' And I try to be funny. 'I'll have the coffee and donuts.' But we don't go inside… we don't actually go across the threshold. But, oh, as soon as you get there, 'oh hey. Hi Miss Travis! Hey, come on in! Let me show you around.' I'm like, 'no, I'm fine here.'

What is striking in Travis's narrative is the fact that her clients want her to come into their homes. As noted in Chapter 3 with Randi's story of being on parole, this demonstrates that individuals' experiences of being on community supervision are often more complex than simply being burdened by the constant threat of surveillance. Arguably, Travis's clients invite her into their homes both because they want to demonstrate to her that they are complying with the conditions of their supervision and because they clearly have fostered a relationship with her. Yet in joking about being suspicious of her clients' intentions in their invitations, Travis alludes to this concern about client dangerousness, which is what procedurally prevents her from going inside.

Officers were divided over the utility of these superficial visits. Some saw them as a step toward being able to do the real work of supervision after two-plus years of being "stuck in the

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office," while others voiced concern about their own safety. As Officer Craig–a veteran of adult probation–noted, "a lot of people who are new to AB 109 have a problem with [the visits] because they say, 'well, you got us going to see people who just got out of prison.'" Most, however, believed that having a firearm would impair their ability to form relationships with their clients. Officer Wilkinson, who was neutral about the firearm topic (she half-jokingly stated that "I probably don't want a gun because I would shoot") acknowledged that "[being armed] would change our relationship with them, because a lot of times the reason why they have problems with the cops is because of how they've been treated." This awareness that probation officers need to differentiate themselves from the police in light of both their clients' histories with the police and the new supervision set-up, which involves the police, is a point to which I will return at the end of this chapter.

As has been shown thus far, probation officers working in PRCS have been challenged not only with a new program and an arguably new clientele, but with the pressures associated with a program that has been implemented hastily and under immense public scrutiny. The following section examines how officers are managing key aspects of their work under these circumstances.

Recalibrating the personal touch

This section presents the concept of the recalibration of the personal touch as a means of understanding how officers are confronting the complexity of their work, both procedurally and with a clientele which has been constructed as riskier than traditional probation clients. As discussed in Chapter 1, the personal touch involves the utilization of elements of an officer's personal values, histories, and experiences alongside their professional training to supervise their clients. Here, I examine how officers conceptualize three key facets of their work: the use of

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evidence-based risk assessment and other scientifically-based ways of knowing about their clients; the use of discretion in punishing violations; and problem-solving around the limits of PRCS.

The science of risk

In contrast to their counterparts in parole, probation officers were somewhat more likely to utilize the scientific discourse of risk in how they assess new clients. Officer Armstrong, for example, recognized that because she is unarmed, for her own safety she must limit her home visits to clients who were categorized as lower risk: "I can guarantee you one thing: I will not be going to see those clients that have a LS/CMI risk score of 26 to 29. Those will not be the guys I go and see. I will be seeing my clients who are working. I will be going to the transitional homes." In this way, Armstrong uses her clients' risk scores–which are, as discussed in Chapter 2, determined during intake at a probation HUB office–to shape at least one aspect of her work with her clients.

At other times, the LS/CMI is not directly referenced, but its themes and terminology emerge in how officers evaluate new clients. During my interview with Officer Napier, for example, he pulled out a client's file and showed me the different sorts of information he uses to develop an expectation about new clients:

> People like that, you gotta study them and know how to approach them… What I usually do when I get a new client is I pull up their history. That's the first thing I do. 'Cause some of them, I don't know them. Never seen them in my life. They haven't seen me in their lives. So I like to set up a conversation in a more cordial way. Tell them what I expect from them and I'll tell 'em what they can expect from me. What I'm gonna do as their deputy… I will respect you like a human being. I'm not gonna treat you like a criminal but you're gonna act well. You're gonna be able to start doing something different, 'cause you do what you've been doing the past ten twenty years, you're gonna get the same result… So I'll look at their history before they come. These are all his descriptors. These are the addresses he has used in the past. These are the convictions. So I take a look at all these things. What kind of crime has this guy been committing in the past? What kind of sentence has he received in the past?

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> Where has he been? Prison? Probation? How did he perform while on supervision? Parole? Did he go back? Yes. On probation, was he violated? Did he go back and forth to court?
>
> So when I take a look at this in my mind I start framing who I'm seeing. It starts to look like a picture. These things will tell me at least who they are on paper. Sometimes what you see may not be what you get. So this history here will tell me who I'm dealing with… Then I ask that person the [case plan] questions based on this. 'Cause I see what his or her reaction would be. Then from there I have a plan. This person is sophisticated. This person I may be able to work with. I gotta be hard on this person. So when that person is sitting here I know how to approach them. That first day I set the tone. They know that this is the way Mr. Napier gonna work with me. So if I know you are the type that's gonna come here and play games I will tell you right now, 'hey, just leave it at the door. Let's take care of business. It's all about you, not about me. It's all about your future not mine.' I let them understand that.

What is notable in Napier's narrative is his use of the term "you gotta study them," which–in contrast to parole–is an interesting use of science discourse to describe his approach, which relies heavily on clients' criminal histories.

Napier's use of actuarial tools to guide his initial interactions with his clients exemplifies what Smith calls the "text-reader conversation" (2005, pp. 104-105; Smith & Turner, 2014), in which texts are interpreted by workers as a means of then shaping workers' actions. In researching his new client before meeting him, Napier tries to answer questions posed on the case plan documents by reviewing the client's history. These questions in large part are structured by the client's LS/CMI score. As Napier emphasizes, "they can manipulate you," meaning he needs to understand a client's history prior to meeting him, so that during the initial meeting, he can pose these same questions, gauge the client's response, and from there develop a sense of whether he "may be able to work with this person" or he has to "be hard on this person."

While interpreting texts in this way, Napier employs a personal touch to "set up a conversation in a more cordial way"–he recognizes that his initial meeting with a new client involves both establishing rapport and assessing the extent to which the client is being honest with him. In structuring interactions with clients in this way, Napier is carrying out the "responsivity" component to the "risk-need-responsivity" triad that structures evidence-based

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correctional treatment. Andrews, Bonta, & Hoge (1990) define responsivity as "styles and modes of service [that] are matched to the learning styles and abilities of offenders" (p. 20).

Despite the increased integration of risk assessment practices, probation officers still readily acknowledged the limits of these tools, and spoke of risk assessment as being both intuitive and ongoing. Napier noted that "sometimes what you see is not what you get"–that a client's risk score, criminal history, and prison file can only tell you so much–and that he has had clients who have surprised him both positively and negatively. Officer Craig, a veteran, cited clients' "attitude" as the key predictor of how successful they might be on supervision; Officer Perez, another veteran, stated: "you have to sit down with them. You have to talk with them. You have to interact at least so you can get an idea of who you're dealing with. And the continued interaction tells you more and more about this person."

Arguably, officers' increased integration of evidence-based risk assessment can be attributed to the newness of the program and the fact that everyone–both veteran and novice officers alike–have had to learn the new policies and procedures associated with PRCS. In this way, PRCS has served as a "clean slate" which, in contrast to parole, offers far less room for resistance of these practices.

Discretionary punishment

As noted in Chapter 2, the primary punitive tool that officers carrying PRCS caseloads have at their disposal to coerce compliance is flash incarceration, in which an individual who has violated some condition of her probation is incarcerated for a short period of time. Flash incarceration is a remedial sanction, in contrast to incarceration associated with a probation revocation. Both forms of punishment involve incarceration in county jail. Officers varied both

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in how they used flash incarceration and the threat of revocation, and in how they understood the usefulness of these threats as a supervision tool. Officer Craig describes the process like this:

> Initially we flash them for ten days. They can't get out for ten days and if we get a revocation in, it is up to the judge how long the time is. They can order anywhere from 30 days to 180 days. If they get 30 days they might do 3 days. If we say 180 days, depending on the mood that the sheriff is in about releasing people, they might get 90 days, but we had somebody get 180 days and they were out in 11. And with the sheriff the reason was 'oh, my jails are overcrowded.' But they need to have some punishment for a true violation where the judge has said 'do 180 days.' Well, the county jail releases people but they always say it's based upon what the sheriff has said. So yeah, on the revocations we do they're not getting enough time.

Similar to the parole agents interviewed for this project, Officer Craig's narrative underscores a typical concern about officer legitimacy under AB 109: as Craig notes, "they need to have some punishment for a true violation," meaning clients won't take the sanction seriously if they are locked up and then immediately released. This concern is reflective of the fact that, in many respects, Realignment has simply pushed the systemic burden associated with mass incarceration from the state to the counties. As noted in previous chapters, jail overcrowding is a chronic problem in L.A. County, made worse by Realignment's shifting of parole revocations to the county level. Because of this, there are proposals under consideration to construct more jail space in L.A. and at least 20 other counties struggling with similar issues (Martin & Lofstrom, 2014).

Arguably, the threat of ten days in Twin Towers–L.A. County's main jail, notorious for its poor conditions (see: Cooper, 2013)–is a powerful deterrent, at least for some clients. A common and unsurprising sentiment expressed both by the women at New Beginnings and the parole agents and probation officers was that the conditions in county jail are much worse than in state prison–a reality that has likely only worsened under AB 109. Probation officers also noted that for "special populations" like LGBTQ individuals, county jail is objectively more dangerous than prison.

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Officers varied considerably in how they described their use of flash incarceration. Officer Travis is on one end of the spectrum:

> I flash everybody. Not to be mean, but 'cause whatever you did for you to even receive a flash, you shouldn't. One, you shouldn't have been doing that, whatever it is. You shouldn't have been there. Two, if they're picked up by the police or something like that then automatically I'm flashing you. As far as with the [risk] matrix, I try to work with all of them. I try to give 'em the benefit of the doubt. Because let's be honest, if you been on meth and you been on heroin, if you been on crack, since I was born you're really not gonna stop smoking crack in two days. You're really not. But you're going to [drug treatment program] 'cause I call and I talk to the counselor as well. And now if I call your counselor and they tell me 'oh S.'s missed three of her meetings' well, 'S., you wanna go to jail.' Because you're not doing what you're supposed to. At least I can say, 'ok, well you're using but at least you're going to class.' So I'll give you a call. Let me try to work with you. We're gonna try to get through this. But if I call and they're telling me 'we haven't seen S.,' [then] 'you gotta go. Cause you're not trying.'…
>
> I try to be strict but I try to be fair to everyone. Cause I don't ever want it to be like, ok, we're testing. And they're out there in the testing area and they're talking amongst [themselves] like they do. 'Well I tested positive for crack and Miss Travis flashed me.' 'I tested positive for crack and she just gave me [a slap on the wrist]. You know? Because I want them to know, 'ok, so if I'm standing in line and I know I'm getting ready to test positive for crack, well maybe I might wanna call Miss Travis and let her know this is my problem. And I tell 'em that 'as long as you're open and you're honest with me and you let me know ahead of time. Don't come tell me something after the fact. 'Cause if you tell me something after the fact I can't work with you… Now some cases where you've came and you've wanted me to help you three, four, five, six, seven, eight times, I'm a help you alright. I'm a help you go right down to the county [jail]. Haha. But at least I can say that when I do flash my clients a lot of 'em be smiling. 'Ok Miss Travis, I'll see you when I get out.' And I say, 'Ok, so look at it like this: when you come back, I'm gonna have a new attitude. And you're gonna have a new attitude. It's gonna be a blank sheet. We're starting over. And they have to accept that. 'Cause they're like 'you right, Miss Travis. I'm not mad because I know you tried to work with me.'

Officer Travis contradicts herself in interesting ways. She claims to have a zero tolerance policy for her clients having contact with the police: whatever the client was doing to attract police attention, s/he shouldn't have been doing it. In some respects, Travis sees flash incarceration as way of helping her clients with long histories of substance abuse issues to "dry out." Stints in jail have long been used for this purpose by both the police and community corrections agents (see,

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for examples: Lynch, 2000; Spradley, 1970; Wiseman, 1979). Interestingly, Travis sees this not only as a useful tactic, but one that her clients understand and to some extent appreciate.

Yet Travis seems to also follow a personal policy that effort should be rewarded, and this factors into her discretionary decision-making. In acknowledging the difficulties of recovering from drug addiction, she almost touches into a harm reductionist perspective (Marlatt, Larimer, & Witkiewitz, 2011; Marlatt & Witkiewitz, 2002) when she implies that if "you're using but at least you're going to class" she might not punish you.[87] A fundamental element of using discretion in this regard seems to be the perception of whether someone is "trying" or not–a theme that also emerged in both parole agents' narratives and the experiences of women at New Beginnings who had positive experiences of being on PRCS.

When Travis encourages her clients who have used drugs to tell her before they test dirty, she is relying on the trust she has established in her relationships with her clients. She is "strict," but she tries to be "fair" to everyone–a fact that she communicates to each client. Perhaps another reason for Travis to encourage her clients to tell her before they test is that if they tell her after the fact, there will be a record of the dirty test, which she will then have to document in case notes and possibly justify her decision regarding whether to flash incarcerate or not to her supervisor. In this way, she manages her clients' behavior in order to maintain control over what happens to their cases.

[87] In contrast to "zero-tolerance" or abstinence-based approaches to substance use issues, harm reduction offers a "pragmatic approach" rooted in three objectives: to reduce the harmful consequences of substance use; to provide an alternative to the zero-tolerance approach by setting goals around substance use that account for the needs of the individual; and to make services more accessible to individuals dealing with substance use issues, in contrast to traditional treatment services which mandate sobriety (Marlatt & Witkiewitz, 2002, p. 868).

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As a counterpoint to Travis's assertion that she flashes "everybody" (though this isn't actually true), Officer Jackson spoke candidly about instances in which incarceration and other sanctions are inappropriate:

> When you want me to violate somebody... I'm like, 'hmm.' I terminated somebody that got arrested the day before he was supposed to get his termination. He lied about his address or whatever. And my supervisor's like, 'you gonna keep him another year.' And I'm thinking to myself, 'for what, realistically?' He did lie. He didn't tell me the truth. He was sleeping in his van. And I asked him, 'Why didn't you tell me you're sleeping in your van?' But I knew why. As a 65 year-old man… finally he told me it was his pride and his ego… When he told me that, I understood. And so I'm like I'm not gonna keep him on. Now would he go out and probably reoffend? Probably will. Because he doesn't have anything. And so I did [terminate him] anyway. 'Cause he talked to me and he said, 'I wouldn't have a problem with this, but you guys don't do nothing. You guys don't help me with this and this and this. And to keep me on another year, it's your decision but what would that do?'
>
> And I was like, 'ooh, you got a point.' So when I terminated him, my supervisor said, 'I don't agree with you terminating him, but you made the decision. I just wanna let you know I don't agree.' And I said, 'I knew you would because you're'–I call him 9150 [the address of Probation headquarters]. You know? Because everything is by the book with the supervision. I said 'but we deal with the people.' And he might go [reoffend] and he probably will. He's petty theft. That's what he does. But when I really sat and thought about it, the people I violate, if I really had resources to assist you I wouldn't mind. Cause some of 'em need it. But when we don't have resources I'm not giving you anything. Why am I going to keep you on and I'm not doing anything for you?

What is striking in Jackson's narrative is her view that clients should be benefiting from their time on PRCS–reaping some sort of rehabilitative gain–in order for a remedial sanction or a continuation on PRCS to be worthwhile. This points to officers' investment in both goals of PRCS–ensuring public safety and facilitating rehabilitation–and suggests that at times, officers even prioritize the latter over the former.

For Jackson, one size does not fit all: she makes her decisions about whether to violate someone based on whether she perceives a remedial sanction as being helpful to the client or not. In the case she cites in this passage, Jackson recognizes that the assistance her client really needs involves things that she cannot provide–namely, stable housing. In other situations, however, "some of 'em need" the "help" Jackson can offer by using flash incarceration to get them back

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on track. In a similar way, Jackson uses this calculation to determine who to keep on PRCS and who to terminate, based on her intuitive assessment of whether staying on PRCS will benefit her client.

It is interesting that Jackson, who had only been with adult probation for a year at the time of our interview, was comfortable with and open about going against her supervisor's recommendation about this case–especially since she readily acknowledges that this client will likely reoffend. Arguably, this is because Jackson views her use of the personal touch as being an essential element of her professional expertise. In calling her supervisor "9150"–indicating that he aligns himself with probation administration–Jackson illustrates what Lipsky (1980) observed to be the mismatch of priorities pursued by front-line workers versus their supervisors. In essence, Lipsky argues, workers are process-oriented while managers are result-oriented (p. 19). Workers must develop techniques of functioning that allow them to deal with the torrential flow of cases to be processed, while managers must monitor work outputs to ensure that results are consistent with agency objectives (p. 18). Jackson references that supervision formulas are "by the book," but sees her discretion to go against these formulas as being an essential part to the messier reality of "deal[ing] with the people." This is unsurprising in light of others' findings along this theme (Lipsky, 1980; Lynch, 1998, 2000; Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003).

Although at face value, Travis's and Jackson's narratives indicate that they have very different approaches to supervision, both of their approaches are rooted in the use of a personal touch to making discretionary decisions. In spite of claiming that she uses flash incarceration for all violations, Travis believes that effort should be rewarded. This means that in some cases, she will choose to not use flash incarceration when she assesses that a client is making progress on rehabilitative goals in spite of continued substance abuse. Jackson likewise takes an

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individualized approach to decision-making, drawing on her assessment of whether clients will benefit from a remedial sanction or a continuation on PRCS. In contrast to their counterparts in parole, these data indicate that while ensuring public safety remains the primary concern of PRCS, officers have an increased commitment to and belief in the value of rehabilitation, regardless of whether they actually have the tools to facilitate it.

Problem-solving the limits of supervision: officers as critical believers

As alluded to in Jackson's narrative, the fundamental dilemma that probation officers confront in PRCS is how to manage the deficits of a program that claims to offer "complete supervision." Officers readily recognized the limitations of the services they provide, while–in contrast to parole agents–they also to some extent buy into PRCS's policies and procedures. Thus, the data presented here point to the importance in front-line work of problem-solving and otherwise managing when rehabilitation cannot be fully realized.

The constant work of determining when clients can and cannot be helped by the tools available to them positions officers as "critical believers" who invest a personal touch in their work with clients in an attempt to effect a positive outcome while simultaneously coming to terms with the limits of what they can actually achieve. The concept of the critical believer emerged as probation officers more readily identified specific flaws in the PRCS system and were more likely to describe instances in which they exercised discretion–even against the advice of their superiors–to combat what they perceived to be deleterious effects of doing things "by the book." Parole agents, on the other hand, perhaps out of the exhaustion and disillusionment that understandably has accompanied the department's downsizing, noted that parole was often a "waste of time" for their parolees, but still appeared to be uncritically

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committed to the public safety goal of the department. At the same time, probation officers were more optimistic about the potential of PRCS to effect positive change in the lives of its clients.

This concept draws on Moore and Hirai's (2014) analysis of how clients of drug treatment courts respond to the simultaneous exclusion and empowerment promoted by neoliberalist programming which emphasizes personal responsibility and independence from state assistance. Moore and Hirai argue that clients react to this programming–namely its process of "responsibilization," that clients need to take responsibility for addressing their deficits and pathologies–by variously adapting postures as "outcasts," "performers," or "true believers" (see also: Hirai, 2010). The true believers strive to fully internalize the values of the program, while simultaneously acknowledging that even attainment of the program's definition of success does not necessarily lead to social inclusion nor an improvement in the material conditions of their lives. Here, I this concept is modified in order to contribute an understanding of how workers manage to remain invested in a program which they recognize is fundamentally flawed. In advancing this argument–that workers undergo an internal coping process and then enact certain tactics as a result–I am taking a different stance from what some other scholars of front-line work have argued. Lipsky (1980), for example, argues that workers deal with the discrepancy between ideal and actual practice by changing how they view their clients rather than their approach to processing them (p. 143).

The critical believer concept also draws from sociological understandings of ambivalence. Merton & Barber (1976) distinguish between psychological and sociological ambivalence in this way: psychological ambivalence denotes a sense of being pulled in opposite directions, such as feeling love and hate for the same person, and the way one reconciles these emotions depends on an individual's personality; sociological ambivalence, on the other hand, is conditioned by social

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structure: "incompatible normative expectations of attitudes, beliefs, and behavior assigned to a status (i.e., a social position) or to a set of statuses in society" (p. 6). In other words, sociological ambivalence happens when the structure one operates within produces conflicting expectations of an individual. Merton and Barber provide the example of the therapist role that some medical doctors play as distinguished from doctors' other roles as researchers, administrators, and colleagues.

Extending Merton and Barber's theorizing, Ashforth (2001) contends that most workers are at least somewhat ambivalent about the roles they occupy; people tend simultaneously identify and disidentify with elements of particular role identities. Ashforth identifies five pathways to ambivalence, one of which is worth noting here to foreground the following analysis.[88] Ambivalence produced through conflicts within a role identity often means that workers will identify with the aspects of a role that are most consistent with their global identity, while disidentifying with aspects that are the least consistent. Notably, Ashforth suggests that "complexity may also give rise to internal contradictions and dilemmas, particularly if a role is emergent or in a state of flux" (p. 78). For probation officers, this tension has arisen as they have sought to adjust to a new program in which rehabilitation is set forth as a goal that in reality can be only partially or unevenly achieved.

The critical believer posture–which is rooted in ambivalence–leads officers to engage in two problem-solving strategies to cope with the complexity of their circumstances: managing expectations of PRCS's rehabilitative capacity–both clients' and their own; and taking on extra work to bridge the gap between PRCS's limitations and clients' needs. In doing so, officers are

[88] The other four pathways are: inter-role conflict, or conflicts between multiple identities; fear of loss of self; protection of dualistic values; and social stigma (Ashforth, 2001, p. 78).

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seeking to reclaim aspects of their identity which they are institutionally blocked from fully carrying out.

Managing expectations

In addition to identifying and enacting stop-gap measures to combat systemic flaws which limit the capacity of PRCS to facilitate rehabilitation, being a critical believer involves managing client expectations of what the program can do for them. The following narrative illustrates how Officer Jackson confronts the limitations of her work and how this in turn shapes her interactions with clients:

> I like my job. I like dealing with our clients. But the frustration comes from I'm not really helping… so I'm helping you the only way I can really help you. It's with me and my thoughts and my mind that hopefully you take whatever I kinda sense will get to them to start thinking and stop being mad at the system for not assisting you because that's not what it's really designed to do. It's not to help you. It's to keep you. And when you realize that then you realize, 'why you so frustrated?' The cops–my client's like, 'they stop me every time! I'm not doing anything!' Ok, it's the system. But you're not really doing anything. 'You don't have a job,' I said, 'so I would stop you too.'

Interestingly, Jackson's narrative demonstrates a sort of cognitive dissonance that emerged frequently in my interviews with officers: she simultaneously values her role because she enjoys helping people, while she also recognizes that she is severely limited in the amount and extent to which she can provide help. Perhaps even more strikingly, she sees the system–in which she is a willing participant–as a trap and a source of further oppression. As she later noted, she often tells her clients, "they wanna keep you caught up in needing us and needing the benefits." Jackson hopes that once her clients recognize this, they will "start thinking and stop being mad at the system"–in other words, be motivated to make changes in their lives. She accomplishes this by drawing on aspects of herself that she values–as she says, "it's with me and my thoughts and my mind" that she can facilitate clients' empowerment to seek change on their own, because the system is not designed to provide assistance.

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Jackson's ambivalence about her role in an imperfect program was echoed by other officers interviewed for this project–particularly those who were new to adult probation and thus had a point of comparison with the other systems in which they had worked. Officer Armstrong, for example, was quick to compare PRCS with her experiences of juvenile probation:

> I'm not discouraged by the program. I like it. I think there's a lot more that we can do to help our clients. Especially our women. It would be so nice to see counselors in our facilities–therapists at the facilities. We do it for our juveniles. Why can't the sober living homes and transitional housing homes employ a therapist?

Armstrong's narrative pinpoints a key aspect of workplace ambivalence and how probation officers adopt the critical believer posture: she simultaneously views the program positively, while also identifying areas for potential improvement.

For officers, the work of managing expectations also meant managing their own expectations of the system in which they are operating. Interestingly, officers readily recognized that PRCS has a capitalist orientation which further compromises the quality of the services they are able to provide. This theme emerged primarily when officers talked about Health RIGHT 360, the agency with which probation contracts to provide job development and transitional housing services. As Jackson explains it:

> [The county] pays [the contractor] about $1500 a month for transitional housing clients. So if I send somebody to transitional housing, that's $1500. If I send somebody to a job placement, the county pays [the contractor] $500 to place that client. Ok, say I'm a business woman. Hmm. If I find you a job I only get $500. If I keep you here I get $1500. What would I do? 'Cause at the end of the day we have to remember it's a business. So I'm not gonna rush. If I paid you $1500 to find him a job and only $500 to house him, guess what? We would have more jobs. But they're not.
>
> And Mr. C [the probation officer liaison to the contractor], we battle all the time 'cause he's like 'they know it's not working!' And he fights. But I told him his delivery to the people that make decisions is not effective because you have to explain to them how it's gonna work for not only the clients but for their pockets. Because all they look at is the money's coming out their pocket. 'If I keep these people in the program I get more money in my pocket. Realistically. If I keep violating my clients, they stay in the program more, the state gives 'em more money. If my client gets a job and gets his own house and stuff like that, it's done…

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> Sometimes you get in a position where you care and you see that you're unfortunately working for a business. That's what I have to keep reminding myself. It's a business. It's a business. It's a business. And even though I care I can only do so much.

Within the logic of capitalism, it makes sense to look for market solutions to the problems associated with incarceration. However, as officers were quick to recognize, the structuring of community supervision as "a business" de-incentivizes Health RIGHT 360 to provide the very services that would make the reentry process easier: Jackson observes that if her clients "succeed" by getting jobs and their own homes, then the contractor loses money. The comprehension of this reality helps officers to manage their own expectations of what PRCS's contracted services can do for their clients.

Officers noted that this leads to watered-down services, or to services which address some problems but not others. In lamenting that many of her clients fail to find employment[89] after going through Health RIGHT 360's job development programs, Officer Sanchez noted that "a lot of 'em get a [job training] certificate but that's meaningless because they still can't get a job. It's a joke." Officer Armstrong recounted a story of a client living in one of Health RIGHT 360's transitional housing facilities who had no clothes to wear for an upcoming job interview. Armstrong remarked in frustration, "I know they're making a lotta money. Come on. Making a *lotta* money. Can you imagine all the deputies from every office doing a referral to Health RIGHT 360? And none of the money goes to the client." Officers also noted that probation's use of contracts for service provision leads to a fractured rather than cohesive and centralized experience of PRCS services, since clients have to go to multiple locations–which are often quite far away from one another–to receive all the services they need. As shown in Chapter 3, the

[89] Of course, this is not the only factor involved here: California has been particularly hard hit by the recent economic downturn, and although recovery has happened, it is still very difficult to enter the workforce, even for individuals without criminal records and with high levels of education.

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hustle involved in getting to one's many appointments was a common struggle for the women at New Beginnings.

Extra work

Being a critical believer also means regularly doing work that falls outside of one's formal job description in order to do effective supervision. This is an aspect that has been noted by others who have studied front-line work (Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2000, 2003; see Chapter 1). For probation officers, a common struggle was wrangling other systems–such as substance abuse and mental health service providers–in an effort to manage and address clients' needs. It is important to note here that, with the exception of Agent Gorman who went "above and beyond" to help her parolees, parole agents do not take on this sort of extra work.

Officer Craig recounted to me her work with a difficult client named William, who has schizophrenia. William is so difficult because he uses racial slurs when talking to his probation officers, and he often refuses to take his medication. Although Officer Craig eventually figured out how to manage her interactions with William, she had less luck getting the county mental health provider (the Department of Mental Health, or DMH) with which probation has a contract to provide William with the services he needed. Officer Craig recounted a typical interaction with DMH to me with an air of bemusement. In the following passage, she describes how mental health professionals defer to her expertise in working with William, while simultaneously asking her to be more punitive with him so that they don't have to deal with him. She refuses to do this, even though this creates more work for her:

> Oh, can I tell you what the mental health provider called and said? It was so funny. [The supervising clinician] said, 'I had to see [William] 'cause my staff couldn't see him 'cause they couldn't control him.' He said, 'he's so vulgar.' I said, 'well, what did he say to you?' 'He called me a honky.' I say, 'he called you a honky?' I said, 'let me tell you what he called me!' 'What he call you, Miss Craig?' 'A nigger bitch.' 'Oh… oh well then you know what we're dealing with.' That's what he said. Haha.

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> I said, 'no you know what *I'm* dealing with.' He said 'wow, I want you to drug test him.' 'Ok, well when I drug test him he's negative.' He said, 'but Miss Craig, he's so vulgar! He likes to provoke people.' I said 'well, I have a question: you guys are [the department of mental health]. So what do you want me to do?' He said, 'well, can you put him in jail? When he violates can you put him in jail?' Haha. I said, 'yeah, but you know he's just coming back to you guys for services. 'Cause wherever they start that's where they're gonna finish their services at.'
>
> He said, 'well once we get him in jail, we'll see.' I said ok… His mental health [provider] emails me once a week: 'He came in again today and, you know, it was just hard calming him down.' And I'm thinking, 'but you're mental health! You got way more training in this than me! But no, I got you.' And they ask, 'can you drug test him?' I am but drugs is not his problem. He's schizophrenic. And he don't take his meds. And he told me, 'I take 'em when I want to.' Ok. Just take 'em before you come and see me.

It is baffling but not altogether surprising that DMH claims to not know how to handle AB 109 clients. Arguably, DMH adopts this helpless posture in the hope that they can pawn the difficult work of dealing with clients like William off on another agency. The supervising clinician complains that William is vulgar and that his staff can't control him. As a result, he asks Craig to drug test William. He is certain that this is why William is acting out, and hopes that if he violates the conditions of his probation, he will no longer come to them for mental health services. Due to the clinicians' inability to handle William's medication compliance issues, Craig takes on this responsibility. She does so because she does not see William's untreated mental illness as a valid reason for placing him in violation of his probation–this perspective was shared by all other officers. Similar experiences with DMH were not uncommon for the women at New Beginnings who were under PRCS supervision, and they often had difficulty obtaining their medications in a timely fashion.

What makes DMH's refusal to work with William all the more interesting is the fact that William, for all his bluster, is a relatively simple case: he has what is clinically referred to as an SPMI–a Severe and Persistent Mental Illness–but he does not have a history of substance abuse. However, the mental health provider hopes that a positive drug test will not only send William to

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jail, but will also re-route him into the substance abuse treatment system. Substance abuse would then become William's primary presenting issue, meaning that mental health will no longer have to deal with him.

The prevalence of "co-occurring disorders"–an Axis I mental disorder concurrent with a substance use disorder–is higher in crime-processed groups than in the general population. By one estimate, approximately 80 percent of individuals on probation who are required to participate in substance abuse treatment also have a mental disorder (Hiller, Knight, Broome, & Simpson, 1996). By another estimate, 74 percent of state prison inmates and 76 percent of jail inmates who have a mental health disorder also have a substance abuse issue (James & Glaze, 2006). A third study estimates that half of crime-processed women have a co-occurring disorder (Jordan, Schlenger, Fairbank, & Caddell, 1996). Thus, it is fair to say that a substantial percentage of AB 109 clients have co-occurring disorders. A consistent theme in all interviews was the inability of the AB 109 program to effectively address both of these issues simultaneously: clients could either receive mental health services or substance abuse counseling, but not both simultaneously. This is surprising given the emphasis on evidence-based practices elsewhere in the model.

In practice, this means that probation officers take on the work of bridging this gap. Similar to Officer Craig, Officer Armstrong monitors her clients' psychiatric medications and submits them to drug tests–two activities that, respectively, the mental health and substance abuse service providers whom probation pays to serve AB 109 should be doing:

> Even with my clients who are receiving mental health or co-occurring services, they come in here looking crazy. And I would have to ask them, 'are you using?' 'No no no, Mrs. Armstrong, I'm not using.' 'Bring your medication in for your next appointment.' And I'm looking at medication, counting pills. Seeing what they're doing. Asking, 'are you getting tested at the facility?' For example I have someone who was ordered by the court to be in a drug program and I found out that he's not even being tested. So I have to start testing him

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> now. I test him every time he comes in. And he should be receiving co-occurring services. That's why I say, you know, it's unbelievable… And why are our people waiting a month, two months [to be seen]? Or [they're only being seen] once a month. If you have a mental health condition be it schizophrenia, bipolar, manic-depressive, why are you only seeing a doctor once a month? Now all your medication should be taken care of, right? But you should probably be going to see your professional probably once a week at the minimum…They should be receiving drug education, counseling, better coping skills.

Armstrong's sentiments were echoed by all other officers: they recognized that even though they are supposed to be providing "complete supervision," the way service provision is set up under AB 109 means that a large percentage of their clients are not receiving the services they need, and that the services that are available are inadequate. Officers have little control over what clients are receiving at other agencies, which means that they tend to take on additional work– Armstrong, for example, counts her clients' pills to monitor medication compliance. As highlighted elsewhere here and in Chapter 2, Craig's and Armstrong's narratives point to the difficulties of cross-system collaboration in general and in L.A. County specifically (see, for examples: Ross, 2009; Sandwick, Tamis, Parsons, & Arauz-Cuadra, 2013).

Finally, it is worth mentioning that, as noted in Chapter 3, the women at New Beginnings consistently had positive perceptions of PRCS despite the fact that being on this new form of supervision meant confusing and often distressing encounters with police. Just as Officer Wilkinson at the beginning of this chapter recognized that her clients have had negative interactions with the police, women's accounts of compliance checks indicate that their probation officers recognize the ironies of this set-up, and openly communicate this fact to their clients. When Rowena recounts her compliance check experience to her probation officer, for example, her officer's response that the police "gonna do what they gonna do" indicates to Rowena that the police activity associated with PRCS has no bearing on their relationship as long as Rowena is following the rules. This honesty likely helps Rowena to trust her officer.

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Zara, likewise, trusts her officer enough to tell her that the SEO officer she met was a "bully." In this way, officers' adoption of the critical believer posture facilitates positive relationships with their clients.

The narratives presented in this section have collectively illustrated the problem-solving strategies that officers utilize in order to manage the complexity of their circumstances, both internally and in relation to their clients. The following section elaborates on this latter point: how the critical believer posture shapes officers' approaches to supervising their clients.

How critical believers operate: Manifestations of the personal touch

As this chapter has shown thus far, officers' location within a new, highly-publicized program that serves a more "dangerous" clientele has necessitated a recalibration of the personal touch they use in supervising their clients. A recognition of the limitations of this program has compelled officers to adopt a critical believer posture, which helps them to manage the complexity of their situation. This section integrates these two concepts to examine tactics rooted in the personal touch that officers use to develop relationships with their clients.

Rapport-building

Officers employ techniques to build rapport that are rooted in a personal touch that is defined by each officer's individual values and experiences. To return to Officer Craig's experience supervising William, her "difficult" client whom the county mental health provider did not want to serve, the following passage demonstrates Craig's use of what she calls "motherese" to manage her interactions with William. When he came to Craig's caseload, William had already exhausted the good will of several of the newer officers, who refused to work with him because of his abundant use of profanity.

> [William] is our guy that's schizophrenic. The first day I met him, within a week he had had three different POs. The first person he told them 'oh, you Hispanic. I don't like

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> wetbacks.' So they say 'ok, we're not gonna let a Spanish person have him.' [William's] Black. So then they gave him to a male Black thinking that'll work, and he stood up on him. He said 'I'll beat your ass.' Haha. He said, 'you don't know me. I'm schizophrenic!' 'So we know you're schizophrenic but you can't threaten people.'
>
> So then I met him a week later and he said 'what's up, nigger bitch?' And I was like, 'you call me a nigger *and* a bitch?!' Haha. So I was like [to another PO], 'can you go get [the supervising PO] 'cause I think we're gonna need to flash him if this doesn't go any better…' So he said, 'well I don't wanna go back to jail.' 'You don't?' 'Miss Craig, what I gotta do?' I said, 'you know what you gotta do? You have to apologize. You have to change your tone. You cannot say bitch. No more. No more profanity and you cannot use the word nigger cause I'm not a nigger. Are you a nigger?' 'No, I ain't a nigger.' 'Yeah, I'm not a nigger.' And surprisingly after that he changed his tone.
>
> I started using–I have *motherese* voice. With people with mental health problems I've learned you have to talk to them different. I'm probably talking like this to them [brings voice down in volume]: 'how you doing? Did you take your meds today?' 'No I didn't take my meds.' 'Well, maybe that's a part of the problem. You know that we can only have a successful interview here if you take your meds before you come in because we need something to help you daily [with] calming yourself.' 'Next time I'll take my meds before I come see you.' Ok. That's what I need. But anybody that has mental health issues I immediately say oh–*motherese*. It's just the mothering voice in you when your baby's [crying] you got out there [lowers voice] 'are you ok? What do you need?' It works really well. 'Cause if they talk loud and you talk loud it just escalates. 'No. I'm sorry, we have to end this interview because it's not gonna be successful.'

Given that by some estimates, more than half of prison and jail inmates have a mental health problem (James & Glaze, 2006), William is actually a rather typical client, though his presentation is extreme. In using phrases such as "you have to change your tone" and "you have to apologize," Craig exhibits her veteran status in her ability to get William to calm down and speak to her respectfully. Interestingly, the expected description of how Craig works with difficult clients like William might be something about how she uses evidence-based practices like Motivational Interviewing to help her clients set goals and identify resistance to change (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Rather, she talks about using her intuitive skills as a mother, which she has learned are effective not only for reducing clients' hostility, but also for establishing rapport based on mutual respect and trust.

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Officers who were neither parents nor veterans of probation used different tactics to build rapport, often rooted in momentarily setting aside the obvious power dynamic of the officer-client relationship. Officer Jackson, for example, recounted her tentative approach to rapport-building like this:

> So my client and I, we were laughing and [a supervisor] passed by and said 'you're having too much fun.' At first it hit me cause I said, 'am I doing something wrong?' So I went to my super[visor] at the time and he's like, 'what do you mean?' I'm like, 'we actually–we were engaging, like laughing,' but at the same time they know my position, they know what I do. But it doesn't have to be always, 'hey, I'm the boss.' 'Cause I know they really at the end of the day don't care about that. They already know that... So we have conversations, 'what's going on with you?'

Unlike Craig, Jackson does not have the age or experience to be able to develop a mothering dynamic with her clients. Instead, her use of laughter to develop rapport with her clients is likely something that worked well when she was working with juveniles, and she finds it to be just as effective with adults. However, she allows a supervisor's passing comment to make her momentarily question her approach, likely because she is so new to the program.

Belief in change

In the early months of AB 109, Officer Martinez had a male client on his caseload who had "an extensive rap sheet"–roughly 26 years total in prison. Because this client was determined to be very high risk, Martinez was asked to do a case review presentation to probation administrators regarding the client's "static and dynamic criminogenic risk factors… we had to do a quick a review of whether they've told you they've heard voices, what kind of medication they take, what are some of the positive things that would make them act better, what are the things that would probably trigger a relapse." Martinez admits that he was intimidated, both by the client's history and his physical stature: "he's probably like 6'3, 280. Big. Muscle. Looks like an ex-NFL player. So before I present, I go, 'look, he's a big guy. He could probably kill half of

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us in this room if he wanted to.'" Martinez's primary concern about this particular case was reiterated throughout my interviews for this project: the client had a prior murder conviction for which he had served time, but his most recent conviction was for a non-violent drug offense– thus, he qualified for county-level supervision under AB 109. In this way, it is possible for individuals with violent histories to qualify for PRCS (Gerlinger & Turner, 2013).

Yet despite these understandable concerns about this client's dangerousness, in the following passage, Martinez describes what his client shared with him about his decision to change, and how Martinez in turn approached his work with him:

> He said that the reason why he changed [happened] when he was locked up. He was very articulate about how he explained this. He had a cellmate and they both just looked at each other and at some point they realized, 'you know what? I'm willing to kill you.' 'Well. I'm willing to kill *you*.' However it got down to that, he said he realized, 'I don't wanna go that far. I'm cool. I don't wanna kill nobody, I don't wanna get killed.' So in his words, 'I did what's called a PC move' [protective custody]. I asked to be removed. So he took a chance of getting shanked up when he put his hands behind his back through the little cell door to get handcuffed. And he told the guy 'just let me leave. I'll leave. And we don't have to do this.' And so he said from there on he knew he didn't want it like that…
>
> When I first saw him, big guy, t-shirt, just looking all gang-banged up, scar on his eye, I probably thought, 'nah, this guy's gonna beat somebody up, kill somebody, and just go back to jail.' But I didn't treat him that way and what he told me was, 'the way you've treated me, I feel like I gotta treat people that way.' And I told him, 'you know what? Maybe I can't be as effective in the neighborhood where you came from, but if I help you then you can be for your neighborhood what I am to you. In other words your face resembled more the neighborhood you came from but right here in this office it doesn't matter. We're adults and we can see a difference but out there they might see you more like a mentor because it's your neighborhood.'
>
> And so I was telling him, 'that's all I'm trying to promote because this is my example: what good is it for me to be wealthy or what not out there with my family but I'm worrying about people trying to come up on me, get rid of me to get to what they think I have that they want? I'd rather have people out there thinking about how they are gonna solve their problems in a productive manner that's not criminal and then I could have conversations with them while I'm with my family, for example without worrying about me being a threat. I'd rather go out like that. There'll always be violence. There'll always be random emotional anger, angry events that happen in life, but I don't wanna be producing that. I'd rather be reducing that. And so that's my approach to my clients… I'm more personal. My father got killed by somebody in Mexico about five years ago. If someone had talked to that person and calmed them down and not made them feel that they had to kill my father for whatever reason, my son wouldn't be asking, 'where's my grandfather?' Do you understand? So out there there's

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> gonna be a lotta children that might say because someone calmed somebody down maybe I could see my grandfather. I could see my father. And that's the way I view it.

What is striking here is the transformation that Martinez describes in both his thinking about and approach to this client in a way that is not defined by his risk category. Arguably, this is because Martinez believes in this client's ability to change–a belief that is rooted not only in his professional training, but in elements of his personal history that he values.

Even though Martinez is encouraged by administrators at first to develop a case plan for this client that accounts for his high risk status, as his relationship with the client evolves, his approach departs from the language of risk. This is because the client shared with Martinez the moment in which he decided not to engage in violent behavior anymore, and in doing so, made himself vulnerable to another prisoner. Upon hearing this, Martinez defines his supervision approach as being "more personal"–he draws on aspects of his own personal experience to support his client's effort to change. Martinez links his experience of losing his father to violence produced by anger to how he works with his clients to prevent a similar outcome. Interestingly, instead of assuming the worst of this client–which would be understandable given Martinez's loss–he sees an important aspect of his job as modeling good behavior so that his clients can in turn transmit these values to their own neighborhoods. In this way, Martinez hopes to prevent what happened to his family from happening to others.

How the personal touch is gendered

Similar to parole agents, probation officers tended to view the women on their caseloads as simultaneously more emotionally draining and also more successful than their male counterparts. Unlike with the agents, however, interviews with officers did not yield similar distinctions in supervision approach styles based on officer-client gender dynamics; across gender, officers were fairly uniform in how they conceptualized the differences between male and female

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clients.[90] The one exception to this is that female officers tended to be more cynical in how they talked about their female clients. These officers were attuned to distinguishing between women who objectively have more needs and those who are manipulating the officer. This echoes my findings in the previous chapter as well as other research on how front-line workers in the crime-processing system often view their clients as manipulative. Officer Sanchez, for example, describes how women will employ the strategy of "spider-webbing" like this:

> With women I have to be hyper alert to where I'm getting the signs that they're pulling my leg and they wanna be victims. So the women play the victim card a lot. 'I couldn't get to my appointment cause I didn't have my car and I had my kids and...' So when they spider-web me what I do? I go back and say, 'what time was your appointment?' '10 am.' 'What time did you wake up your kids to go to school? What time do they go to school?' '8 o'clock.' So a lot of times I'll say, 'let's write it down.' Men just tend to say, 'I couldn't make it. I forgot. I didn't have the money.' You know, one quick excuse. A woman will spider-web you so it's just basically getting them to focus. Being compassionate but not compassionate to where you're runned over.
>
> I can understand there's issues. I have had to drag my kids to school too and get here. Sometimes I kinda have to dig further, like, you know, sleeping pills. Some people take sleeping pills. But as far as like [the difference between] a woman and a man–the manipulation. And like, 'oh, Miss Sanchez, that's a pretty sweater you have. I love it!' 'Thank you so much.' And then we get refocused.

Sanchez is alert to ways in which her female clients might try to capitalize on her sympathy by constructing themselves as "victims" who can't be held accountable for meeting the conditions of their probation. Clients will "spider-web" her by trying to distract her from a potential violation (e.g., a missed appointment) by citing multiple difficulties that may or may not actually be valid excuses. As her narrative illustrates, in these instances, Sanchez does not let herself or her client get caught up in a "victim" mentality, which she views as an impediment to successfully completing PRCS.

[90] The lack of variation across officer gender may also be related to officers not doing intensive home visits of their clients, in contrast to the male parole agents in the previous chapter who worried about accusations of sexual impropriety during visits of their female parolees.

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As Sanchez implies when she mentions her own challenges in getting her kids to school and then getting to work on time, some female officers noted the importance of connecting to their female clients based on their common experiences as women and mothers. Officer Craig describes her approach like this:

> With women, they want to feel like you understand them. So 'ok, I'm a female too. What do you need?' Once you say that, 'oh, maybe she can understand me, look at me different, 'cause she's a female too.' And they open up. It's all about your approach with 'em. I don't need to use *motherese* with them. I just need to say 'I'm a female too. What do you need? Well, if this happened to you and you never got any counseling, do you think that if you try counseling it might help?' I have a lotta females come in here, they've never been referred to counseling before. For real? 'You shoulda been in counseling a long time ago. They shoulda had you in counseling in prison but ok we gonna get your some services.' And that's what you find out is that counseling really ain't that bad, cause counseling gets people to open up, realize, 'oh, the reason I have this problem is cause I was mistreated. The reason I have this problem is because he touched me and he shouldn't have. The reason I'm promiscuous...' 'Ok, well, we gonna do some counseling because you've been traumatized by that. And when you tell people they've been traumatized they're like, 'I have?' 'Yeah, you have.'

Notably, Craig does not "mother" her female clients like she does with William. Rather, Craig uses the shared experience of being women as an entry point to helping her female clients get help for their often traumatic histories. Craig stated that "every woman I've supervised in my past 13 years has been abused physically and sexually." While perhaps an overstatement, research indicates that crime-processed women do indeed experience very high rates of many forms of abuse.[91] Arguably, because women tend to be more forthcoming about their abuse histories and because therapy is one resource that is readily available to their clients, officers were often able to quickly identify and address this need.

Officers were quick to mention that women are more compliant than men: they tend to show up for appointments and drug tests or to call if they are unable to come. At the same time,

[91] Female prisoners are far more likely than their male counterparts to report a history of physical and/or sexual abuse, and thus have high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (Moloney, van den Bergh, & Moller, 2009), other mental illness (Cauffman, 2008), substance abuse (Langan & Pelissier, 2000), and health-related issues (Maeve, 1999; Bloom, Owen, & Covington, 2003).

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however, as Officer Sanchez noted, women are more likely to have a litany of reasons for not meeting the conditions of their supervision, which officers are only sometimes able to help them address. Officer Napier, who referenced multiple female clients as being "easy but hard" cases in this way, sums up the contradiction like this:

> You don't expect much of any problems with women. They don't argue. They report when you tell 'em to report. Basically women do what you ask them to do.
>
> And sometimes I sympathize with them. They will tell you, 'I'm a single mom... it's only me. I don't have money. I'm on welfare. I cannot afford to come. Don't have money for the bus. I don't have money to go in this class. Those are part of the areas that we have problem with women... In terms of reporting sometimes we have problem with that. But for the most part women are much easier to supervise then men. Men will argue. They won't do what you ask, what you want them to do. They will give you 1,000 reasons why they cannot go to their substance abuse class, 1,000 reasons why they don't have money to report, 1,000 reasons why they cannot come and test. I would say when I [drug] test I have 95 percent of women reporting to come and test. It's just the way it is...
>
> Women are a lot more needy then men. They just have needs. And I understand that. Single mother, I understand the problem. They have to take their child to school. They don't have a job. They have to find means to feed them. They complain to you. That you know while in prison they don't have custody of their children so those things are not part of you know trying to correct wrong. So for me I understand that and I don't blame them for that. I don't put those things on them. It's a burden on them already. I don't need to add more.

Arguably, Napier and the other officers I interviewed view women as needier because of the limitations of the PRCS program to address "non-criminogenic" needs that could serve as barriers to meeting the requirements of their supervision. The most frequent difficulty encountered by women with children, for example–both at New Beginnings and the clients referenced by the officers in interviews–was dependable and affordable child care. Officers were able to make referrals for such services, but there were often waiting lists, at least for the agencies utilized by the women in my sample.

Conclusion

Officer narratives in this chapter underscore two important points. First, in adopting the critical believer posture, probation officers–in stark contrast to parole agents–appear to have both

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loftier aspirations for PRCS in terms of its rehabilitative potential as well as a realistic understanding of its flaws. They do so even though they are now working with a clientele that has been constructed as riskier and more "sophisticated." In part, officers may have the luxury of being more invested in rehabilitation because many of the enforcement aspects of their work have been "outsourced" to local law enforcement. As a result, officers draw on a personal touch in their work to build rapport with their clients and offer assistance in the limited ways available to them. These approaches vary based on officers' personal values and histories.

Second, officers' struggles to manage the flaws of PRCS as well as expectations of what it can do for their clients shed light on the ways in which as much as Realignment is "new" and PRCS is "not like parole or probation," the restructuring that has taken place under AB 109 is burdened with many of the same perennial difficulties associated with carceral devolution that are readily visible in other community supervision models–most notably, the inclusion of a diverse array of state and non-state stakeholders who have equally diverse understandings of what former prisoners "need" and the means through which to meet these needs (Miller, 2014).

Some of PRCS's limitations in its early years of implementation have arguably been by design: the emphasis has been on public safety–arguably, the public priority. As concerns about a rising crime rate related to Realignment dissolve, however, policy makers and administrators may be more open to addressing some of AB 109's deficits in rehabilitative programming. The analyses presented here and in earlier chapters pinpoint some of these deficits–most notably, the gap in services for people with co-occurring disorders, important differences in working with women on community supervision, and the disruptive nature of law enforcement-conducted compliance checks. It is to these issues–and my recommendations for addressing them–that I now turn in the conclusion to this dissertation.

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Chapter 6

Conclusion: Toward changes from within and without

The rapid growth in recent years of research on crime-processed women has thankfully brought women's issues in from the margins of criminological research after decades of neglect. Yet as the analyses in this dissertation have shown, much work remains to be done: the institutions that claim to help formerly-incarcerated people often actually hinder the already difficult process of rebuilding one's life post-incarceration; women confront some particularly complex institutional issues in this process–often through a mismatch between women's goals for themselves and those that are institutional imposed upon them.

By also examining the perspectives of workers within these institutions, this dissertation has shown that these difficulties at times arise through a mismatch of institutional goals with workers' self-defined goals (parole, Chapter 4); other times, institutional and worker goals align, but the means of achieving the goals are, at best, unevenly available, forcing workers to develop strategies to cope with this reality (probation, Chapter 5). In these ways, the inability of public institutions to place coherent–rather than conflicting and irrational–demands on women's time inflicts forms of invisible punishment on people who have already served their formal sentences (see also: Welsh & Rajah, 2014; Welsh, 2015).

One way of understanding how this happens is through what Hagan, Hewitt, and Alwin (1979) have referred to as the "loosely coupled organizational system" that characterizes criminal justice administration in the United States. As Hagan et al argue, "loose coupling" means the lack of a tight fit between structure and function: police, courts, and correctional agencies, for example, "are responsive to one another, while still maintaining independent identities and some evidence of physical and logical separateness" (1979, p. 508; see also:

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McCorkle & Crank, 1996). To some extent, this set-up is a deliberate product of the tension between the often contradictory goals of efficiency and the individualization of punishment that run throughout the crime-processing system.

This loose coupling becomes even more tenuous as welfare, family court, mental health, and substance abuse treatment providers take on the work of providing services to crime-processed people, with varying levels of coordination with each other and community supervision agencies. For the women at New Beginnings, this means post-incarceration work that is chaotic and highly fractured; for front-line workers tasked with carrying out criminal justice policy, as others have also shown (Lynch, 1998, 2000; Werth, 2011a, 2011b, 2013), this frequently means being tasked with a rehabilitative mandate without the tools to achieve it. To further complicate matters, our current era of carceral devolution (Miller, 2014) has been exemplified in this dissertation by California's efforts toward decarceration, which have been accomplished through the shifting of responsibility for people convicted of low-level felony offenses from the state to the counties.

This dissertation has examined how people operating on the front-lines of criminal justice policy–both clients working to rebuild their lives and the workers trying to help them do it–understand and cope with the realities of their ever-evolving circumstances. The thread that has run throughout my findings is how aspects of the personal are brought into public settings by both clients and workers, often as a means of achieving goals that are otherwise off-limits.

Chapter 3 examines the multiple forms of work that women engage in to manage various post-incarceration priorities–both their own and those that are institutionally imposed upon them. In the course of this work, the personal and the public collide in ways that non-crime-processed people largely take for granted. These collisions happen in fairly mundane interactions with public institutions, in which women must strategically disclose personal details of their lives as

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they engage in the consuming process of getting the assistance they need. Women intuitively recognize that institutions likely will not and cannot fulfill the promise of their stated "helping" goals. Thus, women's work centers around minimizing any potential harm associated with their institutional involvement, while maximizing potential benefits. Though the tactics may vary, this theme carries across the institutions of welfare, parole, and probation.

With the implementation of AB 109, the collisions of the personal and the public now involve new criminal justice actors–the police–in work that conventionally is carried out by parole agents or probation officers. This has troubling implications for all involved: women on PRCS who experience these checks endure continued stigmatization; police officers are burdened with a new form of work that seems tangential to their central task of fighting crime; and probation officers are relegated to doing superficial field work with little tangible benefit either to enforcement or rehabilitation. In examining how a community-based reentry program with very loose ties to the state has resisted AB 109's new use of the police in this way, Chapter 3 has sought to fill a gap in feminist criminological literature. To-date, most feminist theorizing on community-based punishment has been limited to examinations of how state-run reentry facilities for women control and exploit women's emotions for the sake of rehabilitation. My findings point to the fact that reentry programs are far more diverse, both in the strength of their ties to the state and in their understandings of women's post-incarceration needs.

Under Realignment, parole agents (Chapter 4) have experienced the illusion of change, as stated departmental goals have shifted even further toward rehabilitation, while agents' coercive authority has been diminished through changes to the parole revocation process. Yet agents are actively resisting these changes, which they view as an erosion to the primary goal of parole: ensuring public safety. As a result, agents exhibit a reluctance to buy in to "evidence-based"

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practices by engaging in "anti-science" discourse when practices that are imposed upon them do not align with what they intuitively and experientially know. To make matters worse, as others before me have shown, being given a rehabilitative mandate without the means of properly achieving it further erodes agents' investment in rehabilitation. In response, agents bring their personal values, histories, and experiences to their work in various ways, in an effort to juggle both effective surveillance of their parolees and what Lynch (2000) calls paying "lip service to the rehabilitative ideal" (p. 46).

Meanwhile, probation officers (Chapter 5), operating under quite different conditions, are recalibrating their work with what they perceive to be a more dangerous and sophisticated clientele. The central challenge for officers working under AB 109 is how to manage the shortcomings of a program that purports to offer "complete supervision"–both the enforcement of the conditions of PRCS and the provision of rehabilitative services and resources. In showing this tension, I argue that officers' recalibration of the personal touch necessitates being "critical believers" in the program. The adoption of the critical believer posture, which is rooted in ambivalence, involves both psychological and interactive processes in which officers employ tactics rooted in their personal values and experiences to try to bridge the gaps in PRCS programming.

Recommendations

My aim in this dissertation has been to pinpoint problems in how social policy is carried out in the supervision and assistance of crime-processed people, and to identify some specific ways of addressing these problems. It is important to note here that even though states like California are taking promising steps toward reducing the use of incarceration, the rapid growth of

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community corrections[92] in the United States is cause for concern, particularly in light of the evidence cited in other chapters that the sheer fact of being on community supervision places one at higher risk of continued involvement in the crime-processing system. In making these recommendations, I take the stance here that if people must be on community supervision, they should be getting something out of it in the form of assistance toward meeting their own goals, rather than simply the goals of the institution that is supervising them. The following sections present two sets of recommendations: one for changes that might be made within the institutions studied here; and another for how people working outside of state-run institutions–activists, advocates, and other allies–might effect changes outside of governmental settings.

Changes from within

Bring institutional priorities into line with those of formerly-incarcerated people

As I showed in Chapters 2 and 3, one way in which the institutions that process women make their post-incarceration work more difficult is through a mismatch between institutional priorities and those that the women have for themselves. For examples: my data reveal how interactions with the welfare system frequently make women's lives more difficult through exclusionary policies, and how interactions with the police under PRCS disrupt women's ability to heal and rebuild their lives. An aim in policy reform should be to ensure that the institutions meant to facilitate the reentry process do not actually impede it. Table 6.1, which shows how institutional priorities mismatch with those of some of the women in my sample, gives a clue about how to do this.

[92] As others have shown, the expansion of community corrections has especially affected women: although they account for only about 10% of prisoners, women account for more than 25% of individuals under noncustodial supervision (Glaze & Bonczar, 2009; Haney, 2010, p. 15). From 1995 to 2006, the growth rate of women on probation or parole far outpaced that of men, increasing by a dramatic 56% (Glaze & Bonczar, 2007; Morash, 2010, p. 3).

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Table 6.1 Women's post-release priorities versus institutions' priorities for them.

Study participants	Women's priority tasks	Priorities imposed upon them
Yasmine	Reunite with her child, go to school	Comply with parole, "put her kids first"
Rowena	Stay sober, reunite with family	Live at the address she has given to PRCS
Dawn	Get welfare assistance for herself	Make sure she doesn't violate her parole

All three of these examples are reflective of how institutional priorities of managing risk through addressing criminogenic needs come at the expense of women's non-criminogenic needs, as discussed in Chapter 1.

Yasmine's priorities when she got out were to be able to reunite with her child and go to school to become a cosmetologist. Her long-term goal of getting a job matches with an institutional priority–her parole agent would certainly want her to get a job–and yet she still has substantial difficulty in achieving this goal. Arguably this is because she is juggling so many other tasks, like frequent drug tests at parole and DUI classes at another location. Yasmine must demonstrate to the family court that she will be a good mother who is able to provide for her child, yet her attorney wonders if Yasmine is really committed to "putting her kids first." In this way, Yasmine is stuck trying to figure out which work she should prioritize at the expense of other tasks, though they are all very important.

There are a couple of ways in which Yasmine's circumstances could be improved. First, her work could be made easier if there was a central place where she could accomplish multiple tasks, such as her drug testing, DUI classes, and work training program. This is a recommendation to which I will return in a later section. Second, if the structure of her community supervision recognized that reunification with her child (a non-criminogenic need) was equally as important as her drug testing and DUI classes (which address her criminogenic

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needs), Yasmine's parole agent would be able to develop a case plan to ensure that she could work toward addressing both sets of needs–all while continuing to go to school.[93]

Rowena's priorities when she got out were to stay sober and reunite with her family, with whom she has a strained relationship due to her years of cycling in and out of prison. Yet the law enforcement-conducted compliance check that she experiences in Chapter 3 indicates that, under Realignment, the state's priority for her is to live where she is supposed to be living so that she can be easily monitored–even if her probation officer shares Rowena's goals of sobriety and reconnection with family. As I have shown, these checks involve the invasion of the small amount of personal space that women typically have post-incarceration. The manner in which the checks are conducted means that Rowena's ability to reintegrate into–not just reenter–her community is impeded: her neighbors now know that she has some sort of involvement with the police, further perpetuating the stigma that all formerly-incarcerated people must confront in some form or another. This is another way in which women's post-release priorities are marginalized for the sake of institutional priorities that emphasize risk management.

Lastly, Dawn's goal when we went to the welfare office together was to get assistance for herself after she had been laid off from her job, yet the institutional priority that the welfare eligibility worker had to carry out was to ensure that Dawn was complying with the conditions of her parole. Dawn feels that this is intrusive, but she is forced to share this information nonetheless–even though it doesn't qualify for her for any sort of special assistance. Namely,

[93] It is important to note here that the parole agents and probation officers I spoke with were universally supportive of women's goals to reunite with their children, and several spoke proudly of their few clients who had succeeded in these efforts. My point here is that, within the structures in which they work, agents and officers have few tools with which to support the pursuit of such goals, beyond writing letters to family court on behalf of their clients. This is because community supervision work is focused on addressing criminogenic needs.

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Dawn recognizes that participating in the welfare-to-work program is not going to help her get a job.

There are two ways in which Dawn's experience might have been improved. First, as in Yasmine's situation, Dawn's frustration with the welfare application process might have been eased if she had been able to accomplish this task in the same location where she also had to see her parole agent. A second way has to do with addressing the welfare system's inability to accommodate formerly-incarcerated people. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, none of the women in my sample found work through the welfare-to-work program in which they were required to participate in order to receive assistance. I have argued elsewhere (Welsh, 2014) that this is due in part to the welfare system's lack of awareness that many of its clients have criminal records. In my recommendations to DPSS, I have suggested the establishment of partnerships with community-based organizations that are experts in these issues to train welfare-to-work staff on barriers to employment for formerly-incarcerated people. This would also enable DPSS to foster formal connections with such organizations so that welfare clients might better be able to access their services.

Lastly, the narratives of the parole agents and probation officers I spoke with indicate a continued need for the training of community supervision staff in the particular needs of their female clients. Parole agents were especially mixed in their levels of comfort with their female parolees. To neglect this aspect of professional development is to do a huge disservice to women on supervision–though this cuts another way as well: if agents "bankload" their female cases, these women should then be at reduced risk of incurring a violation. Recent excellent scholarship (Morash, 2010; Morash et al, 2014); and training curricula (see: Bloom, Owen, & Covington,

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2003) suggest specific ways in which workers can be better trained to work with their female clients.

Increase worker and community representation in decision-making

To shift now to worker considerations, one overarching recommendation, which other scholars have discussed, is the development of a more participatory model for changing institutions with input from street-level workers (Maynard-Moody, Musheno, & Palumbo, 1990). My interviews with parole agents and probation officers demonstrate why this is important: front-line workers have intimate knowledge of the strengths and deficits of the institutions in which they are working.

Public institutions typically function in a hierarchical and centralized bureaucratic structure. The three institutions studied here–all operating at either the county (welfare, probation) or state (parole) levels, with unionized workers and top-down management structures–are no exception. In many ways, such a set-up fails to capitalize on the wealth of experience accrued by front-line workers.[94] In their comparative analysis of the community correctional systems of Oregon and Colorado, Maynard-Moody et al (1990) find that Colorado's system, which afforded greater influence to street-level workers in the policy process, was more successfully implemented than Oregon's more traditional structure. It is unrealistic to suggest that California or L.A. County in particular adopt the Colorado model, which is organized around judicial districts and local advisory boards, and whose services are highly privatized. However, there are a few intermediate steps that might be taken within L.A. County's existing structure that could improve service provision by diversifying who participates in decision-making processes around AB 109.

[94] Although, as a counterpoint to this, Maynard-Moody et al (1990) acknowledge that workers often also try to make their work easier at clients' expense (see also: Levine, Musheno, & Palumbo, 1980).

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A fundamental problem with securing buy-in for the new way of doing things under Realignment has been the reality that it is a massive change that has been forced upon the counties by the state. As discussed in Chapter 2, this is evident in how local policymakers talked about AB 109 in the early stages of its implementation. Likewise, a consistent theme in my interviews with parole agents and probation officers on this topic was that this shift has been imposed upon them, largely without their input. Furthermore, community-based organizations–led by All of Us or None in several California counties–have also lodged complaints about the governing body overseeing AB 109 implementation at the county level.

As prescribed by AB 109 legislation,[95] each county has created a Community Corrections Partnership (CCP), led by an executive committee comprised of representatives from probation, the district attorney, the public defender, the presiding judge of the superior court, the chief of police, the sheriff, and a representative from a county social services provider–in the area of welfare, mental health, or substance abuse (CDCR, 2014g). Interestingly, the penal code indicates that the CCPs should also include "a representative from a community-based organization with experience in successfully providing rehabilitative services to persons who have been convicted of a criminal offense," as well as a victim advocate, but it does not specify who has voting rights on the Executive Committee.[96] Neither of these groups is mentioned in the CDCR description of the CCP Executive Committee or in Los Angeles County's AB 109 implementation plan (County of Los Angeles Community Corrections Partnership, 2011). Material from the Los Angeles Regional Reentry Partnership (2014) indicates that the

[95] See California Penal Code §1230.1. According to Petersilia (2013, p. 44), the Community Corrections Partnerships existed prior to Realignment–they were established in 2009 under SB 678 in an earlier effort to divert adult probationers from prison.
[96] See Cal. Penal Code §1230.2L-M.

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community-based representative of the Los Angeles CCP does not have voting rights (see also: Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, 2014).

Petersilia (2013) suggests that "in its formation of Community Corrections Partnerships, AB 109 appears self-consciously designed to create cross-systems collaboration and buy-in among the various actors responsible for implementing the new regime in each county" (p. 44). "Appears" is the key word here. Moving forward, not only should there be increased representation of community-based organizations–perhaps by expanding the number of voting members on the CCPs' Executive Committees–but also, consideration should be given to the ways in which front-line workers in governmental organizations might increase their representation in the decision-making process.

For example, a recurring theme in my interviews with probation officers was the shortcomings of the contractors who are paid by the County to provide various services. As discussed in Chapter 5, officers were quick to identify how Health RIGHT 360 is more incentivized to place people in transitional housing rather than jobs, and that this translates into fewer of their clients finding employment. Part of the problem, as I understood it in interviews and in researching the organization, is that Health RIGHT 360 is a massive organization with offices throughout California. Taking a cue from Colorado's more dynamic model, input from probation officers on how their clients' needs are and are not being met might go a long way to holding Health RIGHT 360 accountable to providing services. Further, it might also facilitate the identification of other smaller, more responsive community-based organizations who can provide services on an ad-hoc basis. A similar approach might be taken to address the gap in services for people with co-occurring disorders.

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Develop and improve connections between welfare and community corrections[97]

The AB 109 HUBs are a step toward a "one-stop shop" or integrated service model that could be an effective approach for combatting the fracturing of the institutional circuit, which I described in Chapter 2. The one-stop shop model first emerged in Australia (Wettenhall & Kimber, 1996) and has since been adopted in many European countries (Minas, 2009, 2014) and in certain healthcare sectors in the U.S. For people living with HIV in the U.S., for example, researchers have argued that the one-stop model can reduce stigma while maximizing the quality of service provision as well as effective communication sharing amongst providers (Ojikutu, Holman, Kunches, Landers, Perlmutter, Ward, Fant, & Hirschhorn, 2014).

Although the HUBs represent a step toward this model, they do not go far enough. Given that transportation is a significant barrier between formerly-incarcerated people and the services they need, clients should be able to accomplish multiple tasks at the HUB that facilitate the achievement of *their* post-incarceration goals, not simply the goals of PRCS. Clients should be able to meet with their assigned probation officer at the HUBs, rather than an intake officer whom they will only see once. Clients should also be able to apply for public assistance. Currently at the HUBs, clients are able to get screened for eligibility for CalFresh (food stamps), GR, and TANF by a DPSS representative who works on-site. However, as noted in Chapter 2, this is insufficient since clients still have to go to a DPSS office to actually apply. A family court representative or parent advocate should be present to assist clients in understanding how to

[97] As noted in Chapter 2, I have separately submitted a report to DPSS on my findings and recommendations as they pertain to issues in the welfare system (see: Welsh, 2014). In the report, I recommend: the elimination of the two-week residency rule for applicants; an expansion of the DPSS jail outreach program, which has been severely cut in recent years; the training of DPSS staff on the issues confronting crime-processed people; and the development of partnerships with community-based organizations to offer services like record expungement and training on how to look for work with a criminal record.

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pursue family reunification. There should also be a variety of treatment and education programs offered on-site. A prisoner reentry center that recently opened in Chillicothe, Ohio,[98] offers a potential model (Johnson, 2014; see also: Clear, 2005).

The same recommendations apply to the Parole Outpatient Clinics for individuals on parole. My interviews with parole agents indicated that some of these cross-system connections did exist at some point, but over time have been eliminated. Job and employment development services should be consistently available. Furthermore, DPSS should be partnering with parole offices in Los Angeles to provide the same screening–and ideally application–services as they do at the probation HUBs. These sorts of linkages would go a long way toward rectifying the systemic inability of community supervision agencies to address non-criminogenic needs.

Reconsider how compliance checks are carried out

On one hand, the existing model of having local law enforcement conduct AB 109 compliance checks might be a good thing, in that it allows clients' probation officers to distance themselves almost entirely from the enforcement component of PRCS. The women from New Beginnings had almost universally positive things to say about their probation officers, while being highly critical of the police. This indicates that the women viewed these two institutions as not being linked, even though they are. Possibly, this perception of separation facilitates the development of positive relationships between clients and their probation officers. For this reason, arming probation officers should not be considered a viable solution. However, the checks as they are currently being carried out are hugely disruptive and stigmatizing.

[98] It is important to note here that Ohio has a recidivism rate of 27.1 percent, well below the national average of 44 percent. According to Johnson (2014), corrections officials attribute this to a robust network of reentry programming.

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There are at least a couple ways in which the negative aspects of these checks might be minimized. One approach would be to have clients' probation officers accompany local law enforcement during these checks–rather than an armed SEO officer who looks just like the police–so that there is a "friendly face" present to reduce client stress. This may not be possible given the probation union's concerns about officer safety. Another approach–not exclusive of the first suggestion–might involve establishing and training a specialized unit of the police to conduct these checks in a less disruptive manner. I intend to take on this issue in future research.

Change from without: toward a peer mentor program for formerly-incarcerated people

One way in which community-based organizations, activists, and other allies of formerly-incarcerated people might better facilitate post-incarceration work is through a peer mentor/advocate model. This is something that many programs already do on an ad hoc, informal basis, but a formalized model based on similar approaches to other populations would qualitatively improve people's post-incarceration experiences, and could even reduce at least short-term recidivism for some people. I first started thinking about this idea during my days sitting in welfare offices with the women from New Beginnings. Much of what makes post-incarceration work so difficult is the fact that one must do much of it alone. It is easy to become intimidated, angry, and/or despondent when one must wait several hours to speak with an overworked and distracted welfare worker through bullet-proof glass or an equally overworked family court attorney; it is easy to leave a meeting with one's parole agent or probation officer without having all of one's needs addressed or questions answered.

The Arizona Bridge to Independent Living (ABIL) program in Phoenix offers a model for what a peer mentoring program for formerly-incarcerated people might look like. ABIL, which provides a wide range of advocacy, independent living, home care, and employment services to

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people living with disabilities, recruits volunteer peer mentors who either have a disability themselves or are close to someone who does. After going through an application process and a training program, peer mentors listen, provide support, and–crucially–"take part in solving problems that all people with disabilities have in common, and share their knowledge of community resources" (ABIL, 2014).[99]

A peer mentorship program for formerly-incarcerated people might have similar qualifying criteria for prospective mentors: formerly-incarcerated people who have had recognized "success" (for examples: maintaining permanent housing, stable employment, and/or positive familial relationships) and people who have personal or professional experience with formerly-incarcerated people. The program would need to include careful training to ensure that mentors are knowledgeable not only about the physical and psychological effects of incarceration, but also the many rules and policies associated with various institutions, so that they can not only be advocates, but also help their mentees be effective advocates for themselves. If implemented properly, such a program would bridge a common gap in the type of support that small, community-based organizations like New Beginnings are able to provide to their clients. Typically, such programs only have one dedicated social worker, who, by virtue of the amount of case documentation for billing purposes s/he has to complete, cannot spend much time helping clients out in the community.

[99] Another program with promising elements, which I have participated in, is the Women's Prison Association WomenCare mentoring program in New York City (WPA, 2014). Through letter-writing and visits leading up to women's release from prison or jail, mentors develop relationships with their mentees prior to release, and then maintain regular contact individually and through WPA-sponsored events post-release. Mentors are not required to have personal or professional knowledge of incarceration, but do receive ongoing support and training on various aspects of the crime-processing system. However, they are not specifically trained to be institutional advocates as I am suggesting here; rather, mentors are intended to provide an additional level of social support to recently-released women–an equally important endeavor.

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Conclusion

In closing, Realignment has been called "the most sweeping correctional experiment in recent history" (Petersilia, 2013, p. 4) and the harbinger of "the new common sense of high-crime societies" (Simon, 2014, p. 155). These grand descriptors hint at a sense of optimism among scholars of punishment about the transformative potential of Realignment. Indeed, Jonathan Simon, who along with Malcolm Feeley issued a pessimistic analysis of punishment in the 1990s (see: Feeley & Simon, 1992), sees the ruling in *Brown v. Plata* and the legislation it has spawned as a definitive turning point in how we think about punishment in America.[100] Simon argues that the ruling in *Plata* is, at its core, about reviving concerns about dignity–the value that is at the heart of the Eighth Amendment (2014). I share Simon's optimism. In identifying the many issues discussed throughout this dissertation, my intent has been to ensure that Realignment succeeds, not just in its mandate to uphold public safety, but more importantly, by ensuring that in lieu of incarceration, crime-processed individuals have the tools they need to be happy, healthy, and fully integrated members of our society.

[100] As noted previously, in the wake of Realignment, Proposition 47, which reclassifies six drug and property crimes from felonies to misdemeanors, has further shifted California penal policy away from incarceration. Notably, some of the savings incurred by Prop. 47 will be put toward mental health and substance abuse treatment programming–though not necessarily for the AB 109 population. The Sentencing Project has optimistically suggested that "this historic vote demonstrates support to advance a public safety strategy beyond incarceration to include treatment and prevention" (2014).

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Appendix A: Methodology

This project began by asking the following sorts of questions: what are the most urgent tasks that reentering women must complete, and with what institutions do these tasks bring them into contact? What tasks do front-line institutional workers carry out in their interactions with the women? How are they helpful, and how are they hindering? Following Burawoy (1979), this project also asked why workers work as hard as they do, even in systems that are deeply flawed? How is the organization of both the women's and the workers' activities linked to broader institutional, social, economic, and political contexts? Specifically, what does this "new era" of punishment in California mean for the future of the people and institutions studied here? In analyses, this project sought to address these questions, always grounded in the concerns and contradictions experienced by the standpoint informants–the formerly-incarcerated women with whom the inquiry began.

Goals and objectives

The goal of this study has been to understand the ways in which formerly-incarcerated women navigate the reentry process through the various resources and services they access, and the roles that front-line workers play as institutional agents who assist and/or hinder this process. The study has had four objectives:

1. To describe the strategies and coping mechanisms that formerly-incarcerated women employ to get what they need;
2. To assess the extent to which women believe that front-line workers and the institutions they represent do and/or do not meet their needs;
3. To describe the front-line worker perspective on prisoner reentry, and on the needs of formerly-incarcerated women specifically; and
4. To describe service provision to the reentering population as it is currently unfolding under the new, more decentralized structure of California's "realigned" criminal justice system.

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Study design

This study unfolded in two phases over the course of two years, starting from the standpoint of formerly-incarcerated women and then moving outward to the front-line workers within the institutions with which women interact. No single data collection method sufficiently reveals all aspects of reality, making the use of multiple methods essential (Patton, 1990, p. 187). Thus, data were collected and analyzed through the triangulation of several sources:

1. One-on-one, in-depth interviews with clients;
2. Participant-observation of clients accessing services at various bureaucracies;
3. One-on-one, in-depth interviews of front-line workers;
4. Publicly-available policies, forms, assessment tools, and other texts used in case processing; and
5. Interviews with key informants.

Triangulation is an important aspect of a rigorous research design, as data are collected from multiple sources to validate, or test the quality and accuracy, of what study participants say and of what is observed. In this way, triangulation ensures credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research by identifying inconsistencies in the findings of different sources of data (Patton, 1990, pp. 187-188). Phase one of this study used the triangulation of multiple ethnographic data sources–observations, interviews, and texts–to capture not only what formerly-incarcerated women *say they do* but also what they actually do, to uncover consistencies and inconsistencies (Watkins-Hayes, 2009, p. 248). As Duneier (2011) puts it when arguing for ethnography rather than only interview or surveys, “talk can be cheap.” These initial findings were then used to guide phase two of the study, which involved in-depth interviews with California state parole agents and Los Angeles County probation officers.

The institutional ethnographic approach

First conceptualized by Dorothy Smith during the women’s movement in the 1970s, institutional ethnography is considered to be an extension of standpoint theory and an alternative

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to the positivist research paradigm, which critical scholars have identified as oppressive to women and other marginalized groups (Burawoy, 1998; Campbell, 1998; Campbell & Gregor, 2004; Smith, 1987; Sprague, 2005). Institutional ethnographers are concerned with exploring, analyzing, and mapping the ways in which people experience social organization. Smith et al (2006) emphasize that the institutional ethnographic approach does not limit itself to what can be directly observed; rather, it "seeks to reveal the extended bureaucratic, professional, legislative, and economic, as well as other social relations involved in the production of local events and activities" (p. 172). As Luken and Vaughan (2005) note, institutional ethnographers do not seek to simply describe the behavior or experiences of research participants. Instead, the project is to use those experiences to explicate how an institutional regime coordinates the work of the participants and others. In line with this perspective, the accounts of the women and workers interviewed for this project have served as an entry point to the social relations that organize their experiences (Campbell & Gregor, 2004; see also: Bisaillon, 2012a).

Sensitizing concepts

In suggesting the use of sensitizing concepts to guide social science research, Blumer (1954) contrasts definitive concepts–those clearly and precisely common to a class of objects–with sensitizing concepts, which lack clear attributes or classifications but give researchers a point of reference in developing empirical understandings of social interactions. Qualitative social scientists have increasingly employed sensitizing concepts as starting points for research and as interpretive devices, because they bring into focus important elements of social interaction and provide guidelines for investigation of different social settings (Bowen, 2006; Patton, 1990, pp. 216-219). This approach allows room for the element of surprise that is inherent in interpretivist research (Becker, 1996).

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As Patton (1990) points out, it is impossible to observe everything, and sensitizing concepts enable the observer to hone in on key concepts which illustrate the complexities of the setting (p. 216). A conceptual framework links multiple concepts and serves as a catalyst for theory-building (Seibold, 2002). At the outset of this study, a set of sensitizing concepts rooted in the empirical literature were devised to inform the development of interview guides and to focus observations. These are the concepts discussed fully in Chapter 1: institutional ethnography's generous understanding of work (Smith, 1987); Lipsky's (1980) understanding of discretion, alienation, and advocacy; emotion work (Hochschild, 1979) and emotion management (Schwalbe et al, 2000). I refined these concepts throughout data collection and analysis as I made discoveries about what I was seeing. Most notably, I developed an understanding of how the personal and the public collide in post-incarceration work as well as the concept of the "personal touch" in front-line work as these concepts emerged in the data.

Sampling and recruitment

Qualitative research typically focuses in depth on small samples selected purposefully. In order to achieve this, researchers frequently use a mix of sampling methods to develop an approach that is compatible with the nuances of a particular project. I selected New Beginnings because it provided post-incarceration services exclusively to women, and because it provided these services to women on both parole and PRCS–an important facet of this study. Initially, I used a purposeful sampling approach to identify information-rich women's cases for in-depth study (Patton, 1990, p. 169). In practice, this meant recruiting women who needed to apply for welfare, for example. Subsequently, I used a theory-based sampling approach to recruit additional women into the study. In theory-based sampling, the researcher selects "incidents, slices of life, time periods, or people on the basis of their potential manifestation or

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representation of important theoretical constructs" (Patton, 1990, p. 177). Thus, as I came to understand welfare as a key institution in women's post-incarceration labor, I recruited additional women who also needed to apply for welfare or go to the welfare office to deal with issues pertaining to their welfare cases. Likewise, I sought to recruit a mixture of women who were on state parole and county PRCS. As was the case in this study, institutional ethnographers often use an initial group of informants to point toward informants in other settings, rather than basing their analyses on a single set of cases (DeVault & McCoy, 2006, p. 33). This strategy is compatible with theory-based sampling. Table A.1 shows the demographic composition of the study's sample of formerly-incarcerated women:

Table A.1 Demographics of formerly-incarcerated female participants.

	Formerly-incarcerated women, n=24
Race/ethnicity	75% Black, 17% Latina, 8% White
Community supervision	67% on parole, 33% on PRCS (AB 109)[101]
Age range	24 to 60
Family status	75% had children

Because this sample was drawn from only one reentry program for women in South L.A., there were no inclusion/exclusion criteria. By virtue of their enrollment in New Beginnings, all women had been released from either state prison or county jail within the past year. Women learned about my study through announcements I made at house meetings and through word-of-mouth from other women in the program who had participated in the study.

In total, 24 women participated in my study through in-depth interviews; based on interviews, I then conducted in-depth observations with 10 of these women. Interviews ranged in length

[101] If this study were to be done today, I would expect the proportion of women on PRCS to be higher, given what we know about the sorts of crimes for which women are often convicted. Because I recruited this sample within the first year of Realignment, I have reason to believe that my sample is slightly skewed in this regard, given that the infrastructure for making housing and other referrals to places like New Beginnings was not fully up and running during the study period.

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from 45 to 90 minutes; observations ranged in length from two to eight hours in a day. In total, I conducted roughly 400 hours of observations. Women were compensated $40 for each interview,[102] and received non-cash compensation during and after observations, such as lunch and snacks, in addition to transportation to and from the observations.

With the parole agents and probation officers I interviewed, difficulties in obtaining access meant that I had to use a purely convenience sampling approach. I was told by parole that the size of the sample needed to be limited to under ten so as not to become a union issue, and probation had similar concerns. Tables A.2 and A.3 show the demographic composition of these samples.

Table A.2 Demographics of California State parole agent participants.

	State parole agents, n=9
Race/ethnicity	22% Black, 45% Latina/o, 22% White, 11% Asian
Gender	33% female, 67% male
Previous job	78% were Correctional Officers; 11% did other work in prison; and 11% did other work for the state

Table A.3 Demographics of Los Angeles County probation officer participants.

	County probation officers, n=10
Race/ethnicity	60% Black, 40% Latina/o
Gender	70% female, 30% male
Previous job	60% had previously worked with juveniles and were new to Adult Probation within the past 2 years, per AB 109

I targeted recruitment to agents and officers working in South Los Angeles, so that I could match workers' perspectives to those of the women and capture anything particular about post-

[102] This amount is roughly consistent with what other researchers doing similar work have provided recently: Cobbina (2009) and Heidemann (2013) each provided $30 interview incentives to formerly-incarcerated women.

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incarceration work in this geographic area. Once I received permission to conduct the interviews at each agency, an internal email blast was sent out containing details about the study and asking for volunteers. An administrator within each agency created a list of volunteers and scheduled the interviews for me. In total, I conducted in-depth interviews with 19 community supervision workers: nine State parole agents and ten L.A. County probation officers working in South Los Angeles offices. Interviews ranged in length from 45 minutes to two hours, with most interviews being about one hour long.

Procedures

In accordance with the general principles of qualitative research, I employed an iterative process using multiple waves of data collection and analysis. The purpose of this approach is to be able to use early findings to guide and tailor later data collection to develop a fuller understanding of the phenomenon (Patton, 1990, p. 266). All human subjects protections were rigorously maintained throughout the study.

Phase One: formerly-incarcerated women

Phase one of data collection began with observations of the women's daily lives at New Beginnings, informal conversations with the program staff, and in-depth interviews with the women. These interviews sought to understand:

1. The women's day-to-day lives post-incarceration;
2. The institutions with which women most frequently come into contact;
3. Their experiences of these institutions generally, and with workers specifically;
4. What makes a good or bad worker–parole/probation officer, welfare case manager, child welfare social worker, etc.; and
5. Women's perspectives on race and gender and the extent to which they feel these demographics shape their interactions with workers.

With the women's consent, I digitally recorded each interview (see Appendix B for the interview guide). When interviews were conducted in a setting not conducive to recording, I took detailed

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notes. I conducted these interviews in two waves during 2012: I first interviewed 13 women, then selected three to observe based on their interview responses. About six months later, I repeated this process and interviewed 11 more women and did observations with seven.

Participant-observation provides another means of viewing institutions through the eyes of those who participate in then (Diamond, 2006, pp. 45-64). My observations with the women involved providing them transportation to their various appointments, observing the processes women went through to obtain the assistance they needed, and reporting back to the program's case manager regarding the outcome of these appointments for clients' case files. I functioned within New Beginnings as a volunteer in this way, though all staff and the women were aware of my research. Although I initially received "assignments" from the program's case manager to transport a client, for example, to apply for County welfare benefits, I introduced myself to the women as a doctoral student-researcher who is also has social work qualifications. I informed each woman of the details of my study, and I obtained informed consent before conducting any observations or interviews. I explained to each woman that while I was willing to assist her in navigating various systems, I was primarily there to observe her experiences.[103]

[103] Some researchers may take issue with the fact that I offered to help women during my observations with them, arguing that this could jeopardize my objectivity and skew my findings. In practice, this really only happened during women's contact with the welfare system, and instances in which I did not help far outweighed times when I did. (The example with Dawn in the welfare office discussed in Chapter 1 occurred at the very end of that phase of my research, when I had reached data saturation.) Often, women were far more knowledgeable about institutional processes than I was, though my knowledge of the welfare system did eclipse even Dawn's after my months of volunteer work with the legal aid program. However, I made a clear choice in offering my assistance in the first place. As a social worker and a feminist researcher, I consider it to be unethical to sit next to a woman for several hours for the sake of *my* research and not assist her in making sense of the various confusing forms and rules meant to help public institutions determine who is worthy and who is unworthy of assistance. On most occasions, it was the women who educated me on how things work, but there were a few women–particularly those who had low reading comprehension–who readily accepted my assistance in filling out their applications. In navigating this complexity of my research, I adopted what Duneier (2011) refers to as following the subject's lead for the sake of "showing the people" upon whom the study is based.

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Over time, women started calling me on their own to drive them to appointments, and I no longer took assignments from the program's case manager. After the two recruitment waves, I had reached data "saturation," meaning I had reached the point at which the collection of additional data did not shed any further light on my inquiry (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As these women left the program–either to live with family members or to move into their own apartments–the research relationship was terminated.

During this phase, I accompanied women to emergency rooms, County welfare offices, affordable housing offices, mental health agencies, substance abuse treatment providers, family court, and parole and probation offices. In addition, I conducted in-depth participant-observation in more than half of the 14 L.A. County welfare offices that offer General Relief as a volunteer with a legal aid program. In my initial fieldwork, I quickly identified the welfare system as a central aspect of the initial stage of the reentry process, with all but one of the women in my sample needing to apply for food stamps, cash aid, or both. Thus, to learn about this system in greater depth beyond observing the women applying for assistance, I became a volunteer with the Public Counsel Law Center, which runs a program called Connecting Angelenos to Resources and Essential Services (CARES; Public Counsel, 2015). This program trains summer law associates, practicing lawyers, and social work students to provide advocacy to individuals in DPSS offices. Participants are trained on the county welfare system in the morning, then go to a DPSS office in the afternoon to assist first-time welfare applicants in applying for benefits, advocate for benefits recipients who are at risk of losing their benefits, and assist former recipients who need to re-apply. After my initial training, I did volunteer work with CARES for six hours per week for one year.

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While conducting observations, when it was socially acceptable to do so, I wrote field notes during the observation. These field notes included descriptions of the environment and context, descriptions of the processes and interactions as they unfolded, and my reactions and attempts to explore significant events. When I was unable to take notes during an observation, I took "headnotes" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 18) and later recorded them using a digital recorder. As interviews and field notes were transcribed, they were coded and analyzed to identify patterns in the data through "constant comparison." Based on these analyses, I revised my interview protocols to guide future data collection.

During this phase, I also collected publicly-available texts–program brochures, application forms, institutional policies and procedures–for analysis and development of a hierarchy of terms, to uncover themes and compare them to the emergent themes in the interviews and field notes. Institutional ethnographers examine the ways in which institutional categories and ruling relations are "activated" in texts (Wilson & Pence, 2006, pp. 210-211). Based on my preliminary analysis of key texts, interviews, and field notes during my first wave of recruitment of the women, I was then able to conduct a second wave of interviews and observations with refined sensitizing concepts geared toward closer, targeted examination of the identified categories.

Phase Two: Front-line workers

Phase two of data collection involved interviews with parole agents and probation officers.[104] These interviews sought to understand:

1. Workers' daily job functions;
2. The rules, regulations, and constraints under which workers operate;
3. Workers' personal backgrounds and motivations for embarking on a public service career;
4. Workers' experiences with and perceptions of the women on their caseloads; and
5. How the work has changed since the implementation of AB 109.

[104] As noted previously, I also conducted in-depth interviews with 19 DPSS eligibility workers and case managers during this phase. Results from these interviews will be disseminated separately.

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With the workers' consent, I digitally recorded each interview. I conducted these interviews in two waves during 2013, first at two South L.A. parole offices, and later at five South L.A. probation offices. See Appendices C and D for these interview guides.

Analysis

Interviews and field notes were audio-recorded, transcribed, and then analyzed. During interviews, I discussed with my participants the emergent themes I was seeing in my data to confirm accuracy and to highlight conflicting perspectives amongst participants (Patton, 1990). A core set of questions on the same themes were asked of all participants–both the formerly-incarcerated women and the front-line workers–and responses were then cross-checked with other sources of data. Prior to transcription of recordings, pseudonyms were assigned to all participants to protect their identities. Recordings were transcribed by either me or one professional transcriptionist to ensure consistency. To ensure that interviewees' words were accurately represented, I closely reviewed each transcript not transcribed by me. During each interview, I also recorded written notes, which were reviewed along with the transcripts.

I utilized a modified version of Doucet & Mauthner's (2008) Listening Guide approach to interview analysis, in which interview transcripts are read repeatedly, each time through a different analytical lens. This approach is compatible with how other institutional ethnographers have recently analyzed their data (see, for example: Bisaillon, 2012b). Interviews are first read for narrative, adopting a "what is happening here?" approach rooted in the grounded theory tradition (Charmaz, 2006). A second reading focuses on how each interviewee speaks about her/himself and their social world. A third reading examines social and institutional networks and relationships, and a fourth reading focuses on "structured power relations and dominant ideologies that frame narratives" (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008, pp. 405-406). This fourth reading

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allows for reflection on the micro-level narratives and how they might be linked with macro-level policies, processes, and structures–a key focus of the study presented here. As prescribed, a worksheet is created for each interview in which the interviewee's words are laid out in one column and my reactions and interpretations are in an adjacent column, allowing for a reflexive reading of the narrative. I modified this approach: working in Microsoft Word, I used the "comments" feature to highlight text to code, as well as to record my reactions to the text. I found this to be useful, because the text can then be searched for key terms, which are inevitably refined throughout the analytic process. While this manual coding process was more time-consuming and labor-intensive than working in a qualitative software program, in line with other qualitative researchers (see: Bisaillon, 2012b; Cobbina, 2009), I found that this approach afforded me a greater degree of immersion into–and therefore familiarity with–the data.

As a precursor to writing up my findings, I then wrote memos to reflect on this coding process for each interview. I examined my initial codes through a process of "constant comparison" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in which each passage of text that is coded is then compared with all other similarly-coded passages. This allowed me to not only ensure that my coding was consistent, but also consider other dimensions or phenomena that perhaps should have been coded differently.

Limitations

In qualitative research, breadth is often sacrificed for depth. From a positivist perspective, interpretive approaches to research are limited because they search for subjective interpretations of experiences rather than one single, objective truth (Kraska & Neuman, 2008, p. 410). Purposeful and theoretical sampling approaches are non-random and therefore limit the generalizability of this study. The study's place-based nature, as well as its small sample sizes,

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limited the external validity, or the extent to which I am able to claim that my findings are generalizable to entire populations. Internal validity was achieved through member validation of key emergent themes: themes were discussed with the women, workers, and key informants as appropriate to not only confirm accuracy, but also to highlight conflicting perspectives amongst the different groups studied. Reliability in a qualitative research context depends on internal and external consistency (Kraska & Neuman, 2008, p. 410). Internal consistency was maintained though consistent use of the same questions and probes throughout interviews. External consistency was achieved by cross-checking observations with other sources of data and by testing "rival explanations" of the data during analysis (Patton, 1990, p. 462).

A central aim of this project has been to describe formerly-incarcerated women's experiences on their own terms rather than compared to those of men (Flavin, 2001; see also: Richie, 1996; Opsal, 2009). However, this focus also begets another limitation: the study does not examine the experiences of men, who, despite the rapid growth of the female incarcerated population, still comprise 90 percent of prison and jail inmates (Langan & Levin, 2002; Western, 2006). Some studies suggest that incarcerated men and women have very similar risk and need profiles (Steffensmeier & Allan, 1996; Dowden & Andrews, 1999; Heilbrun et al, 2008) and that there are few differences in men's and women's narratives of desistance and redemption (Maruna, 2001). Although as discussed previously, women often enter the crime-processing system with more difficult life circumstances, there is evidence that, at least in some ways, women fare better post-incarceration: women are less likely to be rearrested, reconvicted, and returned to incarceration than men (Langan & Levin, 2002), and they have lower rates of return to substance abuse (Pelissier, Camp, Gaes, Saylor, & Rhodes, 2003). Future studies should employ the

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approach taken here to understand the institutional experiences of formerly-incarcerated men as well as how they are perceived and managed by front-line workers.

Because of this study's prioritization of depth over breadth, I have been careful to make reasonable claims about what my findings mean. For example, one facet of the worker experience that I could not capture was variations across jurisdictions–and even across different parts of Los Angeles–since I purposely limited my interviews to workers in South Los Angeles offices. As Grattet et al (2008, p. 15) note regarding parole in particular, the "[four parole regions in California] are understood to have differences in their organizational cultures and in the types of parolees they supervise." Similar assumptions can be made about the limitations of my probation interviews, particularly given the substantial variation highlighted by others in how counties are implementing AB 109 (Abarbanel et al, 2013; Lin & Petersilia, 2014). Future research should employ a multi-site approach to examine workers' varied experiences of AB 109, as well as quantitative methods such as a large-scale survey of workers across the state.

Lastly, because I drew my sample of formerly-incarcerated women from only one reentry program, my results cannot be generalized to all formerly-incarcerated women everywhere. However, Dorothy Smith (2005) refutes positivist notions of generalizability in this way: "institutional ethnography addresses explicitly the character of institutions in contemporary society: that they are themselves forms of social organization that generalize and universalize across multiple local settings" (p. 42). In other words, the focus in institutional ethnography broadly–and in this study in particular–is not on individual experience but rather on how local settings are socially organized. The narratives of the women and workers presented throughout this dissertation have illuminated the work processes they undertake, and how these various forms of work are facilitated and hindered by social and criminal justice policies.

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Appendix B: Guide for interviews with formerly-incarcerated women

Introduction: Hello, my name is Megan Welsh and I am a doctoral student working on a project to learn about the experiences of women who are coming home from prison or getting out of jail.

I want to understand how formerly-incarcerated women access the help and services they need when they get out. I am especially interested in what has really helped you and what has really frustrated you in getting the help you need from a lot of different places.

Just to get you thinking about the types of things I'd like to talk about, I'm interested in hearing about your experiences with: your parole or probation officer if you have one; applying for GR and food stamps; finding and applying for housing; seeing a doctor for health care or mental health services and medication; reconnecting with your children; getting legal help, etc., and how successful (if at all), you've been in receiving the help you need.

What you tell me will hopefully be used to tell policy makers about what women need when they get out of prison or jail, and ideally, to help to make services more accessible.

My plan is to gather as much information from you and the other women at [New Beginnings], then follow some of you around to your appointments at the places I just mentioned to observe your experiences.

Do you have any questions about this?

Ok, so let's review this consent form. You can read along if you want or just listen to me. Once I am done, you can let me know if you still agree to participate. (Review consent form, especially part about tape-recording.)

(If she agrees), great! Let's get started. Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers. Everything you share here will be kept completely confidential – whatever you say will not be connected with your name. Nothing will be shared with anyone at [New Beginnings], your parole or probation officer, or anyone in your family.

If you don't understand a question, please ask me. If you don't feel comfortable answering any question, you can skip it. Remember that you can stop the interview at any time. This should take about one hour, but we can stop at any time if you need to take a break or if you don't want to continue.

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PARTICIPANT CODE: _____ DATE: _____

First, I'd like you to tell me about how you came to be at [New Beginnings].

Prompts:

1. Where and for how long were you incarcerated this most recent time?

2. How did you find out about the program?

3. How long have you been here?

4. What is your daily life like here at New Beginnings – can you walk me through a typical day?

Based on responses from above, probe about daily activities.

5. What places outside of New Beginnings have you had to go? (Prompts: parole/probation office; family court/social worker/child welfare; doctor/health/mental health/counseling; GR/welfare/food stamps).

   Ok, let's take each of these places and talk about them one at a time.

   a. When you have to go to appointments at these places, does a [New Beginnings] staff person go with you?

   b. How long does it take you to get there? How long do you usually have to wait for help?

   c. Who do you talk to? Do you talk to the same person every time, or does it change?

   d. If on-going (e.g., parole officer), how would you describe your relationship with _____?

      i. Do you feel like he/she listens to you and helps you?

      ii. Do you wish anything was different about this relationship?

   e. If not on-going, how did you feel about your experience at the _____ office?

      i. Do you feel like you got the help you needed?

      ii. Do you have to go back?

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6. Ok, now I'd like to ask you to think about some specific experiences that you've had with social workers, case managers, parole/probation officers, etc., maybe your first experiences with these types of workers or ones that really stand out for you. These experiences could be on-going, like with a parole officer, or just one time, like with someone at the welfare office.

   (Probes: Did this person remind you of a friend/family member? Did you perceive them as similar to you, or different from you? Did you feel like you could confide in this person?)

   a. Can you remember the case manager, social worker, or service provider-type person who helped you the <u>most?</u>

      i. What was this person like?

      ii. What was their role, and how did they help you?

   b. Can you remember the case manager, social worker, or service provider-type person who helped you the <u>least?</u>

      i. What was this person like?

      ii. What was their role? Why weren't they helpful?

7. Some people say that having a social worker, case manager, or parole/probation officer who is of a similar racial/ethnic background as they are is a good thing. Others say it can be a bad thing, while other people say it doesn't matter. From your experience, what do you think?

8. Along those same lines, some people say that having a social worker, case manager, or parole/probation officer who is the same gender as they are is a good thing. Others say it is a bad thing, while other people say it doesn't matter. From your experience, what do you think?

9. How would you feel if you had a social worker, case manager, or parole/probation officer who was younger than you? What if they were older than you? Do you think one is better than the other?

   (Probe with questions about respect, experience, wisdom, what they expect a staff person to bring to the interaction/relationship).

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As I mentioned in the consent form, I'd like to follow you and some other [New Beginnings] residents around when you go to appointments. I'd like to observe your interactions with these people to get a better understanding of what you're telling me.

Would you feel comfortable with me tagging along with you when you go to _____?

If you're not sure, you don't have to answer now. I will follow-up with you next week, and you can let me know.

What you've told me has been very helpful. Is there anything else you can think of that you want to tell me about how you've accessed services since you've gotten out? In your opinion, are there other questions that I should be asking?

Thank you so much for your time!

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Appendix C: Guide for interviews with parole agents

Introduction: Hello, my name is Megan Welsh and I am a doctoral student in Criminal Justice. I'm working on a project to learn about the experiences of parole officers like you who, in the course of their work, interact with formerly-incarcerated women – that is, women who have recently come out of prison.

In my research, I want to understand how formerly-incarcerated women access the services they need when they get out of prison. As a former social worker myself, I am especially interested in the frustrations, barriers, and difficulties that direct service workers and formerly-incarcerated women experience when interacting with each other, and when trying to get connected with resources and services. My hope is that my study will identify some concrete issues that might help lead to better policies, training, and programming to help formerly-incarcerated women and the people who work with them.

So, I'd like to ask you about how you got started in this field, what your typical work day is like in your current position, and any experiences you've had with clients who are formerly-incarcerated women. This interview will take about 45 minutes to complete. We can stop or take a break at any time, and you can feel free to skip any questions you don't want to answer.

Do you have any questions about this?

(Review consent form.)

(If interviewee agrees), great! Let's get started.

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PARTICIPANT CODE: _____ DATE: _____

INTRODUCTION

I'd like to start with some general questions so I can understand the work that you do.

1. What is your current position?
2. How long have you been in this field?
3. What drew you to this work?
4. Can you tell me about how you came to be in your current position?

DAILY WORK

Now I'd like to shift gears a bit and ask you about your daily work in your current job position.

5. What is your daily work life like – can you walk me through a typical day?
6. What is your first encounter with a new parolee typically like?
7. When you meet a new parolee, how quickly can you predict whether they will succeed or fail? Can you describe how you assess this?

   <u>Probe</u>: Has there ever been a surprise case where things turned out differently than you expected? Can you tell me what happened?

INTERACTIONS WITH FORMERLY-INCARCERATED WOMEN

Ok, now I'd like to ask you about any interactions you've had with clients that are formerly-incarcerated.

8. How many women do you currently have on your caseload?
   a. Has this frequency changed over time – have you noticed that you are seeing more or fewer formerly-incarcerated women than you used to? Why do you think this is? **(Probe about AB 109/Realignment)**

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b. How (if at all) has AB 109/Realignment changed your typical work day, and your work overall? **(Probe for changes in types of parolees, caseload increase/decrease, etc.)**

Now I'd like you to think about some specific experiences that you've had working with clients you discovered were formerly-incarcerated, maybe your first experience or one that really stands out for you.

9. Can you tell me about a case that you worked on with a woman where you felt especially satisfied with the experience?
(Probe: Why was it rewarding? The interaction/process of the work? The outcome?)

10. Can you tell me about a case that you worked on with a woman where you felt especially frustrated by the experience? **(Probe: Why was it frustrating?)**

11. Overall, do you think there are enough services in the local area for women on parole? **(Probe for housing, mental health, child care, etc.)**

12. How do you typically refer women on your caseload to services? **(Probes: Does your office partner with local agencies? Do you keep an updated list?)**

These are all the questions I have for you for now. What you've told me has been very helpful. Is there anything else you can think of that you want to tell me? In your opinion, are there other questions that I should be asking?

Thank you so much for your time!

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Appendix D: Guide for interviews with probation officers

Introduction: Hello, my name is Megan Welsh and I am a doctoral student in Criminal Justice. I'm working on a project to learn about the work that probation officers do with women who are "PSPs" – Post-release Supervised Persons. I'm interested in learning how the work of probation officers in Los Angeles County has been affected by Realignment/AB 109 & A.B. 117.

The interviews I am conducting are part of a larger study of crime-involved women and the "front-line workers" they encounter in the course of their reentry process in post-Realignment L.A. County. By front-line workers, I mean criminal justice supervision staff like probation officers, parole agents, welfare eligibility workers, substance abuse counselors, etc. I want to understand the frustrations, barriers, and difficulties that front-line workers and formerly-incarcerated women experience when interacting with each other, and when trying to get connected with resources and services. My hope is that my study will identify some concrete issues that might help lead to better policies, training, and programming to help formerly-incarcerated women and the people who work with them.

So, I'd like to ask you about how you got started in this field, what your typical work day is like in your current position, and experiences you've had with clients who are women – both over the course of your whole career and since Realignment has taken effect. This interview will take about 45 minutes to complete. We can stop or take a break at any time, and you can feel free to skip any questions you don't want to answer.

Do you have any questions about this?

(Review consent form.)

(If interviewee agrees), great! Let's get started.

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PARTICIPANT CODE: _____ DATE: _____

INTRODUCTION

I'd like to start with some general questions so I can understand the work that you do.

13. What is your current position?

14. How long have you been in this field?

15. Can you tell me about how you came to be in your current position?

DAILY WORK

Now I'd like to shift gears a bit and ask you about your daily work in your current job position.

16. What is your daily work life like – can you walk me through a typical day?

17. What is your first encounter with a new PSP/probationer typically like?

18. When you meet a new PSP/probationer, how quickly can you predict whether they will succeed or fail? Can you describe how you assess this?

    Probe: Has there ever been a surprise case where things turned out differently than you expected? Can you tell me what happened?

INTERACTIONS WITH FORMERLY-INCARCERATED WOMEN

Ok, now I'd like to ask you about any interactions you've had with clients that are women.

19. How many women do you currently have on your caseload?

    a. Has this frequency changed over time – have you noticed that you are seeing more or fewer women than you used to? Why do you think this is?**(Probe about AB 109 / Realignment)**

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b. How (if at all) has AB 109/Realignment changed your typical work day, and your work overall? **(Probe for changes in types of probationers, caseload increase/decrease, etc.)**

Now I'd like you to think about some specific experiences that you've had working with women, maybe your first experience or one that really stands out for you.

20. Can you tell me about a case that you worked on with a woman where you felt especially satisfied with the experience?
(Probe: Why was it rewarding? The interaction/process of the work? The outcome?)

21. Can you tell me about a case that you worked on with a woman where you felt especially frustrated by the experience? **(Probe: Why was it frustrating?)**

22. Overall, do you think there are enough services in the local area for women on probation and AB 109? **(Probe for housing, mental health, child care, etc.)**

23. How do you typically refer women on your caseload to services? **(Probes: Does your office partner with local agencies? Do you keep an updated list?)**

These are all the questions I have for you for now. What you've told me has been very helpful. Is there anything else you can think of that you want to tell me? In your opinion, are there other questions that I should be asking?

Thank you so much for your time!

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