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The construction and stewardship of responsible yet precarious subjects: Punitive ideology, rehabilitation, and 'tough love' among parole personnel

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Abstract

This article examines how the diverse goals (promoting public safety, rehabilitation, and reentry) of the California parole agency function collectively, focusing on how field agents and supervisors make sense of and instantiate the agency's mission. While these goals display fracture and can compete, the parole system displays an incorporative capacity as field personnel integrate these elements together into what they see as a coherent project. I argue that this fusion is both made possible and structured by a 'punitive ideology' common among field personnel that is undergirded by the construction of paroled subjects as always precarious and as responsible for their own reformation. Following this, parole personnel privilege a 'tough love' approach that emphasizes surveillance, sanctioning perceived misconduct, and utilizing (or threatening to utilize) reimprisonment. Yet, rather than entailing the abandonment or delegitimation of the goal of offender assistance, this approach keeps rehabilitation – as a potentiality – present through folding it within a web of punitive regulation. While this undercuts rehabilitation and reshapes it as a mechanism for surveillance and sanctioning, parole personnel view this approach as the most effective way to promote self-betterment and steward individuals towards 'parole success'.

Keywords

parole, punishment, reentry, rehabilitation, responsabilization

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Parole represents a strategy for supervising and managing individuals as they transition from prison to community. Designed to enhance public safety through on-going monitoring (e.g. periodic meetings, home visits), it represents an opportunity to regulate the behavior and even personhood of paroled subjects (Turnbull and Hannah-Moffat, 2009; Werth, 2011). At the same time, parole is envisioned as an opportunity to facilitate rehabilitation and community reintegration. The decline of rehabilitation in corrections generally and parole specifically has been well noted (e.g. Allen, 1981; Garland, 2001; Petersilia, 2003; Simon, 1993), yet rehabilitation – as a goal and material practice – has never fully disappeared from the penal landscape (Hutchinson, 2006; Lynch, 1998, 2000; Robinson, 2008). In fact, in California, the site of fieldwork for this article, the state has placed a renewed emphasis on promoting offender reformation, and the formal mission statement of parole announces a commitment to promoting the tripartite goals of public safety, rehabilitation, and reentry (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, 2012a). In the aggregate, penal interventions display diversity and even contradiction (Hutchinson, 2006; O'Malley, 2000; Rose, 1999), but even specific practices and institutions display a commitment to manifold goals and elements. In this article, I examine how the diverse goals of the California parole agency function collectively, focusing on how field personnel (parole agents and supervisors) make sense of and enact the agency's multiple mandates.

The findings suggest that, on one level, the goals of parole exist as discrete and somewhat fractured elements. Field personnel tend to categorize parole as oriented around two central components that coexist uneasily and hold the potential to conflict with one another: the supervision, regulation, and containment of paroled subjects in order to ensure public safety (the 'law enforcement' component) and providing/facilitating offender assistance (the 'social work' component).¹ At the same time, parole manifests adaptive and incorporative capacities, as it is able to integrate divergent elements into what agents perceive as a consistent and coherent project. The fusion of elements is both made possible and structured by the 'punitive ideology' of field personnel, which is shaped by two interrelated constructions of paroled subjects: first, the assumption that parolees are responsible for their own conduct and reformation and, second, a view that these responsabilized individuals are always potentially dangerous and unlikely to change and, therefore, in need of intensive supervision and regulation.

While the everyday practices of field personnel display considerable variety, across individuals but also across situations and temporal moments, I contend that these assumptions about paroled subjects are (re)shaping the meaning and utilization of rehabilitation, reentry and offender assistance. Programs ostensibly designed for offender assistance are frequently used as a means to enhance supervision, normative regulation and control, while also utilized as potential leverage to incite a desire for self-reformation among paroled subjects. In general, agents rely upon an approach that privileges monitoring for criminal activity and drug use, enforcement of parole conditions regulating quotidian conduct, sanctioning both

minor and more 'serious' noncompliance, and the threat of incarceration. While I suggest that the punitive ideology and everyday practices of agents are, to a significant degree, short-circuiting California's public commitment to offender assistance, for agents this approach represents a way to instantiate all of the agency's formal goals. That is, facilitating rehabilitation and community reintegration, as goals, are not jettisoned or delegitimized, but are folded within a punitive envelope geared toward 'aiding' parolees by enmeshing them in a net of regulatory surveillance. Highlighting the entrenchment of responsabilization strategies and logics within punishment (e.g. Bosworth, 2007; Hannah-Moffat, 2000; O'Malley, 1996), the ongoing reconfiguration of the relationship between the state and penal subjects (M Brown, 2005; Rose, 1999; Wacquant, 2009), and parole's capability to operate through circuits of both repressive and productive power (Hörnqvist, 2007; Turnbull and Hannah-Moffat, 2009), parole field personnel view embracing a punitive, 'tough love' approach as the most effective way to steward paroled subjects away from criminality and toward self-betterment, 'parole success', and positive citizenship.

Parole in context

In recent decades, parole has undergone a variety of transitions, with policy makers, practitioners and scholars variously attempting to define its role within penalty. Despite this, parole remains fluid in relation to securing a coherent explanation of its place in the penal and political sphere (Lynch, 2000; Simon, 1993). In the early 20th century, penological narratives tended to claim that inmates were rehabilitated in prison, and parole was merely a formal method for supervising these reformed individuals for a brief time in the community. Soon after however, the period of parole was talked about as an opportunity to rehabilitate in the community as well (Cavender, 1982; Simon, 1993). In the 1950s and 1960s, the provision of rehabilitative-oriented services provided a secure anchoring point for parole, one that replaced industrial discipline and the labor market (Simon, 1993). Implicit in this 'penal welfarist' approach was the idea that paroled subjects required state assistance to reform, and the state was capable of providing meaningful support to achieve this. The late 1970s, however, witnessed another paradigmatic shift in the nature, and discourse, of parole in California, as well as in other states. Coinciding with the adoption of a determinate sentencing structure and a mandatory parole system, the California parole agency transitioned from a clinical approach – oriented toward reformation and normalization – to a managerial model oriented toward the efficient and cost-effective management (i.e. containment) of paroled subjects (Lynch, 1998; Simon, 1993). Rehabilitative narratives and practices receded during this time and the parole agency adopted a 'New Model' oriented toward supervision, actuarial classification, internal performance indicators, and an audit culture to effectively supervise the 'risky' population of parolees.

In recent years, the entire criminal justice system in California has been a topic of discussion and scrutiny, driven, in part, by prison overcrowding, fiscal constraints and legal challenges to correctional practice.² During the period of fieldwork, California had the largest prison and parole populations and the highest correctional expenditures of any state (Glaze, 2011),³ a disturbingly high recidivism rate of 66 percent (compared to a national average of 40 percent), and in 2006 parole violators accounted for 64 percent of all prison admissions (Grattet et al., 2008). Unsurprisingly, parole has been central to discussions and 'reform' efforts within the state.

Since 2000, California has taken definitive, and public, steps toward highlighting rehabilitation as a central component of correctional efforts. First, in what Pallone and Hennessy (2003) describe as the 'Rebellion of 2000', California voters passed Proposition 36, the Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act of 2000, which requires sentences of community-based drug treatment, rather than incarceration, for individuals convicted of first and second offense drug possession. Individuals on parole are eligible to receive Proposition 36 community-based sentencing. Then, in 2005, the state clearly announced a (re)commitment to the goal of rehabilitation through renaming the Department of Corrections (CDC) the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). Further, in 2007, the state passed the Public-Safety and Offender Rehabilitation Services Act of 2007, also known as Assembly Bill 900, providing funding for rehabilitative services within prisons and parole.

Overlapping, although not isomorphic, with rehabilitation, the paradigm of reentry has become an established part of correctional discourse in the last 20 years. In 2009 the state convened the Parole Reform Task Force with 'the objective of aligning our current practices with those that have proven to positively impact offender reintegration' (CDCR, 2010: 4). The Task Force developed and recommended implementation of the California Parole Supervision and Reintegration Model, which promotes elements of individualized case management – integrated with the use of actuarial instruments – in order to promote rehabilitation by facilitating 'a parolee's willingness to change' (CDCR, 2010: 5). These developments signal a return of some of the elements that were central to the clinical era of California parole in the 1950s and 1960s, including rehabilitation and an individualized case-management approach. In California, not only have vestiges of 'transformative optimism' (Robinson, 2008: 434) survived, but the state has publicly conveyed that the goals of rehabilitation and aiding post-prison reentry are central to the operation of parole.

Currently, the formal mission statement of the parole agency claims that the:

Division of Adult Parole Operations [DAPO] is responsible for protecting the community by enabling the parole agents to be an active part of the community's public safety plans; providing a range of resources and services to offer the opportunity for

change; and encouraging and assisting parolees in their effort to reintegrate into the community. (CDCR, 2012a)

As designated by the state legislature in the California Penal Code, parole seeks ‘to provide educational, vocational, family and personal counseling to parolees to aid their transition back into the community’ (California Penal Code § 3000, 2011). There are, to be sure, elements within parole that reflect a managerial, risk containment model that relies upon classification and control, such as the use of actuarial risk assessment tools and drug testing. At the same time, offender assistance, encompassing both rehabilitation and reentry, is an integral part of the formal mission of parole today, highlighting that DAPO is embracing the multiple capabilities of this penal intervention. In theory, these elements are designed to work in concert. Yet how field personnel understand and enact these various elements remains an empirical question, and there has been minimal research that examines the impact of California’s recent commitment to rehabilitation within parole.

The goals espoused by parole and probation agencies can have a diminished or minimal impact on the practices of field personnel (Lynch, 1998, 2000; McCleary, 1978; McCorkle and Crank, 1996; see also Cheliotis, 2006). Further, some argue that rehabilitative discourses function largely as symbolic presentation, as ‘window-dressing on an overly punitive “managerialist” system’ (Lewis, 2005: 119). Based on ethnographic research conducted in a California parole office, Lynch (2000) found that while rehabilitation was a component of the institutional discourse, this commitment remained largely rhetorical, as neither DAPO nor agents devoted considerable resources to implementing it. Importantly, this research was conducted prior to the state’s recent public reinvigoration of rehabilitation. Further, while Lynch’s findings could be viewed through the lens of the replacement of a rehabilitative intent with a punitive or managerialist one, her conclusions suggest a more complex dynamic, one involving the integration of multiple elements.

Diversity and flexibility in contemporary penalty

Temporal changes and evolutions within penalty have received considerable attention in recent years. A variety of scholars contend that we have witnessed the arrival of an age of increased punitiveness or penal austerity (e.g. Bottoms, 1995; Garland, 2001; Hallsworth, 2002; Pratt, 2000). While important differences exist in delineating the contours and causal forces at play in this emergent punitive turn, there is increasing agreement that the reformist project has declined considerably and that rehabilitation – as an orienting narrative and material practice – has been significantly eroded since the 1970s (e.g. Allen, 1981; Lynch, 2000; Robinson, 2008), and has lost much of its cultural purchase (Garland, 2001; McCulloch and McNeill, 2007). Some authors have invoked the imagery of a pendulum swinging from a rehabilitative project to a punitive approach (e.g. Kennedy and Kelly,

1981; Shichor, 1992; Visher, 2007), suggesting the existence of well-established positions that operate in a zero-sum relationship.

Others suggest that changes in punishment display a more uneven and inconsistent nature. A growing body of work has problematized approaches that privilege epochal, paradigmatic change and argues that some broad accounts of penalty have exaggerated the coherence of past punishment (Hutchinson, 2006; Lynch, 2009; O'Malley, 2000; Vaughn, 2000) and underestimated the inconsistency of emerging trends (Hutchinson, 2006; Loader and Sparks, 2004; O'Malley, 1999; Rose, 1999, 2000). Highlighting the complexity of contemporary punishment, work in this vein shows how various, and sometimes contradictory, elements coexist and intermingle within punishment (Hannah-Moffat, 2000, 2005; Hutchinson, 2006; O'Malley, 1999; Rose, 1999; Vaughn, 2000). This literature suggests not just the coexistence, but also the integration of diverse logics and the subsequent reshaping of penalty. For instance, Robinson (2008) observes that rehabilitation has survived due, in large part, to its capacity to adapt to other penal narratives and goals, including punitive ones. In a related vein, authors have challenged the view that reformist and actuarial approaches are fundamentally distinct or opposing approaches, noting that current ('third generation' dynamic) actuarial instruments that assess risks and needs contain elements of a renewed commitment to rehabilitation (Hannah-Moffat, 2005; Hutchinson, 2006; Robinson, 2008). Here, actuarial tools are leveraged to control and contain offenders, while also representing a mechanism to treat criminogenic needs in order to change behavior (see also Harcourt, 2007).

Additionally, a body of work, often drawing from a Foucauldian governmentality framework, examines how rehabilitative practices are being reshaped by neoliberal logics oriented around moralization and responsabilization. The assumption that 'offenders' need to be accountable, entrepreneurial, and self-managing pervades many contemporary correctional practices (Bosworth, 2007; Hannah-Moffat, 2000; Hörnqvist, 2010; Lynch, 2000; Meyer and O'Malley, 2005; Moore and Hannah-Moffat, 2005; O'Malley, 1996; Robinson, 2008; Rose, 2000). Such work highlights that those enmeshed in various locations in the penal complex are not constituted as passive subjects who must be normalized and altered, so much as active subjects who have choice and responsibility, and are expected to bring about changes in their own lives (e.g. Currie, 2004; Lucken, 1998; Robinson, 2008). Calling attention to the presence of responsabilization strategies does not necessarily equate with the dismantling of the traditional 'welfare state' or the emergence of a purely punitive penal state. Rather, responsabilization techniques can operate across different approaches and penal philosophies. As such, this body of scholarship has productively highlighted the ways in which penal interventions have been sites of new techniques, diverse practices, and fluid logics (Hutchinson, 2006; O'Malley, 1996, 1999).⁴

In this general vein, a growing body of work highlights diversity, fragmentation and incorporative capacity specifically within parole. In California, Lynch (2000) observes the fusion of rehabilitative and control-oriented practices through the

construction of parolees as responsible for their own improvement. Turnbull and Hannah-Moffat (2009) specifically examine how parole conditions are simultaneously punitive and neoliberal, and entail the application of both repressive and productive power which simultaneously stimulates and limits autonomy (see also Hörnqvist, 2007; Werth, 2011). Here, seemingly punitive regulatory controls (e.g. intensive supervision, spatial restrictions, prohibitions against association with ‘criminal’ others) can reflect a form of targeted governance (Valverde and Mopas, 2004) designed to empower and assist paroled subjects transition back to autonomous self-governance.

Methods

The data for this article are drawn from a larger ethnographic research project conducted with DAPO personnel over two years (2008–2010). Data come from archival and document analysis, in-depth interviews (both semi- and unstructured), and ethnographic observations with DAPO personnel and individuals on parole. The bulk of fieldwork for this article took place in – and around – four parole field offices in various locations in California. I worked alongside parole agents and supervisors (Unit Supervisors and Assistant Unit Supervisors) as they went about their daily activities, which included meeting and interacting with individuals on parole, performing administrative duties, attending training sessions and departmental meetings, and engaging in conversations (professional and social) with each other. I also traveled with agents as they went on ‘field calls’ or ‘compliance checks’ to visit ‘clients’⁵ in their homes or places of employment.

Examining the discourses, perspectives and quotidian practices of field personnel – alongside an ethnographic and archival analysis that attends to institutional and structural factors – allows for an examination of how the formal goals of parole and policy directives emanating from DAPO are given meaning and enacted in parole practice. Such an approach opens the door for examining the relations between institutional forces (both official, ‘frontline’ policies but also more local – and less visible – elements) and field personnel, and for tracing how technologies and rationalities of governance are ‘instantiated in the actual practices and discourses that make up the field’ (Garland, 1997: 204; see also McNeill et al., 2009).

A fractured practice? The goals as discrete elements

Among agents and supervisors, parole is viewed as having varied elements that exist as discrete and potentially conflicting. Rather than representing complementary elements, the goals tend to be viewed as separate mandates that fit uneasily together. Agents talked about the ‘law enforcement’ and ‘social work’ elements of parole. Some refer to the law enforcement aspect as the ‘hook’em and book’em approach’, and highlight the importance of enforcing rules, along with arresting and potentially reincarcerating parolees who do not comply. The social work component – which collapses together the goals of rehabilitation and

reentry – entails providing assistance and resources to ‘help’ clients. Agents frequently talk about these components as if they are in competition with one another, and express concern over balancing them:

It’s hard to know . . . when to be nice and when to be tough. When do you focus on helping somebody? You know, being their social worker and getting them set up with a job or program. And when do you crack down and play it tough? (Sam, parole agent)⁶

A number of previous scholars have created or utilized typologies of agents’ orientations, and noted tension between welfarist/social work and control/law enforcement oriented approaches (Whitehead and Lindquist, 1992; see, for example, Fulton et al., 1997; Lynch, 2000; McCleary, 1978; Ohlin et al., 1956). Studt (1973), in a study of California parole, utilized the terms service and surveillance, yet troubled a dichotomous categorization and noted considerable fluidity and overlap between them (see also Ward and Kupchik, 2007). While this insight resonates with the present findings, it is noteworthy that for my informants there is a certain amount of fracture within parole; law enforcement and social work exist as (semi-) discrete components that hold the potential to conflict.

The construction of paroled subjects: Precarious, dangerous, and responsible

Across the parole offices I studied, agents and supervisors conceive of/constitute parolees as precarious subjects who are potentially dangerous, troublesome, and unlikely to change. At the same time – enlivened by neoliberalized assumptions about human nature and citizenship – individuals are viewed as responsible for their own conduct and reformation. This construction of paroled subjects was shared across informants; it exists as a baseline assumption about parolees, and informs individuals’ conceptions of the mission of parole. The conception of parolees as always precarious and *potentially* dangerous is itself fluid – it allows for variation without fundamentally challenging its own hegemony. (While some clients are perceived as ‘higher risk’ than others, all are produced as potentially troublesome and dangerous.) This construction clearly reflects both institutional culture and larger socio-cultural constructions of offenders and criminality. It is reflected in how agents talk about paroled subjects, in the ways in which they interact with and question them, and in agents’ everyday strategies for managing their caseloads. Importantly, it is a construction that travels within DAPO; it is reinforced across agents and communicated to less experienced agents through a complex web of comments, jokes, and advice. For example, while it was rare for agents to publicly share client ‘success stories’, they frequently exchanged tales about individuals who have ‘screwed up’ or been reincarcerated.

Agents view paroled subjects as inherently risky; they are constituted as always potentially dangerous. As ‘offenders’ who have committed crimes in the past, they

represent a *de facto* criminal subject who is automatically perceived as a threat to community safety. As one agent noted, 'These guys have already proven they're criminals. There's no question about that. They did it, and many of them will do it again.' Importantly, the construction of paroled subjects as precarious undergirds a hegemonic assumption among field personnel: individuals on parole need to change, either by fundamentally remaking the self or, at the minimum, by adjusting their attitudes and everyday behavior. This represents something of a double-bind (see Fortun, 2001) for agents and their clients alike. As inherently criminal and dangerous, paroled subjects are in need of reformation, but this assumption also feeds a culture of skepticism and pessimism. Agents read the criminalized, always-already dangerous identity into parolees' attitudes and practices, typically viewing them as unlikely to, or even incapable of, change. It is common for agents to talk about how parolees can 'talk the talk' and 'say all the right things', yet note that this is not necessarily indicative of a sincere desire to reform. Lisa, an agent for over 10 years, explained:

It's hard because you hear people so often say they're going to change and do things differently. And so often, it doesn't happen that way. You get cynical after a while. After hearing people tell you so many times about their good intentions, and then they go out and slip up again, use again, or really hurt someone. I know I'm cynical. Most of us are. If you do this for a while, you can't avoid it.

Not only are individuals seen as always at risk for reverting to unlawful/dangerous conduct, a pervasive expectation exists that most will attempt to play the game of concealing such troublesome behavior. Agents frequently reference the honesty and sincerity of individuals on parole, and tend to view them as prone to manipulation and dishonesty, mirroring findings from previous research with parole, probation and correctional officers (Gaarder et al., 2004; Lynch, 2000; Rhodes, 2004). Valerie, an agent, explained that when she first meets clients she is tempted to tell them to avoid lying to her, but chooses not to because it is 'a waste of time. A lot of these guys lie to us, often, and apparently think we're stupid... You catch them in a lie, and they keep right on lying.'

Additionally, most agents routinely express skepticism regarding the ability of rehabilitative or reentry services to effectuate a lasting positive impact. Such programs are recognized as part of the 'toolkit' that agents have to work with, but they are not viewed with optimism. Several individuals even displayed hostility toward resources dedicated to offender assistance. Tobias, a supervisor, expressed the belief that rehabilitative resources are ineffective and ultimately a waste of departmental and taxpayer money. For him, DAPO providing these services merely 'wastes millions and millions of dollars. That's all they do...waste money. If people want to get clean, they'll get clean. And if not, not. It doesn't matter what we do. It's just a waste of money.' Tobias represented one end of a spectrum, although several other agents also contended that rehabilitation is ineffective and unimportant to parole. By contrast, Gene, who worked under Tobias, claimed that

rehabilitation should be a central goal of parole and that 'assisting' parolees was crucial in managing his caseload. Most individuals fell somewhere between these two viewpoints. A considerable body of research has shown that rehabilitative services can lower recidivism rates in both correctional and community contexts (e.g. Andrews et al., 1990; Lipsey and Cullen, 2007; Lipsey and Wilson, 1993; McGuire, 2002), and that such reductions can be achieved with 'high risk' individuals (Cullen et al., 2009). Most informants, however, are skeptical about the efficacy of rehabilitative services. Within these offices, rehabilitation gains more of its meaning through agents' past experiences, anecdotal knowledge, and assumptions about paroled subjects than through studies or policy evaluations.

There is a general sense that an individual on parole *can* change or go straight; most parolees, agents acknowledge, hold this potential. Further, agents are aware of success stories: individuals who have meaningfully changed, 'gone straight' or 'turned themselves around'. Perhaps tellingly, this topic was typically discussed only during one-on-one conversations with informants after I broached the topic, rather than in everyday conversations. Nonetheless, the successful/changed parolee exists not only as an abstract possibility, but as something that agents have experience with. Further, a number of agents – although not all – acknowledge that rehabilitative programming can play a role in such successes. Substance abuse programs, in particular, are seen as potential assets for those dealing with addiction. At the same time, I contend that neither the abstract idea of potential reformation nor actual success fundamentally challenges the epistemic construction of parolees as inherently precarious. First, agents stress that such successes are rare. Further, it is difficult to differentiate between performed and real change, and to predict who will genuinely reform. Lastly, success is both individualized and responsabilized; it is conceived as something that specific individuals (typically seen as outliers) achieve through their own commitment and effort. Even when programs are construed as beneficial, they are seen as just one factor in a larger constellation of parolee change. In this way, change or reform is conditioned by personal responsibility, and success stories represent exceptions that do not challenge or alter the general construction of the paroled subject.

Responsibility: Rehabilitation as an 'inside job'

Viewing parolees as 'reformable' resonates with penal welfarist assumptions that correctional subjects can be acted upon (e.g. by the state or a particular rehabilitative program) and reformation brought about. In general, however, parolees are construed as possessing the capacity to change themselves. Being capable of change, in contrast to being reformable is, of course, a subtle distinction, but one invested with considerable importance for agents. While recognized as an official goal of DAPO, agents contend that rehabilitation is an 'inside job'; the responsibility for reformation lies with parolees and is something that they must achieve on their own, outside of the realm of parole. Tom, an agent,

explained: 'Look, you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him, drink, right? I can't make these guys change. That's the thing. People have to change themselves. They have to want to change.' Several agents referenced the horse and water metaphor, highlighting how parolees are constructed as accountable for their own choices and actions. As Ned explained during a conversation:

A lot of these guys, they ask about programs, want to do a program. I think it's usually a waste of time. Either they want to clean up and go straight or they don't. I mean, the people who want to stop screwing up will stop screwing up. It's on them.

Indeed, the responsabilization of parolees is promoted by DAPO's discursive framing of its mission. In the 'Parolee on-line handbook' provided by DAPO, the opening sentence reads: 'It's Your Choice – Successful Parole. Now that you are out of prison you will have a lot more freedom. How well you do while on parole will be up to you' (CDCR, 2011a). The handbook further states that a 'good attitude' is crucial to parole success. In this way, DAPO's current orientation is less paternalistic or penal welfarist than during the clinical era of the 1950s and 1960s. While individuals are still constituted as flawed and in need of change, the state is no longer viewed as capable of or responsible (solely or primarily) for reformation. Rather, the parole agency can be a partner who provides resources, but the responsibility for self-betterment ultimately rests with the parolee (see Harcourt, 2010; Lynch, 2000; Robinson, 2008).

Punitive ideology and regulatory surveillance

The presence and interpenetration of these assumptions about paroled subjects forms the basis of and recursively reinforces a punitive ideology among field personnel that privileges a surveillance, control-oriented approach to parole supervision. Through being constituted as inherently dangerous and in need of self-betterment yet, at the same time, as unlikely to change, parolees represent 'regulatable' subjects. That is, individuals are constituted as in need of surveillance and normative regulation so that they do not revert back to criminality while subject to correctional supervision. For agents and supervisors alike, this represents the foundational mandate of parole. It leads agents to deemphasize the normalization of clients and to prioritize regulatory surveillance, sanctioning rule infractions and, if necessary, the revocation of parole and reincarceration of parolees.

Agents universally talked about the importance of closely monitoring individuals; this is the cornerstone of case management:

At the end of the day, the most important thing is monitoring these guys. Watching them to make sure they're not out wreaking havoc. I mean. My job is to protect the public. That's the most important thing we do. (Arnold, parole agent)

I have a lot of people on my caseload, but my job is to supervise all of them. If I let that slide . . . parole is just a name. An empty name. I make sure I keep on top of my people, stay on top of supervising them. (Lisa, parole agent)

Such supervision occurs through periodic meetings inside the parole office, mandatory drug testing,⁷ and home visits. Surveillance represents a way to monitor for crime and drug usage, while also functioning as a mechanism for normative regulation. These moments of contact with parolees are an opportunity for agents to assess whether or not individuals are complying with parole conditions,⁸ such as spatial and travel restrictions, curfews, and prohibitions against association with specific or generic (e.g. 'gang members') others. Such conditions operate as forms of targeted governance (Valverde and Mopas, 2004) and normative regulation that set guidelines for appropriate behavior (Turnbull and Hannah-Moffat, 2009). Monitoring for rule conformity is viewed as crucial, as noncompliance is frequently construed as evidence of a rebellious attitude and as a precursor to more serious problems; those who flout the rules are perceived as 'headed in the wrong direction'.

This slippery slope concept reinforces the value of continual surveillance and the importance of responding to individuals who fail to conform to the rules:

At the heart of this job is watching people, keeping an eye on them. And making sure that they know they are being watched. And if they screw up, they need to know I'm watching and I'm going to respond . . . It's important that they don't just get away with it. (Rick, parole agent)

For agents, individuals who violate conditions should, in most cases, be sanctioned; this serves as a potential deterrent or 'wake-up call' to those who do not comply with agents' authority. Agents responded to rule violations in a variety of ways. In rare instances, they issued an 'unofficial' verbal warning, followed by an admonishment that future violations would result in more severe repercussions. More commonly, agents issued formal parole violations. In these cases, agents document the reason for the citation (e.g. failure to comply with conditions) and then recommend that the individual either remain in the community on parole or be reincarcerated. This recommendation is forwarded first to the agent's Unit Supervisor and then to the Board of Prison Hearings (BPH) who is responsible for making the decision of whether to 'Continue on Parole' or 'Return to Custody' an individual referred to them. In cases where agents recommend that someone remain on parole, they have the additional option of utilizing an 'intermediate sanction', where the parolee is then subject to additional conditions and requirements, such as a curfew, electronic monitoring, home detention or mandatory participation in a program (e.g. substance abuse treatment). While the final decision regarding reimprisonment rests with BPH, the threat of reincarceration hangs over the agent-parolee dynamic. It represents an anchoring point for agents'

authority, and they frequently reference this capacity when interacting with clients. As Nick, a supervisor, noted:

Sending them back [to prison] is our last line of defense. But it's a powerful one. While there are always some guys who don't give a shit, or even want a little vacation . . . who want to be sent back . . . most of these guys don't like the idea of going back inside. So, we have to use that power. It's kind of all we have.⁹

In addition to monitoring conduct for criminality and rule infractions, surveillance represents an opportunity for agents to morally evaluate paroled subjects; to assess their precariousness/danger. Agents rely upon a heterogeneous mix of knowledge production practices – including reviewing criminal histories, actuarial risk prediction instruments, interacting with and getting to know someone, and ‘intuition’ – to achieve this. Through these methods, some individuals are pre-identified as especially risky – as particularly prone to crime, violence or ‘trouble’. In particular, those with more extensive ‘rap sheets’ (particularly ones involving violent offenses), with substance abuse histories (the ‘addicts’), with perceived gang involvement (generally referred to as ‘gangbangers’), and those designated as ‘sex offenders’ are constructed – often before an agent even meets the client – as especially dangerous and in need of close surveillance.

Rather than being pre-identified, other individuals come to be viewed as especially risky through ongoing supervision. After one or more meetings, agents may develop a sense that a particular person is ‘on the wrong track’ and requires additional scrutiny. This can be a result of providing a ‘dirty’ drug test, failing to show up for a scheduled meeting (or being late to one), or displaying what agents perceive as a ‘bad attitude’.

In fact, attitude and the correlated concepts of ‘desire’ and ‘sincerity’ are invested with considerable import in this setting. My informants repeatedly expressed the importance of assessing, or at least attempting to assess, individuals’ desire to go straight and be successful on parole, as well as evaluating whether they are ‘sincerely’ trying to follow through on this. The desire to achieve positive citizenship and the effort required to achieve it are constructed as of crucial importance to individuals’ likelihood of success, and by relation, perceived risk. As responsabilized subjects, parolees are expected to display both the commitment and effort necessary to achieve success:

As soon as I meet a parolee, I'm trying to get a read on him . . . and see if this guy really wants to succeed, really wants to stay out of prison. I mean, do they have a good attitude? And I don't just mean can they put on a show. All of them are trying to make a good impression . . . But I'm always . . . trying to figure out if this person is going to really try. If they are really committed to staying out of prison. (Ned, parole agent)

Culled from a panoply of fluid and nebulous cues (e.g. appearing cooperative versus resentful, making eye contact, body language, not interrupting or arguing

with agents), agents form often lasting impressions. A positive attitude is, to a large degree, equated with a desire to make pro-social changes and go straight. Importantly, attitude and desire, on the one hand, and conduct on the other are recursively related. Agents scrutinize and interpret individuals' conduct to gain insight into their attitude and commitment, while assignments about desire and sincerity serve as a filter for the supervision of conduct. Specifically, individuals who are constituted as possessing a bad attitude or a lack of commitment are often targeted for closer scrutiny.

While these heterogeneous means of assessment are part of constituting individuals, the parolee as a generalized precarious subject operates as a pre-notion about all clients. While there is room for paroled subjects to lessen the extent to which they are enveloped in assumptions of criminality and danger, the expectation of precariousness exists as de-facto 'common sense' that filters perception and guides action (Bourdieu, 1980, 1990); it represents well-entrenched, hegemonic folk knowledge among the individuals in these offices.

Backgrounds: A note about race, gender, and past experience

A wide range of scholarship has examined links between perceptions of criminality/offenders and 'individual characteristics and status' such as race, gender, and socio-economic position (see King and Maruna, 2009 for a good review). In particular, there is a well-established literature linking punitive worldviews and support for punitive measures, on the one hand, and racialized and racist ideologies on the other (Applegate and Davis, 2006; Cohn et al., 1991; Costelloe et al., 2009; Unnever, 2010; see also Wacquant, 2001b), including research with criminal justice personnel (Bennett and Johnson, 2000; Cullen et al., 1993; Ward and Kupchik, 2007). The data from the present study, however, suggest that race/ethnicity – of either parole personnel or paroled subjects – is not *directly* or *visibly* relevant in how agents constitute individuals as precarious. The assumption of potential danger, general skepticism regarding rehabilitation, and placing regulatory surveillance at the center of supervision cuts across DAPO personnel of different races and ethnicities.¹⁰ While this runs counter to some of the previously noted scholarship, it resonates with some recent research, notably King and Maruna's (2009) finding that race and ethnicity do not predict punitive attitudes. Likewise, while Ward and Kupchik (2007) found that race had some ability to predict probation officers' orientations (punitive versus treatment), the most consistent predictors were attitudinal dispositions and goals. The current data suggest that both gender and occupational background may have more influence on agents' worldviews. In general, male agents appear to be slightly more punitive than female agents. Further, those who previously worked as correctional officers in the state prison system tend to be somewhat harsher – in perspective and actions – than individuals who come from other professional backgrounds.^{11,12}

Reimagining and reshaping rehabilitation: 'Tough love' as offender assistance

I contend that agents' punitive ideology and privileging of regulatory surveillance undercuts DAPO's goals of promoting reformation and reentry. The production of paroled subjects as responsabilized individuals in need of close monitoring and regulation contributes to diminishing agents' support for rehabilitative and reintegrative resources, such as placing individuals in half-way houses or assisting clients in obtaining employment. Agents did, on various occasions, utilize assistance resources provided or subsidized by DAPO through placing individuals in programs, including substance abuse programs (both residential and out-patient), sober living homes, and anger management classes.¹³ Yet, in the majority of these cases, agents referred individuals to programs only after they specifically requested assistance. It was uncommon for agents to proactively recommend participation in programs, and in some cases agents would deny clients' requests for a DAPO-sponsored program. For example, during a meeting at an agent's office, an individual expressed they were concerned about staying 'clean' since they had lost their job, and requested placement in a residential drug treatment program. The agent refused, and told the person it was more important that they search for new employment and go to Alcoholics or Narcotics Anonymous meetings while doing so. After the client left, the agent told me that, in his view, this individual wanted to go to the program to avoid paying rent, and that he could stay clean by 'going to AA or NA on his own'. Here, personal responsibility, via the need for individuals to seek help outside of parole, conditions how rehabilitation is viewed and (not) utilized.

The prioritization of supervision, and subsequent deemphasizing of resources for offender assistance, is further reinforced by institutional and structural forces within parole and California. Large caseloads coupled with performance indicators internal to DAPO contribute to agents' devoting considerable time to supervision and 'paperwork', leaving, in their eyes, little time for anything else, such as assessing the need for or coordinating rehabilitative services. While the target for a 'normal caseload' was an already large 70 parolees to one agent, it was common for agents to be supervising between 80 and 100 clients at any given time.¹⁴ Relatedly, at the end of each month agents have to document whether or not they have 'met specs'. Specs refer to specifications, which mandate a minimum number of monthly or quarterly 'contacts' with each client.¹⁵ Conforming to these requirements is a concern for many agents. Rebecca explained, 'If I don't make specs, I have to tell my supervisor about it. It becomes this whole thing... It's just not worth the hassle. It's better to keep up with my contacts, no matter what.' This issue is related to job security for agents, as failure to meet internal organizational requirements is viewed as creating 'hassles' with upper-management or even potentially placing one's job at risk.

Related to concerns about job security, and further reinforcing agents' prioritization of regulatory surveillance, is the nexus of organizational context and the

politicization of crime. In part due to several high profile cases involving perceived parole mismanagement, agents are both aware of and concerned about the potential for negative media and political attention. The national attention to the 11-year kidnapping of Jaycee Lee Dugard by Phillip Garrido while he was subject to parole supervision, which later led to a lawsuit (La Ganga, 2010), was frequently referenced by agents in discussing this issue. Also discussed was a 'scandal' in 2006 involving the housing of registered sex offenders by DAPO in hotels near Disneyland, which, multiple agents contended, ultimately led to the firing of a DAPO regional administrator and several agents. It is likely that agents' recognition of the potential for negative attention from the media – and increased scrutiny from upper-management because of it – strengthens the view that surveillance and sanctioning misconduct are the bedrock of case management.

At the same time, given the extent of prison overcrowding in California, a number of informants explained that they had experienced some 'encouragement' or 'subtle pressure' to utilize intermediate sanctions in lieu of revocation and reincarceration whenever appropriate. As Tim explained: 'No one's saying don't revoke anyone's parole, especially if they do something serious. But it's been made clear that we shouldn't just revoke everybody who breaks some minor rule. They want us to be judicious with sending them back.'

Given this, it would be unsurprising if agents, as some past research has found, chose to ignore and not formally record parole violations (McCleary, 1978) or 'piled up' violations for later use (Blomberg and Lucken, 1994). The agents I worked with, however, typically avoided this and instead recorded all violations, minor or major, immediately. Doing so shows that they are 'on top of' their caseload and minimizes the potential for perceptions of mismanagement from supervisors and upper management. This reflects agents' ongoing concerns about job security and highlights the penetration of an audit culture/managerialism within these parole offices, where internal performance indicators and the potential for organizational censure shape agents' actions.

Another component that impacts agents' willingness to utilize assistance services is the frequent claim that there are inadequate institutional resources available to meaningfully support rehabilitation. While there are a number of programs and services provided or subsidized by DAPO, agents contended that the resources most needed were in short supply. In particular, agents stressed the difficulty of obtaining residential substance abuse programming for clients. While such programs are potentially available, in these four offices there was a lengthy wait, approximately six months, for admission. Further, several agents talked about the need for, yet absence of, institutional support for helping parolees obtain employment. As Samantha noted:

One of the most important things for parolees is to find a job. But that's hard . . . And I literally don't have time to help them, to do anything on this front . . . We can't help them. I have to send them outside [of the parole agency] to a career center or placement agency.

Keeping rehabilitation and reentry present

At the same time, the prioritization of supervision does not lead to the abandonment of resources for offender assistance, rather, it leads to them being reimagined and reshaped. Despite skepticism regarding their reformatory capacity and institutional constraints on their usage, agents view such resources as valuable tools for managing their caseloads. Importantly, they can be – and frequently are – deployed as mechanisms to sanction wayward individuals, to enhance supervision and control, and to incite the self-transformation of paroled subjects.

Agents recommended revocation and reincarceration in various situations (e.g. when parolees have committed ‘serious’ violations, appear ‘unruly’, or are ‘obviously headed for trouble’). Yet, given the encouragement from upper-management to utilize intermediate sanctions in more ‘minor’ cases, agents often utilize other options besides reincarceration. On occasion, agents subjected parolees to intermediate sanctions such as curfews, home detention, or electronic monitoring as an alternative. Even more commonly, they mandated participation in ostensibly rehabilitative programs as an intermediate sanction in lieu of recommending reimprisonment. For agents, utilizing rehabilitative services in this way serves multiple purposes: it keeps individuals in the community, enhances regulatory surveillance, and serves as both warning *and* punishment.

For instance, agents in these four offices routinely utilized an out-patient substance abuse program, Substance Abuse Treatment and Recovery Program (STAR), as an intermediate sanction. Envisioned as an ‘education-based program . . . to provide substance abuse and relapse prevention instruction to parolees’ (CDCR, 2012b), STAR is available inside of various parole offices free of charge if individuals are referred by their agent. To be sure, agents mandated STAR participation following a positive drug test or when they suspected the potential for future ‘drug abuse’. Yet, agents frequently required participation for other reasons in cases where they did not suspect drug usage, such as failure to attend a scheduled meeting, not obtaining employment, and displaying a bad attitude. Importantly, most agents – including ones who regularly made use of it – do not view STAR as effective in addressing substance abuse. It remains, however, a valuable way to exercise supervision and normative regulation, as it sanctions ‘troublesome’ parolees and requires them to be in the parole office for six hours a day, five days a week. James, an agent, stated:

Look, if these guys screw up, I want to let them know they screwed up. I want to send a message: ‘hey, you screwed up, and I know it, and I’m watching you.’ Programs can be a good way to do that. I don’t just want to lecture them, I want them to see me taking action.

Another rehabilitative resource, the Parolee Outpatient Clinic (POC), is also regularly utilized as a mechanism for exercising control over clients. Established to assist parolees with mental health issues, the POC is also a resource for

individuals classified as 'sex offenders', as they are typically required to participate in bi-weekly group therapy sessions facilitated by a psychologist employed by DAPO. As part of DAPO's commitment to 'facilitate long term behavior change within the offender population', the POC provides a 'greater possibility of parolees successfully reintegrating into the community' (CDCR, 2011b). While framed as a resource capable of facilitating rehabilitation and reintegration, agents view – and utilize – the POC as a tool for fostering intensive, regulatory control over sex offenders. Agents responsible for supervising sex offender caseloads regularly attended the POC group therapy sessions in order to 'make their presence felt' and to assess clients. Shawn, an agent, informed me that attending POC sessions is very useful as it helps him determine who is 'on the right track and who may be closer to reoffending . . . it helps me determine who I need to keep a close eye on'. In these moments, the POC represents a mechanism for psychic surveillance, a way to assess the mental state and risk of clients.

Rehabilitative and reintegrative services are further being reshaped through agents' deployment of these services as an indirect way to incite paroled subjects' motivation or desire to self-transform. Despite agents' contention that they do not have a direct role to play in relation to offender assistance, as individuals need to change and reintegrate themselves, field personnel do not fully disengage from rehabilitative efforts and adopt a 'tough love' approach. In this logic, exercising regulatory surveillance is seen as the most effective way to encourage and facilitate reformation. Such an approach, agents contend, may deter individuals from returning to crime and encourage them to make positive changes in their lives. For many agents it is a deeply held assumption that a surveillance oriented approach that embraces punitive measures represents the most feasible way to potentially trigger the self-betterment of paroled subjects:

I know the legislature talks about helping these guys, providing rehabilitation. But they don't know what it's really like. Here in the trenches. They want us to help . . . but they have never set foot in a parole office, or in a prison. Prison is not about vocational rehab, it's about punishing people . . . And in my opinion, you have to break their spirit to help them. Rather than giving them drug treatment, give them 12 or 14 hours of hard labor a day. It's like a wild horse . . . You have to break it. That's the only way . . . In my opinion, if people screw up, we have to respond, strongly. Send them back to prison, and make prison less comfortable. That's the way to help people. That's the way to motivate them. (Leonard, parole agent)

Tough love is the way to go . . . being nice or soft with somebody doesn't help anybody. My job isn't to be nice, to be somebody's friend. My job is to protect the public. Period. I swore an oath to the people of California, to protect them . . . Holding someone's hand doesn't protect society. These guys need to be told that if they mess up, they're going to be punished. (Richard, supervisor)

Making sense of the mission: Parole as a coherent project

It is at this juncture that the seemingly disparate elements of parole coalesce into a coherent project for agents. While the control and social work components exist as potentially competitive components, ultimately this divide is deconstructed. Within these parole offices, the formal goals of the agency not only coexist but interpenetrate one another and are integrated into what agents perceive as a logical, holistic approach.

By and large, this occurs through agents embracing a punitive, control-oriented approach. Specifically, agents prioritize regulatory surveillance (encompassing supervision, enforcement of conditions, and assessment of commitment and sincerity), sanctioning misconduct, and utilizing the threat of reimprisonment. Yet, for field personnel, this does not equate to the delegitimization of the goal of offender assistance. Rather, agents view this tough love approach as the best way to promote parolee reformation, reintegration, and success. Thus, this mode of managing clients represents a way to integrate – and implement – all of the formal goals espoused by DAPO. For agents, the social work components of rehabilitation and reentry are preserved by being folded within a punitive approach. Here, reformative goals survive, ‘but the practices through which these transformations are meant to take place are different’ (Moore and Hannah-Moffat, 2005: 92). As Robinson (2008) has observed, rehabilitation has survived, at least in part, due to its capacity to adapt to other penal narratives and goals, including punitive ones. For field personnel, the potential for offender change is kept alive through its expression in a tough love approach rooted in regulatory control.

I suggest that it is the punitive ideology of agents – involving the construction of paroled subjects as responsible yet precarious – that allows for this folding of elements. In particular, the hegemonic nature of assumptions of parolee responsibility allow agents to distance themselves from the responsibility for providing offender assistance while simultaneously viewing themselves as creating space for parolee self-reformation. Here, responsabilization logics allow for the ‘combination of fragmented and flexible exercises of power that . . . coexist and are interdependent’ (Hannah-Moffat, 2000: 510). Control and social work/rehabilitation are rendered complementary, as reform is viewed as most effectively achieved, or at least promoted, through reliance upon punitive regulation. Moore and Hannah-Moffat (2005) utilize the term ‘punitive therapy’ to note the interpenetration of rehabilitation and punitive practices, while Bosworth (2007) similarly highlights that reformation and control are increasingly complementary, with the responsabilization of penal subjects serving as a linking mechanism. Among DAPO personnel, parolees are constituted as largely self-determining subjects, and if someone does not succeed, it is ‘on them’. Individuals who violate the rules, commit crimes, or end up reincarcerated are responsible for their own ‘failures’. And parole success is constituted as largely dependent on the efforts of parolees themselves, and other factors – such as the relationship between agent and client or the availability of rehabilitative programs – are viewed as of considerably lesser importance. While rehabilitation and reintegration remain

potentially important components of parole success, responsibility for achieving these goals is (re)located in the realm of parolees' private affairs.

Conclusion

Institutional discourses, goals, and policies are not static objects that predetermine their meaning; rather they must be interpreted and implemented by field personnel (Cheliotis, 2006; Lynch, 2000). Moore and Hannah-Moffat (2005) suggest that the survival and evolution of rehabilitation, in the context of punishment in Ontario, Canada, can be understood as a product of how bureaucrats with a long-standing commitment to traditional, welfarist rehabilitation implemented an emergent punitive rhetoric into practice, and in the process preserved elements focused on assisting penal subjects. Within the California parole agency, it appears that the inverse may be occurring. While there is an emergent effort to reinvigorate rehabilitation, a residual and seemingly well-established punitive orientation is reshaping how this effort is materialized. While assumptions of precariousness, responsibility, and 'regulability' make the integration of disparate elements possible, it seems that the organizational and political context within DAPO – and agents' concerns with job security – encourages and reinforces this blending of rehabilitation and regulatory control.

Paradoxically, I suggest that agents' punitive ideology contributes to maintaining the legitimacy of the *goal* of offender assistance by folding this ideal within punitive practices. Yet, at the same time, this configuration appears to reduce agents' willingness to utilize available resources to aid clients, and instead contributes to the deployment of rehabilitative resources as mechanisms of supervision and control. In this way, agents preserve rehabilitation as a viable goal, while simultaneously undercutting DAPO's ability to materially support it. This parallels Lynch's (2000) contention that within the California parole agency the symbolic function of rehabilitation outweighs its material presence. Notably, the data in this article come after California's public recommitment to the goal of rehabilitation, suggesting that this recent commitment is being subverted by the dominant ideology and approach of field personnel. Importantly, however, I suggest that agents do not conceive of rehabilitation and reentry as symbolic goals that deserve only 'lip service', and they do not view their actions as undercutting these goals. Rather, agents contend that their approach of privileging tough love and punitive regulation keeps alive the possibility of paroled subjects reforming themselves.

Despite the state's commitment to promoting offender assistance and lower recidivism, it is conceivable that the tough love approach detailed here may contribute to maintaining or even exacerbating recidivism rates. Deemphasizing or underutilizing resources designed for assistance, while simultaneously closely monitoring and regulating clients, may ultimately increase the likelihood that individuals will have their parole revoked. Further, by constructing parolees as responsible for their own reformation and social reintegration, field personnel downplay or even invisibilize the challenges that individuals face upon release

from prison. Finding employment, addressing substance abuse or mental health issues, and reestablishing social support are cast as primarily, or even solely, dependent upon the efforts of paroled subjects.

Some argue that the principal aims of punishment lie not in reducing crime or recidivism, but in distributing disciplinary control throughout society (Foucault, 1977) and providing a way to aggressively police, contain, or even exclude the marginalized 'underclass' in our neoliberal present (Wacquant, 2001a, 2009). Related to this, the hegemony of responsabilization logics points to an ongoing reconfiguration of the relationship between the state and penal subjects. In our contemporary correctional complex, penal subjects are not just subjects of regulation and potential reformation, but are increasingly subjects of political and social exclusion (M Brown, 2005; Rose, 1999). While constructed as accountable individuals who must manage their own conduct, those who are incapable or unwilling to embrace 'proper citizenship' face the specter of permanent involvement in the criminal justice complex and potentially permanent social exclusion (M Brown, 2005; Wacquant, 2009). In the context of California parole, I contend that rather than seeing the demise of the welfare state (with its inclusion of paternalistic care and normalization) and the triumph of penal austerity, neoliberalized rationalities of responsabilization and entrepreneurial citizenship – among field personnel – are reshaping the state's efforts to reinvigorate rehabilitation and reentry.¹⁶ Highlighting this, DAPO personnel perceive themselves as engaged in an ethical project of protecting the community while simultaneously promoting (the possibility of) offender reformation in the most efficient means available to them. In this logic, if penal exclusion is occurring or even deepening, it is because paroled subjects are making poor choices and not conforming to what is expected of them. Agents' primary responsibility lies in the stewardship and oversight of entrepreneurial paroled subjects; they prioritize indirectly inciting a desire for change over marshaling resources for this process.

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Notes

1. This finding mirrors previous research (e.g. Lynch, 2000; McCleary, 1978; Ohlin et al., 1956), and is explored further in a later section. Notably, the terminology used here – law enforcement and social work – is drawn not just from previous research but also from the language used by research collaborators.

2. Specifically, during fieldwork the California (and global) 'fiscal crisis' was taking place and a federal court order – emanating from *Plata v. Schwarzenegger* (2010 603 F.3d 1088 (9th circuit, 2010)) – placed pressure on the CDCR and DAPO to reduce prison overcrowding.
3. Although since California's passage of Assembly Bill 109 in 2011 and its subsequent correctional 'realignment', the prison population has declined and Texas now has the largest population of any US state.
4. Rather than pointing to discrete epochs or shifts, Foucault (1991: 102) claims that 'we cannot see things in terms of the replacement of a society of sovereignty by a disciplinary society and the subsequent replacement of a society by government; in reality one has a triangle, sovereignty–discipline–government'. Drawing from this, O'Malley (1996: 194) argues that the goal of scholarship is 'not to map the unfolding of an evolution, but to understand the dynamics of such triangular relations, and the conditions that affect the roles taken by various elements in specific combinations'.
5. Both 'parolee' and 'client' were terms used by informants, although parolee is the more frequent moniker. I utilize parolee, client, and paroled subject interchangeably, although sometimes the choice reflects a particular issue or context at hand.
6. All names are pseudonyms.
7. Many, although not all, of the individuals on parole in these four field offices were subject to this requirement.
8. General conditions apply to everyone on parole, while special conditions are implemented by DAPO on an individualized basis.
9. This idea – that some individuals do not care about remaining outside of prison, and that others actually desire to return to prison – highlights the extent to which paroled subjects, for this supervisor, can only be understood through the lens of a criminal other who is entrenched in criminality and thus outside of everyday sociality.
10. The racial/ethnic makeup of personnel in these offices roughly parallels the demographics of California, with a slight underrepresentation of Asian-Americans.
11. Related to this, Lerman and Page (2012) found that California prison officers are more punitive than prison officers in Minnesota.
12. In relation to the import of background characteristics of individuals on parole, several things are suggestive and worth noting. While agents' approach and actions did not vary systematically by the race/ethnicity of individuals on parole, the data suggest that the perceived socio-economic class of parolees did influence agents, mirroring the findings of King and Maruna (2009). Perhaps the category of offender/parolee – with its inherent precariousness and danger – is a significantly marked and meaningful category for agents, and does not require a specifically racial/ethnic construction of otherness. Further, discussing race/ethnicity and class as distinct categories ignores linkages between them (Gans, 2005), and can gloss over the complex ways in which race has been assimilated into imaginaries of crime (Gilroy, 1982; Hawkins, 1995; Young, 2006). For example, historically,

- assignments of being 'reformable' versus irredeemable were determined, in part, by race: white youth could be saved while black youth were incorrigible (Ward, 2012).
13. There was one agent, Gene, who viewed 'social work' as the key component to managing his caseload. Among other efforts to assist clients, he regularly made recommendations about where individuals could possibly apply for jobs. As part of this effort, each month he made trips to various businesses and organizations to inquire if they had any employment opportunities for individuals with a criminal record. Yet, Gene's efforts in this regard stood out as exceptional. Other agents did not take similar steps to assist clients in locating employment. Interestingly, among the other agents in this office, Gene was viewed as a 'throwback' and as someone who was overly lenient in his approach. Other agents noted that they were too busy to search for jobs and, further, parolees needed to be responsible for locating employment through their own efforts.
 14. Following the period of fieldwork, however, in 2011 DAPO instituted, as part of the larger correctional 'realignment', 'non-revocable parole' for a sub-group of non-violent offenders in an effort to reduce caseload size to 40 or 50 clients per agent.
 15. The mandatory minimum number of 'contacts', which refers to a face-to-face meeting between agent and client, vary by parolee classification. There are six possible classifications: high control; high service; control service; minimum service; second striker; and sex offender. Individuals classified as high control, for instance, must have two contacts per month with their parole agent.
 16. See McNeil et al. (2009) for a related examination of how criminal justice social workers in Scotland balance welfarist and punitive practices.

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