

An Ethnographic Examination of Correctional Officer Culture in a Midwestern State

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**An Ethnographic Examination of Correctional Officer Culture in a Midwestern
State**

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University of Nebraska, 2010

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Over the years volumes of research have been conducted in the field of corrections. However, relatively little of this research focuses on correctional officers, and virtually none focuses on correctional officer culture. I address this gap in the research by conducting an ethnography of correctional officers in a Midwestern state. My use of ethnographic methods allowed me to observe correctional officer culture first hand. Specifically I examine the dominant values and beliefs of correctional officer culture, the process of acculturation new recruits experience, and the impact that acculturation has on individuals who become correctional officers.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

There are more prisons in the United States today than at any other time in history (Chaiken 2000; West & Sabol 2008). As a consequence, there are more people working in prison than ever before (Stephan 2008). Prison staff, especially correctional officers, are the most important resource for any correctional institution (Camp, Camp, & Fair 1996; Lambert, Barton, & Hogan 1999). Officers are primarily responsible for the security of the institution but also supervise inmate movements, dispense medications, provide informal counseling and perform many other functions. Despite their importance to the functioning of the prison, correctional officers have not been the subject of much previous research, and their culture has been virtually ignored. Culture is important because it prescribes behavior in given situations, and reveals the shared beliefs of a group. In the case of correctional officers, culture includes how to perceive and behave toward inmates, administrators, outsiders, and other officers.

The limited number of previous studies examining officer culture addressed the extent of cohesiveness among officers. In these studies, cohesiveness was measured by determining the degree to which officers shared values (Lombardo 1989). Correctional research has also explored the inmate subculture within prison. Both areas of research have addressed a debate over the origin of culture. Two views are put forth: 1) culture forms due to the individual characteristics of the members (officers or inmates); or 2) culture forms due to the environmental factors of the prison.

Popular opinion generally sides with the individual argument, viewing the correctional officer as a job that appeals to individuals who have a “thirst for power” and a “sadistic streak” (Kauffman 1988). There is little in the academic literature that supports this view of correctional officers. The earliest work on officers recognizes that while some are brutal and sadistic, this is not a prerequisite for the job. For example, Clemmer (1940) found that in spite of being “unsympathetic and uncaring” at work, officers were normal caring citizens at home (Clemmer 1940). Sykes (1958) stated officer culture comes from the social structure of the prison and not the individual officers (Sykes 1958).

Virtually all academic research on correctional officer culture has concluded it is a result of the environment of the prison and not the people who become officers (Crawley & Crawley 2007; Crouch 1980b; Crouch & Marquart 1980; Duffee, Steinert, & Dvorin 1980; Kauffman 1988; Zimbardo 2007; Zimmer 1986). Kauffman examined the attitudes of correctional officer recruits and found a wide range of attitudes including a total rejection of the officer culture (Kauffman 1988). Individuals who become correctional officers are diverse and become similar only after experiencing the shared environment of prison (Kauffman 1988).

New recruits receive formal training and informal socialization into the role of correctional officer. While scholars now agree that officer culture forms in reaction to the prison environment, there are few studies that explore the process of socialization. I seek to fill the gap in the existing literature by examining the modern correctional officer culture. Specifically, I focus on the process of “becoming” (see Becker 1963) a member of the correctional officer culture, an issue that has been ignored in previous research. I

use data gained through participant observation and semi structured interviews with correctional officers to examine officer culture.

Rationale

Correctional officer culture is important to study for two reasons. The first reason for examining correctional officer culture is to expand knowledge on occupational culture in general. There is a long tradition of examining occupational cultures (Becker 1961; Becker & Geer 1960; Bittner 1970; Hughes 1958; Hughes 1994) and specifically the occupational socialization process (Becker 1961; Broadhead 1983; Conti 2006). Police research is frequently cited by authors studying correctional officers due to the similarities between the occupations (Crawley 2006; Crawley & Crawley 2007). My research expands the occupational culture and socialization literatures by studying a previously unexplored occupational field and applying established concepts to a new occupation.

Second, aside from inmates correctional officers are the largest component of the correctional system. Prison populations have dramatically increased during the last 25 years, leading to a large increase in the number of correctional officers. The correctional officer occupation has been one of the fastest growing careers in America for the last 15 years, and will continue to be for the foreseeable future (Blair & Kratcoski 1992; Britton 2006). Currently there are over 445,000 correctional officers nationwide representing by far the largest non-inmate component of the correctional system (Stephan 2008).

Police-Corrections link.

Although police and correctional officers are similar in terms of duties, hours, and culture (Crawley 2006), there are significant differences between the two occupations

that require them to be examined separately. Police officers have long been studied due to their broad influence in society. Policing scholars have examined both the formal and informal socialization processes of recruits and revealed the methods of transmitting police culture to new officers (Hawkins 1980; Kingshot et. al. 2004; Garner 2005; Woody 2005; Conti 2006). For example, police officers commonly experience a high level of anticipatory socialization (Conti 2006). Anticipatory socialization occurs when people adopt the values of a group they aspire to, but have not yet, joined (Ott 1989). Anticipatory socialization makes the actual socialization process much easier and quicker for the new employee (Gibson & Pappa 2000). Police officers commonly experience anticipatory socialization through family members or close friends who are already police officers. Most new police recruits report desiring a career in law enforcement for several years prior to entering the academy (Conti 2006).

In contrast, most correctional officers “drift” into the job from other “blue collar” work (Farkas & Manning 1997; Lombardo 1989). Drift has several important implications. Drift suggests that correctional officers are not as committed to their job as police officers. A person who has spent several years preparing for a job will find it much more difficult to quit than someone who stumbles into an occupation. Also, due to drift most correctional officers do not know nor try to conform to the values of corrections until they begin the formal training process. The lack of anticipatory socialization appears to be a critical difference in the socialization process of police and correctional officers. If this difference is evident from the scant research on correctional officer socialization then other critical differences are likely.

In addition to the difference in the socialization process of police and correctional officers, the working environment of the two occupations is also distinct. A major difference between policing and correctional environments is the clientele with which each occupation works. There are two critical differences in the clientele of police and correctional officers: type of clientele and familiarity. Police interact with a combination of law abiding and law breaking citizens (Herbert 1996a; Herbert 2001). In contrast, correctional officers interact exclusively with citizens who have broken the law and been deemed dangerous enough to be placed in confinement. This difference influences the culture that forms in reaction to the occupational environment. Police officers delineate between innocent citizens and “bad guys” (Herbert 1996a). Innocent citizens are treated politely and with respect; “bad guys” are despised and treated with little respect (Herbert 1996a). In contrast, correctional officers work only with people labeled “bad guys,” yet most interactions with inmates are carried out in a polite and respectful manner. (Jacobs & Retsky 1980)

The second difference between police and correctional officer clientele is familiarity. Police, especially in larger jurisdictions, interact with different citizens nearly every day (Lipsky 1983; Herbert 1996a; Moon 2006). In contrast, correctional officers work with the same inmates for periods of at least 6 months and often several years (Osborne 1969; Crouch 1980a; Morris & Morris 1980; Willet 2004). This difference means each occupation will have different norms of interaction. Police officers are unlikely to know the citizen they are interacting with as each citizen is essentially a stranger, correctional officers, however, know inmates personally.

Individuals, regardless of occupation, interact differently with people they know as compared to strangers.

A final distinction between police and correctional officers is the level of prestige attached to each by the public. Goffman argues there are two kinds of specialized occupational tasks: one where the person meets the public and one where the person does not (Goffman 1961). This distinction is a critical difference in police and correctional officers' environments. Police are the most visible and symbolically potent form of government in our society (Herbert 2001; Van Maanen 2006). Police visibility results in a high level of prestige from the public who is aware of the dangers of the job. In contrast, correctional officers are hidden from the public view and as a result the public is largely unaware of the difficulties of their job (May 1980). While the public holds a certain level of admiration and respect for police officers (Jesilow, Meyer, & Namazzi 1995; Kappeler et. al. 1998), "a guard is just an inmate with a few more privileges" (Jacobs & Grear 1977). The differences in anticipatory socialization, clientele, and prestige between police and correctional officers demonstrate the need to examine the occupations separately.

Penal theory,

A variety of penal theories exist; basic theories include rehabilitation, deterrence, incapacitation, and retribution. More complex penal theories also exist, for example, Foucault argues that the purpose of the modern prison is to create obedient subjects through discipline (Foucault 1977). He argues that the government seeks to transform the confused, dangerous multitudes of society into ordered masses. Once this transformation is complete, the masses will receive an order and follow it without thinking, creating truly

“docile” bodies in society. Foucault mentions the need for inmates to be at least partially supervised by a specialized staff that “possesses the moral qualities and technical abilities of educators” (Foucault 1977: 270). Only with a specialized staff will the prison achieve its goals.

Foucault recognized the important role of the correctional officer when formulating his theory. Unfortunately, the majority of penal theorists have ignored correctional officers. Research ranging from the philosophical (see Hudson 2003), to the empirical (see Martinson 1974) has been conducted on penal theory. Through this body of research we now have a well developed understanding of penal theories and how they apply to corrections. The component lacking throughout this research is an examination of the role of line-level personnel.

Our understanding of penal theory is incomplete without knowledge of the correctional officers responsible for implementing penal policy. For example, consider the theory of rehabilitation. Rehabilitation states that the goal of punishment is to “change and improve the person through the application of science to human behavior” (Hudson 2003: 26). Rehabilitation applies scientifically driven treatment methods to offenders to change them so they cease committing crime. Treatment programs are typically carried out by trained personnel who specialize in the specific fields. For example, psychologists provide counseling services and anger management training while para-professionals provide narcotics anonymous training. The correctional officer is not charged directly with providing treatment, but he/she has more daily contact with inmates than any other person in the prison (Crouch 1991; Crouch 1980a; May 1980). As a result, the officer has more influence over the inmate than anyone else, including the

highly trained treatment personnel (Zimmer 1986; Lombardo 1989; Crouch 1991; Crawley 2006; Bennet, Crewe, & Wahidin 2007). If the officer does not believe in the rehabilitation ideal, he/she may undermine it either consciously or unconsciously through interactions with the inmates.

The theory of rehabilitation serves as one example of the importance of understanding correctional officers when examining theories of punishment. The literature on the various theories of punishment is extensive, but an examination of correctional officer culture is necessary to provide a deeper understanding of penal theory.

Historical Context

Culture is an emergent phenomenon, and thus the historical development of any occupation helps to shape its culture (Louis 1990). Unfortunately, there has been no historical analysis of the correctional officer occupation. It is, however, possible to examine the development of the officer role by exploring the general history of correctional environments.

Prisons have been a component of the American correctional system since the establishment of the Walnut Street Jail in 1790 (Morris & Rothman 1995; Roberts 1996). The role of “the keepers” has changed significantly over time influencing the culture of modern correctional officers. The first penitentiaries relied on officers to do little more than guard inmates (Roberts 1996; Morris & Rothman 1995). These duties resulted in the term “guard” being applied to the position and the guard role remained dominant until the 1950’s (McKelvey 1977).

The methods of ensuring institutional security changed from the 1800's to the 1960's. Originally, officers used corporal punishment to maintain order within the penitentiary (Morris & Rothman 1995; McKelvey 1977). Corporal punishment was restricted through several reforms to prison administration and by the 1950's prison order was "negotiated" with the inmates (Pisciotta 1994; Sykes 1958). Sykes (1958) found that officers made "trade-offs" with inmates, allowing minor rule infractions to ensure general order within the prison (Sykes 1958). While the tactics changed, the goal of the officers remained the same: ensure the inmates did not escape, and minimize violence.

In the 1950's the American penal system shifted its goals to rehabilitation. The shift carried with it new terminology; prisons became correctional centers and guards became correctional officers (McKelvey 1977; Morris & Rothman 1995). Correctional officers were given the responsibility of aiding in the rehabilitation of inmates in addition to maintaining the security of the institution (Riechel 2002; Roberts 1996). Rehabilitation demands created a contradictory set of goals for officers. The best way to facilitate rehabilitation is to build close relationships with the inmates (Carroll 1980; Hepburn & Albonetti 1980), while security concerns are best achieved by keeping a professional distance from those being supervised (Giallombardo 1966; Bowker 1980). Role conflict developed when officers were asked to help in rehabilitation while maintaining security (Bowker 1980; Carroll 1980; Crouch & Marquart 1980; Hepburn & Albonetti 1980). Rehabilitation ideals faded in the 1970's and early 1980's, but role conflict and the term correctional officer remain.

Culture

The term culture is problematic, ambiguous, and lacks a single definition (Grey 2005; Thompson & Luthans 1990). Culture is defined as: intrinsic organizing (Johannisson 1987), learned ways of coping with experience (Gregory 1983), the way we do things around here (Grey 2005), and sets of meanings, collective situational definitions, or trustworthy recipes (Louis 1990). Despite the ambiguity, a clear definition is needed for this research. In this section I will explore the concepts of culture and socialization, then present the definition of culture used in this research.

Various forms of culture exist which can be organized into concentric circles from macro to micro level. Societal level is the most macro view of culture. Geertz (1973) defines societal level culture as “an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life” (Geertz 1973: 89). Societal level culture is important because it influences the more micro level cultures within it.

There are a variety of organizations within society and each develops a distinct culture (Grey 2005). Organizational culture develops due to the unique demands and environment of the organization. The culture retains several of the attitudes toward life of the larger societal culture (Hansen 1995; Mennino, Rubin & Brayfield 1995). For example, a criminology department still holds the larger societal value of a 40 hour work week. Due to the demands of publication, however, several faculty members may work nights and weekends, far exceeding 40 hours. In this case, the culture of the criminology department includes the norm of exceeding 40 hours per week.

Organizational culture develops within societal culture; similarly occupational culture develops within organizational culture. Organizations are complex systems that contain multiple occupations. The state department of corrections is an organization which contains various occupations including: officer, case worker, librarian, medical personnel, and recreation specialist. Each occupation has a distinct set of problems that arise during the course of work and a distinct culture that develops as a result. Occupational culture consists of shared beliefs, values and patterns of behavior and is influenced by the organizational culture (Dellinger 2002).

One of the key components of any culture is the socialization process that new members must go through to fully enter the culture (Duffee, Steinert, & Dvorin 1980; Engel & Wordin 2003; Worden 1993). Socialization is not limited to only new members but also to individuals who promote, demote or laterally transfer (Ott 1989). All societal groups engage in socialization of new members, but uniformed agencies tend to be the most active and explicit in their socialization practices (Ott 1989). Socialization refers to “learning the ropes” and involves the acquisition of job-related, interpersonal and cultural knowledge (Louis 1990).

The acquisition of cultural knowledge is referred to as acculturation (Louis 1990). Keyton (2005) defines acculturation as, “the interaction activities by which members acquire knowledge and skills to be considered competent in their work roles” (Keyton 2005: 86). More important than the acquisition of job competence is learning the norms of the occupational culture, even those that are not job-related (Keyton 2005). Employees that are successfully acculturated experience higher job satisfaction and higher identification with the organization (Keyton 2005; Louis 1980; Louis 1990).

Acculturation is a critical component of culture and as such is a focal point of my research on correctional officer culture.

My research examines the occupational culture of correctional officers. In this research occupational culture is defined as, “a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (Schein 1992:12). The definition has four important components. First, it maintains that culture is a set of shared beliefs; culture can only exist within the collective. Second, culture develops in response to problems encountered in the working environment. Each occupation will have a unique culture because the working environment will be distinct. Third, culture is taught to new members; newcomers are purposely acculturated with the values of the group. Finally, the definition recognizes that culture is not static, but constantly evolving as new problems arise. The literature review section will delve further into the issue of culture.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the research conducted on correctional officers a gap remains in the literature. While scholars agree that correctional officer culture develops in reaction to the environment, little research has been conducted on officer culture. By gaining a better understanding of correctional officers, we gain a more complete understanding of how penal theory is translated into practice. I now address this gap in the research by examining correctional officer culture. Specifically, I seek to answer two research questions:

- 1) How do correctional officers navigate their occupational world?
- 2) How are newcomers socialized into correctional officer culture?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

From Guards to Correctional Officers and Beyond

Before examining the current culture of correctional officers, it is important to understand the historical development of the occupation. There is virtually no historical analysis of the correctional officer occupation¹. A few cross sectional studies of the occupation are available (see Clemmer 1940; Sykes 1958), but these do not begin until the 1940's and are focused on the inmate culture, only briefly mentioning officers. James Jacobs examines the changing role of "guards" in *Stateville*, but he focuses on one institution over a brief period (1925 through 1975; Jacobs 1977). It is possible to examine the historical development of correctional officers by using literature from general correctional history.

The history of corrections in America can be divided into four eras. The first, the penitentiary era, lasted from 1790 until about 1870. The second, the reformatory era, lasted from 1870 until about 1900. The third, the rehabilitation era, lasted from 1900 until about 1975. The current incapacitation era began in 1976. Each of these eras is defined by a dominant correctional philosophy which impacts the job of officers. In this section, I will briefly review the eras of American corrections focusing on the changing role of correctional officers.

¹ The terminology for correctional staff changed in the 1950's. Due to this shift, I refer to line level custody staff as guards during the review of correctional history until the term correctional officer is applied. After this I will refer to line level custody staff as correctional officers.

The use of prisons in the United States began in 1790 with the opening of the Walnut Street Jail in Philadelphia, PA (Reichel 2001; Roberts 1996). By 1803 the jail was severely overcrowded, and in 1829 a new larger facility opened just outside Philadelphia (Stanko, Gillespie, & Crews 2004). Eastern State Penitentiary was designed to implement the Quaker philosophy of penitence (McKelvey 1977; Morris & Rothman 1995; Roberts 1996). The inmates were to remain totally silent in order to reflect on what they had done, become penitent, and reform (Roberts 1996; Stanko et. al. 2004). Inmates were locked in solitary cells, 24 hours a day, for the duration of their sentence (McKelvey 1977). Solitary confinement meant there was virtually no contact between guards and inmates. Guards were responsible for ensuring inmates remained silent and did not escape. The operating philosophy of Eastern State came to be known as the “Pennsylvania system”.

A competing system of prison governance also developed at the beginning of the 1800’s. In 1817, New York opened the state prison at Auburn with an emphasis on maintaining order (Stanko et. al. 2004). In contrast to the Pennsylvania system, the New York or Auburn system allowed inmates to leave their cells to work and eat together during the day but maintained the rule of silence (McKelvey 1977; Reichel 2001). With inmates out of their cells, the guards resorted to corporal punishment to enforce the rules (McClennan 2008; Morris & Rothman 1995; Roberts 1996). A state law prohibiting flogging was rescinded just prior to opening Auburn and within 10 years the right to flog inmates was extended from the warden to any guard (McClennan 2008). The Auburn system created increased interaction between guards and inmates and established guards as strict disciplinarians.

Auburn guards adopted a military model, wearing uniforms and being held to high standards even while off duty (Morris & Rothman 1995). On duty, guards were commanded to avoid laughter or unnecessary conversation either with each other or the inmates, and at all times to command respect from the inmates (Morris & Rothman 1995). Guards were told to never “allow them (inmates) the least degree of familiarity nor exercise any towards them” (Morris & Rothman 1995: 123). The interaction between inmates and guards was such a concern that in 1831 the warden of Sing Sing, an Auburn system prison, said that to control the convicts he had to “watch incessantly the keepers and not just the prisoners” (McClennan 2008: 60).

A national debate over the merits of the Auburn and Pennsylvania systems lasted until the 1860's (McClennan 2008; McKelvey 1977; Morris & Rothman 1995; Roberts 1996). The Auburn system was plagued by guard deviance. Despite formal rules to the contrary, guards in Auburn prisons frequently talked and even colluded with inmates. The guards kept a steady supply of liquor and tobacco flowing into the prisons and by the 1850's inmates often bribed guards to receive better treatment (McClennan 2008). The Pennsylvania system also had its shortcomings especially regarding the mental health of inmates (McKelvey 1977; Morris & Rothman 1995; Roberts 1996). The debate was settled by financial considerations; the congregate Auburn system was cheaper to operate and allowed inmates to work in more lucrative industries. Due to financial advantages, the Auburn system became the dominant means of operating American prisons (McClennan 2008; McKelvey 1977; Roberts 1996).

The penitentiary era lasted until 1870, when the progressive movement began and a group of penal reformers developed the reformatory system (McKelvey 1977). The

reformatory was based on the idea that inmates should be treated for the cause of their crimes and not released until they were sufficiently reformed (McKelvey 1977; Roberts 1996). The reformers argued for the end of political appointments among prison officials and the start of mandatory training for guards (McKelvey 1977). While the focus of prisons changed during this era, the role of the guard remained virtually the same. Treatment was delivered by specialists in the reformatories and the guard was not given a role in the treatment (Morris & Rothman 1995; Pisciotta 1994). In theory, the shift to a reformatory approach eliminated the harshest forms of discipline used by guards. In reality, corporal punishment was still common and in many cases even harsher (Pisciotta 1994).

In 1880, the reformatory system was fully implemented at Elmira, New York (Pisciotta 1994). In 1893-94 an investigation into the disciplinary practices at Elmira was conducted which uncovered harsh treatment of inmates (Pisciotta 1994). The investigation found that beatings and floggings were common means of enforcing discipline and that Elmira officials had given considerable power to 60 inmate “monitors” (Pisciotta 1994). The monitors were de facto guards who supervised their fellow inmates and were charged with enforcing discipline and making classification recommendations that influenced release (Pisciotta 1994). Zebulon Brockway, the superintendent of Elmira, testified that the inmate monitors were equal in intelligence to guards and were much less costly (Pisciotta 1994). The findings of the 1893-94 investigation led to disillusionment with the reformatory model and by the beginning of the 20th century the goal of prisons changed once again.

At this point, it is important to note some regional differences in the development of corrections. While Northern and Midwestern states utilized the reformatory system, Southern states operated very differently (Foster 2006). In many Southern states labor became a focal point shortly after the American Civil War (Roberts 1996; Gottschalk 2006). The convict-lease system was prevalent throughout the South during the late 1800's. In the lease system, the state leased an inmate to a private citizen for a fee. The citizen then assumed all responsibility for the care and security of the inmate until the lease expired (Reichel 2001). Some Southern states leased out their entire inmate populations (Mancini 1996; Gottschalk 2006). Leasing helped offset the loss of slave labor, created a considerable profit for the state, and eliminated the need for guards (Gottschalk 2006). Inmates who were leased out were considered property and treated far worse than they had been in prison (Gottschalk 2006).

Labor was a major component of prison even in Northern states (McKelvey 1977). Northern and Midwestern states operated under a contract system in which inmates worked for a private contractor at factories in or near the prison (Reichel 2001). The role of the guards remained the same and consisted primarily of monitoring inmates and maintaining security (McKelvey 1977). Prison administrators soon realized they could generate greater profits by eliminating the private contractor. In 1883, New York started operating on a "piece-price" system in which inmates worked inside the prison supervised by guards and then the products were sold on the open market (McKelvey 1977). The piece-price system resulted in the guards serving as de facto foremen (Reichel 2001; Roberts 1996). The need to maximize production resulted in harsh treatment of inmates.

Inmate abuse, complaints from trade unions, and inmate strikes led to a shift in prison labor policies at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century (Gottschalk 2006; McKelvey 1977). The contract system was outlawed in New York in 1884 and at the federal level four years later (Gottschalk 2006). By 1890 every state except Indiana had conducted an investigation of the contract system with most states ending its use (Gottschalk 2006). A few Southern states continued using the lease system until the 1920's, but after 1900 the system was much rarer (Foster 2006; Mancini 1996). The beginning of the Great Depression in 1929 effectively ended prison labor competition on the open market (Foster 2006). The Hawes-Cooper Act was established in 1934 and allowed states to ban the sale of prison-made goods (Foster 2006). By 1940, 33 states had passed laws banning the sale of prison made goods (Allen, Latessa, Ponder & Simonsen 2004).

The move away from prison labor increased inmate idleness. In 1885, 75% of inmates were gainfully employed; by 1932 the number had fallen to 52% (Haynes 1939). Inmates now had an unprecedented level of “free time” and the guards had the new challenge of supervising this time. Inmate free time was soon filled by programming in the rehabilitation era.

Rehabilitation developed with the rise of the social sciences in the early 20th century (Pollock 1997). The new theory held that criminals had been poorly socialized and now must be re-socialized within prison (Stanko et. al. 2004). Re-socialization was accomplished through inmate treatment plans based on professional assessments of an inmate's social deficits (McKelvey 1977; Roberts 1996). Rehabilitation emphasized individualized treatment of offenders and drastically changed the role of guards.

Until the 1920's, guards were hired and fired primarily on a political patronage system leading to high turnover (Jacobs 1977). High turnover led to a near constant set of new officers, which led to arbitrary rule enforcement and high levels of violence (Jacobs 1977). In 1929, the Federal Bureau of Prisons established a staff training academy for guards and changed the job to a civil service appointment to rid the profession of political corruption (McKelvey 1977; Roberts 1996). However, throughout the 1930's, guards worked 12-16 hour days 6 days a week for low pay, which kept turnover rates high (Jacobs 1977).

At the federal level following World War II a new member of the prison staff emerged: the correctional officer (McKelvey 1977). While the number of "correctional officers" was increasing, the traditional guards were primarily utilized to maintain security. The role of the "correctional officer" closely resembled that of a modern caseworker and their primary responsibility involved the treatment of inmates (McKelvey 1977). Correctional officers increased in number throughout the 1940's and 1950's and many had college degrees (McKelvey 1977). In the late 1940's, the training of new officers and guards began to incorporate criminological theory and techniques of prison management (McKelvey 1977).

At this time fraternization with inmates was strictly prohibited, and officers generally viewed inmates as a "separate species" (Jacobs 1977). However, officers could face disciplinary action for "maintaining a dirty assignment" (Jacobs 1977; Sykes 1958). This meant if an officer was assigned to a housing unit they could be disciplined if the housing unit was dirty. The cleaning and maintenance of housing units was carried out by inmate porters who the officers directed. The risk of disciplinary action led to the

development of a “negotiated order” between officers and inmates (Sykes 1958; Jacobs 1977). The officers agreed to ignore minor rule infractions in exchange for the maintenance of a clean orderly cell block (Sykes 1958).

In 1954 the American Penological Association formerly changed its name to the American Correctional Association (McKelvey 1977). This signaled a formal shift in philosophy and other terminology also changed: penitentiaries became correctional centers and guards became correctional officers (McKelvey 1977; Roberts 1996). The shift in philosophy to rehabilitation was soon followed by changes to the correctional officer role.

In the 1960’s three major changes occurred that impacted the role of correctional officers. First, racial tensions in the larger society were magnified in prison settings (Jacobs 1977; Gottschalk 2006). By the 1960’s America’s prison population was becoming increasingly black, but the majority of officers remained white (Gottschalk 2006). Many black inmates identified with the struggles of the civil rights movement’s assessment regarding racial inequality and oppression and consequently cooperation between inmates and officers was nearly impossible (Jacobs 1977). The system of negotiated order which officers had employed for over a decade was now being undermined.

The second major change in corrections in the 1960’s was the emergence of the prisoner’s rights movement (Stanko et. al. 2004). Prior to the 1960’s, inmates had virtually no rights due to reluctance by the courts to intervene in prison administration (Jacobs 1977; Palmer & Palmer 2004). In 1964, the reluctance to intervene known as the “hands off doctrine” ended when the Supreme Court reviewed the case of *Cooper v. Pate*

(Palmer & Palmer 2004; Stanko et. al. 2004). In Cooper, the court held an inmate could bring suit against his or her “keepers” under section 1983 of the Civil Rights Act (Cooper v. Pate 1964). Cooper allowed inmates to challenge the conditions of their confinement and the methods of discipline utilized by correctional officers.

In 1968 the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that whipping violated the 8th Amendment which effectively ended corporal punishment in prison (Jackson v. Bishop 1968). Jacobs (1977) found that prior to 1969, officers felt comfortable “teaching an inmate some respect” by beating inmates who challenged them. Once inmates were provided legal remedy, and corporal punishment was no longer permissible, officers largely abandoned methods of physical discipline. The combination of a deteriorated negotiated order and the ban on corporal punishment created a power void within American prisons which led to unstable conditions and increased violence (DiIulio 1987; Jacobs 1977).

Finally, in the 1960’s most states fully adopted rehabilitation (Roberts 1996). While rehabilitation had been in place since the 1930’s, it was not until the 1960’s that corrections officials became committed to the philosophy (Earley 1993). With this emphasis “the role of the guard had to be transformed from turnkey and disciplinarian to counselor and agent of rehabilitation” (Jacobs 1977: 178). The change created role conflict for officers who were now charged with the contradictory goals of maintaining security and facilitating treatment (Jacobs 1977; Morris & Rothman 1995). Security concerns demand officers maintain a social distance from inmates whereas treatment requires a close relationship between staff and inmates. The conflict inherent in these competing goals led to increased stress for officers. Most officers resolved their role

conflict by reverting to security related tasks. Inmate assaults or escapes are easily measured; close interpersonal relationships with inmates are not. Officers typically chose to focus on the objectively evaluated criteria to ensure job security (Jacobs 1977).

The three major changes in corrections during the 1960's shaped the development of American prisons in the 1970's. Specifically, the power void left by the lack of either negotiated order or fear induced order had violent outcomes. During the early 1970's prison gangs emerged to fill the power void (Jacobs 1977). Many of these gangs had formed in the 1950's and 60's but became powerful in the early 70's due to the power void. With correctional officers no longer able to maintain order, inmate groups (gangs) gained power to avoid total chaos within prisons. Assaults on officers increased because inmates were emboldened to openly challenge authority (Jacobs 1977). Collective prison violence also increased; in 1967 there were 5 prison riots in the United States, in 1972 there were 48 (Gottschalk 2006).

Several leading reformers voiced the belief that correctional officers were one of the largest obstacles to the success of rehabilitation (Jacobs 1977). The sentiment was echoed by the public who felt a high level of sympathy for inmates, especially following the Attica Riot of 1971 (Gottschalk 2006). Sympathy, however, was short lived as the public soon drew connections between inmate rebellion and radical groups such as the Black Panthers and Weathermen (Gottschalk 2006). The association of inmates with radical extremists led the public to again hold inmates in contempt. In 1974, Robert Martinson published his infamous "What Works" article which was widely interpreted as concluding that rehabilitation had been a failure (Martinson 1974). In 1975, the Federal Bureau of Prisons which had championed rehabilitation abandoned the medical model

(Earley 1993). By the early 1980's rehabilitation had virtually vanished as a goal of corrections (Zimring & Hawkins 1995).

Punishment, specifically incapacitation, replaced rehabilitation as the goal of corrections (Roberts 1996). A number of policies were enacted to uphold the goal of incapacitation. The shift in philosophy led to changes in sentencing structures. Rehabilitation relied on indeterminate sentencing where inmates were sentenced to a range of punishment and release was based on the inmate's rehabilitative progress (Ruddell 2004). Indeterminate sentencing was replaced by determinate sentencing in which inmates served a predetermined length of punishment and their behavior had little impact on their release date. In 1987 the United States Sentencing Commission created a set of sentencing guidelines (Jacobsen 2005; Ruddell 2004; Walker 2001). The federal sentencing guidelines were designed to reduce discretion and resulted in longer sentences for most crimes (Jacobsen 2005).

The shift to determinate sentencing and implementation of sentencing guidelines reduced discretion in sentence length. However, inmates were still eligible for early release from prison based on good behavior (Ruddell 2004). In 1984 the state of Washington first implemented a "truth in sentencing" law (Ruddell 2004). The law required inmates to serve a pre-determined portion of their sentence (typically 85%) before being eligible for release. Just over half of all states have adopted "truth in sentencing policies" (Miller 2004). Requiring inmates to serve 85% of their sentence before the possibility of release eliminates an incentive for good behavior (Ruddell 2004). The changes in sentencing structure reduced inmates' incentive to cooperate with prison staff or seek treatment (Ruddell 2004).

Along with changes in sentencing structure, the “war on drugs” was a centerpiece in the “new” incapacitation philosophy. Drug prohibition policies greatly increased the number of people sent to prison for non-violent drug-related crimes (Jacobsen 2005; Ruddell 2004). Jacobsen (2005) estimated that 25% of the increase in prison population between 1980 and 2001 was due to non-violent drug convictions.

The combination of punitive drug policies and revised sentencing structures significantly changed prisons during the 1970’s and 1980’s. From the 1920’s until the 1970’s rates of imprisonment remained stable at around 100-150/100,000 (Caplow & Simon 1999; Gottschalk 2006). In the 1970’s the prison population began to grow, the growth accelerated in the 1980’s and the incarceration rate is now over 500/100,000 (West & Sabol 2008). Overcrowding was a problem at various times throughout correctional history (Jacobs 1977; Gottschalk 2006), but it was never as prevalent as now. Overcrowding results in officers being outnumbered, and makes it difficult for officers to have personal relationships with inmates.

The changes in sentencing policy in the early 1980’s also changed inmate demographics. The prison population became proportionately less violent and older over the last 30 years (Ruddell 2004). The long sentences associated with incapacitation meant inmates were likely to grow old in prison, and the focus on drug crimes meant a higher proportion of non-violent offenders. In addition, from 1980 -1996 imprisonment rates of Latinos increased by 235%, blacks by 184%, and whites by 164% (Blumstein and Beck 1999). This meant there were more minorities in prison than ever before. At the same time, “an us vs. them” attitude towards criminal justice officials developed among minorities in urban areas (Clear 2002). The combination of a higher proportion of

minorities and a shift in minority attitudes led to a more confrontational interaction style between officers and inmates.

Today correctional officers are more professionalized than any previous time in history (Morris & Rothman 1995). The American Correctional Association sets national training standards, and officers receive more and higher quality training than ever before (Morris & Rothman 1995). At the same time, officers must deal with a larger, more hostile although less violent, population. Modern correctional officers also continue to experience a considerable amount of role conflict. The historical development of the occupation shows a transition from guards who relied on corporal punishment and strict discipline to correctional officers who aid in the treatment of criminal offenders. The culture of correctional officers has been neglected in the literature and the history of corrections provides only small glimpses into their culture. It is to the culture of modern correctional officers that I now turn.

Culture

The history of corrections shows the development of a correctional officer occupation. Before examining correctional officer culture, it is important to discuss the term culture in general and more specifically the terms organizational culture and occupational culture.

Dellinger sums up the difference between organizational and occupational cultures by saying that occupational culture develops from the job that people do, while organizational culture develops from where they do that job (Dellinger 2002). For example, the occupational culture of correctional officers should be similar regardless of the state in which officers work. However, the organizational cultures of the South

Dakota and Texas departments of correction will be quite distinct. The integration of occupational and organizational cultures results in workplace culture.

Organizational culture is observable in the way problems are handled in an organization, the way members behave in meetings, and the informal rules of the organization (Suchman 2006). Organizational and occupational cultures interact and influence one another. For example, the organizational culture of the department of corrections may value open communication between supervisors and officers. The occupational culture of correctional officers may value officer solidarity and view administration as an “enemy.” In this scenario, communication between officers and supervisors will probably occur in a guarded fashion. Neither the open communication the organizational culture values, nor the closed ranks the occupational culture values will be realized. Instead, interaction between the cultures will result in a middle ground.

Organizational culture is a relatively new concept² (Grey 2005; Keyton 2005). The term organizational culture was first used in 1960, but did not gain widespread acceptance until the early 1980’s (Becker & Geer 1960; Keyton 2005; Grey 2005). In 1982, two books (see Deal & Kennedy 1982; Peters & Waterman 1982) introduced the concept of organizational culture to a mass audience (Hawkins 2008). Both of these books defined organizational culture as a shared worldview that management dictates to employees (Collins 2001; Grey 2005; Keyton 2005; Hawkins 2008). The authors argued that the success of organizations depends largely on the ability of administration to implement cultural norms. Organizational culture develops from the beliefs and values of the leadership of the organization and is then transmitted to employees (Grey 2005; Ott

² While I delineate between organizational and occupational culture several authors use the terms interchangeably (see Hawkins 2008; McGrath & Tobia 2008; Schein 1992).

1989). Proper acculturation of employees results in a cohesive organizational culture and success of the organization.

Like culture in general, organizational culture functions to provide shared ways of thinking and feeling, to define and maintain boundaries, and to serve as a control system prescribing and proscribing behavior for members (Ott 1989). The boundary maintenance function of organizational culture allows individuals to identify members and non-members of the culture (Ott 1989). Ideally, individuals will identify with the cultural norms presented by the administration and thus brand themselves as members of the organization. If this occurs the culture of the organization will mirror the beliefs and values of the administration. The reality of organizations is that a gap exists between organizational culture and formal accounts of workplace culture (Meyer & Rowan 1977). This is because the level of identification of employees varies within an organization. The variance is partially caused by occupational culture, which is distinct for each occupational group (Keyton 2005).

I adapt Schein's definition of organizational culture as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (Schein 1992:12). Schein presents this definition for organizational culture, but I apply it to occupational culture in my research. The distinction between organizational and occupational culture is the location and origin of the culture. Organizational culture is common throughout the organization regardless of occupation. For example, the department of corrections has an organizational culture that

encompasses all employees including custody, treatment, kitchen workers, and administrators. Occupational culture is focused on a specific occupation and is common to all members of the occupation regardless of the organization in which they work. For example, correctional officers have a distinct occupational culture that is common to all officers regardless of what state (organization) employs them. The distinction between occupational and organizational culture results in a 4 part typology (See table 1).

Table 1: Organizational & Occupational Culture.

Formal Organizational – dictated by the leadership of the organization	Formal Occupational – dictated by leadership through occupation specific training
Informal Organizational – emergent culture that is shared across occupations within the organization	Informal Occupational – emergent culture that is specific to the occupational group

I borrow Schein's definition of organizational culture because it represents culture at the occupational level as well. I apply his definition to a specific occupational group (correctional officers). Within any workplace there is interaction between the organizational culture and the various occupational cultures. The interaction with the organizational culture affects the occupational culture of correctional officers. For example, while officers share the same basic occupational culture there are slight variations among states, and even among institutions. These variations are due to the interaction between the officers' occupational culture and the distinct organizational cultures of various states and institutions. Due to the impact of interaction with organizational culture it is impossible to study occupational culture completely independently from organizational culture. However, in this research my focus is on the occupational culture of correctional officers.

Occupational culture provides a shared worldview and sense of identity for members (Hansen 1995; McGrath & Tobia 2008). The occupational culture has a greater influence on members than the organizational culture or the formal rules and regulations of the organization (Hansen 1995; Mennino et. Al. 2005). Due to the influence that occupational culture has over its members, it is important to understand how this type of culture is formed.

Occupational culture forms through interactions between members of the occupational group and the distinct working environment and conditions of their occupation (McGrath & Tobia 2008; Hawkins 2008). The environment includes the physical components and social dynamics of the occupational setting (Cooke & Rousseau 1988; Hawkins 2008). Social dynamics include interactions with superiors, co-workers, and clients, as well as the structure in which these interactions take place (Hawkins 2008). Since every occupation operates in a unique environment, culture forms as way for new members to navigate the environment they are entering. Culture provides members with values, norms, and behaviors that are acceptable and necessary to function in the occupational environment (Cooke & Rousseau 1988).

Occupational cultures develop when members face a common problem in the occupational environment and must work out a solution together ³(Ott 1989). Members of the occupational group must first agree that the situation is problematic (Louis 1990). There are various interpretations or meanings possible for any situation (Berger & Luckman 1966). For a situation to be labeled a problem, the members must identify other

³ Much of the work presented here on the development of culture is influenced by the earlier work of Howard S. Becker, Herbert Blumer, Charles H. Cooley, Erving Goffman, Everett C. Hughes, and George H. Mead. The influence and conceptual pioneering of those authors has a substantial impact on my operationalization of occupational culture.

possible meanings and agree that the situation is best interpreted as a problem (Keyton 2005; Louis 1990). Through the process of interpreting a situation as problematic, shared perceptions of the work environment emerge, and co-workers develop a common worldview (Louis 1990; Ott 1989; Rousseau 1990).

Once a situation is interpreted as problematic, members of the group will attempt to solve the problem. The process of solving occupational problems also aids in the development of a common culture. Members attempt different solutions to the problem until they find one that works. The solution then becomes a basic assumption about how to “do the job” and with time and repeated use becomes an accepted behavioral norm (Ott 1989). Once agreed upon both the meaning attached to a given situation and the response to that meaning will remain largely unconscious until they are challenged (Louis 1990; Ott 1989). The unconscious institutional meanings and reactions are the essence of occupational culture. An example of the process of interpreting a situation as problematic, formulating a solution and subsequent challenge to the solution may help illustrate this process.

Correctional officers are required to perform strip searches of inmates before and after visits. This situation may be interpreted as problematic due to societal norms regarding the viewing of same sex individuals in a state of undress. Once this interpretation of the situation as problematic is made, the officers must decide how to address the problem. The correctional officers may decide the best solution is to not make inmates undress completely. Instead officers may allow inmates to leave their boxer shorts on and merely pull them down briefly to allow a “peek” at the genital and anal areas. Once agreed upon this solution will become an unconscious behavioral norm

for officers. Contraband frequently enters the institution through the visiting room, therefore a sudden increase in contraband in the prison would challenge the solution. The culture would then have to re-evaluate the best means of addressing the problem of viewing inmates naked.

Although interpretations of events and behavioral norms may become unconscious and taken for granted, culture is constantly evolving (Hawkins 2008; Louis 1990). The occupational environment is constantly changing with new co-workers, supervisors, and clients. Due to the evolution, members must constantly reinterpret their environment to ensure that prior interpretations still apply (Keyton 2005). Members reinterpret their environment through social interactions in an effort to continually make sense of their occupation (Hawkins 2008). Sense making explains how individuals make plausible, coherent, and reasonable accounts of what happens in the work environment (Weick 1995). Through social interaction with other members of the occupational environment, individuals may discover their previous interpretations are no longer plausible. Due to constant re-interpretation, occupational culture is dependent on both its past interpretations and its present interactions to determine if cultural norms are still appropriate (Keyton 2005).

Occupational culture contains shared values, mutual understandings, behavioral expectations, deeply held assumptions, and ideologies that are difficult to assess (Giberson, Resick, Dickson, Mitchelson, Randall & Clark 2009; Rousseau 1990). There are four levels to occupational culture: artifacts, patterns of behavior, beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions (Ott 1989). Of the four levels of culture, only artifacts and patterns of behavior, are directly observable. Beliefs and values and underlying

assumptions, can only be examined indirectly through inference from artifacts and patterns of behavior (Keyton 2005; Ott 1989; Mohan 1993).

Artifacts are “material and non-material objects and patterns that intentionally or unintentionally communicate information about technology, beliefs, values, assumptions and ways of doing things” (Ott 1989: 24). Artifacts can be signs, which are important due to their rational-functional purposes, or symbols which are important for their symbolic meaning (Berger & Luckman 1966; Ott 1989). Part of correctional officer culture is wearing a uniform. The uniform is a sign because it distinguishes officers from inmates. The uniform is also a symbol because it represents the power officers have over inmates. The uniform is also different depending on rank, triggering cultural norms for interacting with superiors and subordinate co-workers. Symbols are critical to occupational culture because they reflect the culture, facilitate communication about cultural experiences, and trigger internalized cultural behavioral norms (Keyton 2005).

A variety of artifacts, both signs and symbols, exist but one of the most important in any culture is language (Geertz 1973; Hansen 1995; Keyton 2005; Louis 1990; Ott 1989). Occupational cultures develop distinct languages and jargons that reveal how members interpret their environment (Hansen 1995). Due to the importance of shared interpretations, language must be learned to enter an occupational culture (Ott 1989). New members are trained both formally and informally on the language of the culture. Formal and informal training is necessary because occupational cultures develop jargon; a language that only members of the culture know (Ott 1989). Jargon either takes terms that are common in the larger society and assigns them new meanings, or creates unique words that are totally unfamiliar to outsiders. For example, in society a “stinger” is a

defense mechanism for an insect, but in prison a “stinger” is a modified electrical device used to heat food. Alternatively, “fifi” is a nonsensical word in society, but in prison is a homemade device meant to simulate a woman when masturbating. Jargon becomes a means of distinguishing members from outsiders (Ott 1989). A member of the culture will be familiar with these terms and their usage while someone outside the occupational culture will not.

Culture is present in the mundane language of everyday interactions and the more symbolic language of stories, myths and jokes (Keyton 2005). Stories are an important form of symbolic communication within occupational culture that is especially useful in transmitting cultural values (Taylor & Van Every 2000; Brown, Denning, Groh, and Prusak 2005; Neuhauser 1998; Mohan 1993; Denning 2005). Stories serve as sense-making devices that allow the existing interpretations of the occupational culture to be transmitted to new members (Gabriel 2004). The transmission of cultural interpretations is indirect, and storytelling is a common method of transmitting interpretations. During the acculturation process, a story is told which represents the values of the culture being entered. The new member is left to interpret the story and decide what values are being promoted (Gabriel 2004). The storytelling method is indirect because no one ever tells the new member explicitly what the values of the culture are; the new member is left to decide. The requirement that new employees interpret stories on their own makes storytelling a powerful transmitter of culture (Brown et. al. 2005; Neuhauser 1998). New members must be able to discern the “moral of the story,” if they cannot, they may fail to adopt the appropriate cultural values and will risk being ostracized. If new members are able to correctly discern cultural values, they are more likely to internalize the values due

to the active role involved with interpreting the story (Denning 2005; Gargiulo 2005; Mohan 1993; Neuhauser 1998). Language is important for occupational culture both as a means of identifying members, and as a means of transmitting culture to new members.

Another critical artifact of a culture is norms, which are demonstrated through patterns of behavior (Keyton 2005). Norms are an agreed upon, unstated form of social control that prescribe and proscribe behavior within the culture (Keyton 2005; Ott 1989). Norms are typically not formally stated; there is no rule book for cultural membership that includes a list of norms. Members learn norms through interaction with experienced members of the culture and through interpreting cultural stories. For example, the official correctional officer winter uniform includes a clip-on tie which is to be worn from October through April. A new officer will arrive at the prison in late October wearing his/her long sleeve shirt and clip on tie, to find the experienced officers do not wear their ties. The experienced officers may joke with the new officer about the tie, or they may remain silent, but they will not tell the new officer “around here we don’t wear the tie.” However, within a few weeks the new officer will begin imitating the behavior of the other officers and cease wearing the tie with the winter uniform. At this point the new officer is adopting the cultural norm in spite of contrary formal regulations. Members of an occupational culture tend to behave in patterned and predictable ways because their behavior is guided by the norms of the culture (Ott 1989).

Patterns of behavior are the second observable level of culture. Patterns of behavior communicate cultural values and norms through repetition (DiMaggio & Powell 1983; Mennino et. al. 2005; Meyer & Rowan 1977). The tie example above illustrates the way a pattern of behavior communicates cultural norms to new members. Once the

norm is communicated to the new member through patterned behavior, the new member begins demonstrating the behavior. Once the new member engages in the patterned behavior he/she demonstrates an internalization of the culture. The member will then transmit the culture to subsequent new members by continuing to engage in the behavioral patterns of the culture.

Cultural patterns of behavior can be observed in either the ritualistic daily tasks of the occupation or in more symbolic ceremonies and celebrations. For example, inmates at one prison are locked down from 4:00pm until 5:00pm for a late afternoon count before dinner. During the lockdown officers go to the dining room where most of the officers eat the prison dinner. Officers are allowed to eat the prison dinner at a cost of \$1.24 per meal, and are supposed to buy meal tickets before their shift to purchase dinner. The meal tickets are supposed to be signed and dropped into a box at the front of the serving line in the dining hall. This is the official means of eating in the prison dining hall which is presented during formal training. In reality, officers rarely pay for their meals: instead they pass their empty hand over the meal ticket box and then retrieve a tray. New officers learn this pattern of behavior while experiencing the daily routine.

In contrast to the rituals of the daily routine are ceremonies and celebrations which are symbolic events that highlight the culture (Ott 1989). Ceremonies and celebrations glorify individuals that follow cultural norms, and adhere to the beliefs and values of the culture (Ott 1989). The department gives an employee of the month award as does each individual prison. The award conveys that the employee receiving the award epitomizes the values of the department. The award is a symbolic way of presenting the organizational culture of the department. When these awards are given,

the officers typically respond by downplaying the significance of the award and emphasizing the person (rarely an officer) who received it as an “ass kisser.” This is a subversive use of a celebration to symbolically demonstrate the occupational culture of officers.

If we examine the language, jargon, stories, physical artifacts, rites, rituals, ceremonies, and daily patterns of behavior of an occupational culture closely, we can gain an understanding of the two more abstract levels of culture (Becker 1961; Keyton 2005; Ott 1989). The first abstract level of occupational culture consists of beliefs and values which can both be viewed broadly as justifications for behavior (Ott 1989; Becker 1961). Beliefs are “consciously held cognitive views about truth and reality” (Ott 1989: 36). Values are “broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others” (Hofstede 2001:5). The difference is that beliefs reveal a perceived reality, while values reveal the preferred reality.

Beliefs and values combine to shape cultural artifacts and patterns of behavior (Hofstede 2001; Ott 1989). Correctional officers may have a belief that inmates are inherently dangerous. The officers’ behavior toward inmates is then shaped by this belief and concerns for personal safety will take precedence. If officers believe inmates are inherently dangerous, the officers may then value harsh punishment for inmates. This is a value because it is a preference for harsh punishment over more lenient approaches. The value could be demonstrated in the officers’ language if officers commonly refer to prison as a “daycare” or the institution as a “college campus.” In both of these examples the language being used points to the value of harsh punishment, and the subsequent view that the current system is not harsh enough. Beliefs and values are unspoken but

members of the occupational culture are commonly aware of these beliefs and values and can verbalize them if needed.

The final and most abstract level of culture is underlying assumptions. Underlying assumptions are a combination of beliefs and values that are unconsciously held (Keyton 2005; Ott 1989). Members of the culture are no longer aware of these values and beliefs because they have become so normalized and accepted. Consequently, the underlying assumptions form the foundation for the occupational culture (Ott 1989). Underlying assumptions may be “politically incorrect” and often are contrary to the values of the official organizational culture (Ott 1989). For example, an underlying assumption of correctional officer culture may be that inmates are “animals.” This underlying assumption is contrary to the organizational value of humane treatment of inmates. Further, claiming that inmates are “animals” and should be treated as such is a “politically incorrect” statement. Instead of verbalizing this view, officers may adhere to it without consciously acknowledging the view.

In the preceding review of the literature, I defined occupational culture, detailed its development and demonstrated methods for examining the abstract concept of occupational culture. Now I turn to correctional officer occupational culture specifically. First, I discuss the possibility that no cohesive culture exists in corrections. Then I examine the available literature on the correctional officer occupation. Little literature is available which directly addresses correctional officer culture, but a review of the literature on the correctional officer occupation informs an examination of officer culture. Finally, I examine the three previous attempts to directly examine correctional officer culture.

Possibility of a Cohesive Correctional Officer Culture

There is a debate within the correctional officer literature about whether a cohesive culture actually exists. Several authors throughout the 1980's suggested the working environment, especially the isolationism and lack of communication among officers prevents the development of a cohesive culture (Poole & Regoli 1981; Klofas & Toch 1982; Philiber 1987; Pollock 1986). At the time it was common for officers to spend large blocks of their day isolated in a housing unit communicating with only inmates. Additionally, research found correctional officers are not recruited based on task related purposes, do not set their own goals, and are not interdependent (Lombardo 1989). These findings point to a lack of cohesion within the officer group. This argument was supplemented by findings that officers showed little consensus on group norms (Lombardo 1989).

At the same time that Lombardo and others were claiming a lack of cohesive culture among correctional officers, others argued for its existence (Crouch 1980a; Crouch 1980b; Crouch & Marquart 1980; Pollock 1986; Kauffman 1988). Kauffman (1988) found prospective officers' values and beliefs varied significantly from those of working officers (Kauffman 1988). Thus individuals' values and beliefs change during the transition from civilian to officer. Data supporting the cohesive culture view was collected using both participant observation (see Crouch 1980a & Crouch 1980b) and interviews (see Kauffman 1988). This combination of methodologies allowed a richer description of the correctional officer experience and led to the belief that a cohesive culture exists. Kauffman created a list of nine norms that were each reported by multiple officers suggesting some cohesion.

The debate over the existence of a cohesive culture continued throughout the 1980's. By the early 90's corrections had changed significantly, moving to more of a team-oriented approach. This change eliminated many of the barriers to culture formation suggested by previous authors (Farkas 1997). Officers were no longer placed in isolation and were encouraged to work together instead of being required to keep a distance. The change carried over to the social world as well; officers began to routinely socialize together creating relatively close relationships. Based on this and the majority of the literature on corrections, it seems clear that a correctional officer culture exists.

Correctional Officer Environment

In spite of the agreement in the literature that a cohesive correctional officer culture exists, there are few attempts to directly examine the culture. A review of the corrections literature can provide an understanding of the correctional environment in general. Occupational culture develops through interaction between members of the occupation and their occupational environment (Sykes 1958; Bowker 1980; Conser 1980; Paoline, Meyers, & Worden 2000; Skolnick 2002; Paoline 2003; Crawley 2006; Skolnick 2008). Because occupational culture forms in reaction to the work environment an understanding of the correctional officer environment helps us understand the culture. Correctional officers operate within total institutions, which significantly impacts the formation and functioning of their culture (Goffman 1961). A total institution according to Goffman is a setting where all aspects of daily life are carried out in the same place with a large group of similar others under the same single authority (Goffman 1961). Goffman argued total institutions are separated from society by large physical barriers, and that the activities within them are all aimed at accomplishing the goals of the

institution. The people within total institutions are split into two groups: the managed population (inmates) and a small supervisory staff (Goffman 1961). Each of these groups develops a distinct culture which both proscribes and prescribes behaviors for their role. These cultures include conceptions of the other group typically consisting of stereotypical views. Staff see inmates as “bitter, secretive and untrustworthy” while inmates see staff as “condescending, highhanded, and mean.” (Goffman 1961: 7).

Perhaps the most dramatic demonstration of the power of the prison environment is the Stanford Prison Experiment (SPE) conducted by Philip Zimbardo and colleagues. The experiment showed that even “normal” (i.e., lacking any mental illness on standardized psychological exams) college students could become brutal, sadistic, oppressors if placed in a position of power over “inmates” (Zimbardo 2007). There are various limitations of this experiment, but the most glaring is the fact the “officers” in the study received no training on how to perform their job. Instead they were told to “act like a guard” and as a result the popular media image of the oppressive guard became prominent. For example, one of the officers began speaking in a southern accent reminiscent of the film *Cool Hand Luke*. Despite this limitation, Zimbardo and colleagues concluded the prison environment changes people regardless of their individual backgrounds (Zimbardo 2007).

Goffman provides a general framework for total institutions including asylums, and Zimbardo demonstrates the influence a simulated correctional environment may have in terms of role-taking behavior. Now it is important that we examine the specific occupational environment of correctional officers.

Correctional officers must staff prisons 24 hours per day in a para-military setting, commonly report feeling in constant conflict with superiors (Jacobs & Grear 1977; Carroll 1980; Cullen, Link, Wolf, & Frank 1985; Willet 2004; Crawley & Crawley 2007) and are traditionally predominantly white males (Lunden 1965; Crouch 1980a; Jacobs & Retsky 1980; Wicks 1981; Jurik 1985; Kauffman 1988). Officers see the work as a job (not a career), and typically, a temporary one (Wicks 1981). Most officers report taking the job due to the extrinsic rewards such as pay, benefits, and job security (Jacobs 1978; Webb & Morris 1980; May 1980; Kauffman 1988; Lombardo 1989; Britton 2003). Academics have pointed to the low pay of correctional officers as a potential stressor, but for most officers the job represents more than they could earn elsewhere due to their lack of education (Jacobs 1978; Kauffman 1988).

The literature points to three critical components of the prison environment that help shape correctional officer culture: perception of dangerousness, proximity to inmates, and role conflict.

Perception of dangerousness.

The perception of correctional officer work as extremely dangerous is widely accepted when discussing the prison environment in academic work (Conover 2001; Crawley & Crawley 2007; Crouch 1980a; Liebling 2008; Sykes 1958). Working in view of bars, heavy steel doors, and razor wire is a constant reminder to officers that their clientele is deemed dangerous by society. Additionally, officers are nearly always outnumbered, and are not allowed to carry weapons when in close proximity with inmates (Jacobs & Retsky 1980). The environment leads to a heightened level of fear among officers and makes fear and unpredictability central components of the officer

culture (Sykes 1958; Toch 1976; Crouch 1980a; Morris & Morris 1980; Crouch 1991; Conover 2001; Johnson 2006). The perception of danger occurs despite the fact that in 2000, the staff assault rate was 14.6/1,000 inmates and there were a total of 5 officers killed by inmates nationwide (Stephan & Karberg 2003). In comparison, during the same year there were 157 law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty (Officer Down 2009). The data suggests the occupation is not exceedingly dangerous but it is perceived to be, by both those who engage in it and the majority of academics who study it.

The perception of the job as dangerous greatly increases the level of stress experienced by correctional officers (Philiber 1987; Kauffman 1988; Crouch 1991; Travis 1994; Conover 2001). The perception of danger also helps shape the officer culture, influencing officers' beliefs and values regarding inmates and their fellow officers. This is because the "problem" of danger is one of the critical issues that officers must negotiate in the course of their work. Previous research found the core beliefs and values of correctional officer culture concern how to properly view inmates (Martin 2003; Rhodes 2004). The view of inmates is influenced by the perception that inmates make the correctional officer's job dangerous.

Inmates are seen as untrustworthy and constantly seeking to manipulate the officer (Jacobs 1978; Crouch & Marquart 1980; Savage 2000; Gregory 2002; Martin 2003; Rhodes 2004). Officers believe inmates committed their crime as an "easy way out" and attribute crime solely to individual-level factors (Jacobs 1978; Carroll 1980; Crouch & Marquart 1980; Crawley 2006). The belief that individual characteristics cause criminal behavior reflects officers' view of inmates as inherently "immoral" and "lazy" (Conover 2001). Most officers do not believe inmates can change or be

rehabilitated (Crawley 2006). Correctional officer's beliefs and values regarding inmates influence patterns of behavior that guide their interactions with inmates.

In spite of the negative values and beliefs about inmates, organizational values define inmates as "people" who should be treated with compassion whenever possible (Morris & Morris 1980; Lombardo 1989; Sparks, Bottoms, & Hay 1996; Britton 2003). The edict to treat inmates with respect comes from the administration but is typically embraced by correctional officers for practical reasons (Fleisher 1989; Eigenberg 1991; Farkas & Manning 1997; Britton 2003). Officers realize they are drastically outnumbered and must treat inmates with respect to ensure order and their own safety. Officers treat inmates with respect by ignoring the crime the inmate is imprisoned for (Guenther & Guenther 1980; Jacobs & Retsky 1980; Lombardo 1989). Instead, officers evaluate the inmate based on their behavior within the facility (Guenther & Guenther 1980; Jacobs & Retsky 1980; Lombardo 1989).

Cultural norms, filtered through the organizational culture, call for officers to be firm but fair toward inmates (Morris & Morris 1980; Owen 1985; Crawley 2006), and emphasize the value of communication skills and a sense of humor (Owen 1985; Kauffman 1988; Crawley & Crawley 2007). These skills are necessary to diffuse potentially violent situations because physical force is not a realistic option. For many officers, survival is achieved by adopting a façade of "hard ass" and showing complete indifference to what occurs around them (Kauffman 1988). This façade allows officers to hide their fear which is critically important because officers believe that any show of fear to inmates puts the officer in grave danger (Kauffman 1988; Conover 2001; Crawley 2006).

The patterns of behavior that guide interactions with inmates influence cultural beliefs and values. For example, one of the consistent findings about correctional officers is increasing cynicism as they progress in their careers (Crawley 2006; Morris & Morris 1980; Toch 1976). The increase in cynicism is generally seen as a reaction to being repeatedly deceived by inmates (Crawley 2006; Morris & Morris 1980). Interactions with inmates are conducted under the belief that inmates are rarely honest. The circular relationship between correctional officer perceptions of inmate deception and increased cynicism reflects the larger patterns of behavior. Officers begin to behave cynically toward inmates due to prior interactions in which they were deceived.

The perception of the job as dangerous influences a number of correctional officer beliefs, values, and patterns of behavior. The perception helps construct the officers' view of inmates as untrustworthy, manipulative, lazy, selfish, violent and unpredictable. The perception of danger also influences the manner in which officers interact with inmates, and increases officer cynicism.

Proximity to inmates.

Correctional officers perform "people work" (Goffman 1961; Jacobs & Gear 1977; Morris & Morris 1980; Lombardo 1989). Their job is to simultaneously meet the security based requirements of the prison administration and the human service needs of the inmates. Correctional officers perform this job far from the public view. Due to their inability to demonstrate their worth in public, correctional officers are left to the mercy of the media and the public imagination to create a public image (May 1980). Officers perform a job that citizens want done, but do not want to perform themselves because of the perception of prisons in general and inmates specifically (Johnson 1981).

Public opinion is that prisons are filled with the worst of society and should be places of punishment (Johnson & Toch 1982). Inmates are the least desirable members of society, the “bad guys,” and therefore officers may be considered tainted by association (Cloward 1968; Duffee et. al. 1980; Johnson 1981; Toch 1981; Jacobsen-Hardy 1999; Johnson 2002; Crawley 2006). Officers are seen as uneducated, abusive brutes who are at best “off” and, at worst, sadistic (Guenther & Guenther 1980; Jacobsen-Hardy 1999; Britton 2003; Crawley 2006). As one author put it, “a guard is just an inmate with a few more privileges” (Jacobs & Grear 1977). Due to their close proximity and extended contact with the “most loathsome members of society” correctional officers engage in “dirty work.”

“Dirty work” is a term first coined by Everett Hughes in 1951 (Hughes 1994). In 1971, Hughes simplified dirty work saying that it was work that in some way is viewed as tainted, unpleasant or undesirable (Hughes 1971). Due to their proximity to the “worst members of society” correctional officers engage in dirty work.

Individuals who engage in dirty work are often stigmatized by their occupation (Ashforth & Kriener 1999; Bittner 1970; Bolton 2005; Cahill 1996; Dick 2005). Goffman defined stigma as, “an attribute that is deeply discrediting” (Goffman 1963:3). A variety of stigma management techniques have been identified. Depersonalization is the most prevalent stigma management technique of correctional officers in the exigent literature. Most officers try to maintain a social distance from inmates to avoid “contamination” (Goffman 1961; Crouch 1980a; Hepburn & Albonetti 1980; Lombardo 1989; Britton 2003). New officers are warned to keep a distance from and never trust inmates (Jacobs & Retsky 1980; Rhodes 2004; Crawley 2006). However, social distance

can never be fully achieved because officers must rely on inmates in varying degrees to maintain order (Sykes 1958). Social distancing from inmates is also difficult because officers generally share much in common with the inmates they supervise (Jacobs 1978; Jacobs & Retsky 1980; Morris & Morris 1980; Poole & Regoli 1981). The desire to maintain social distance from inmates shapes interactions with both inmates and other officers.

Occupational culture plays an important role for individuals' stigma management. Once work is stigmatized as dirty, individuals will seek to develop a support network to manage the stigma (Taylor 1996; Ponticelli 1999; Warren 1974). Occupational culture can function as an effective buffer against the stigma flowing from dirty work, and allow members to enhance their esteem (Dick 2005). The occupational culture provides a sense of belonging to its members. In occupations that are labeled as dirty work, such as correctional officer, one of the primary tasks of the occupational culture is stigma management.

Officers socialize almost exclusively with other officers while excluding outsiders (Kauffman 1980; Lombardo 1989; Martin 2003; Cockcroft 2005; Woody 2005). Officers become isolated from outsiders, in part, due to the stigma attached to "dirty work." The isolation is exacerbated by the around-the-clock hours officers work and the belief that only correctional officers can understand the occupation. The lack of social interaction with non-officers leads to a sense of solidarity among officers and increased cohesiveness of the culture.

Solidarity is a central component of correctional officer culture (DiIulio 1987; Kauffman 1988; Farkas 1997; Farkas & Manning 1997; Conover 2001; Crawley 2006).

The need for solidarity comes from the sense of being isolated from anyone who does not wear the same uniform (Kauffman 1988; Conover 2001; Crawley & Crawley 2007). The security features that keep inmates in prison also function as a physical barrier between officers and outsiders. The separation leaves officers feeling isolated from society. The separation from society, added to the need for social distance from inmates and generally negative relationships with superiors, leaves officers isolated from everyone except their fellow officers.

Solidarity ensures officers can depend on their coworkers in dangerous situations and provides support during times of criticism by outsiders (Crawley 2006). These are both positive reactions to the belief that only officers can understand the difficulty of the job. There are also negative aspects of strong solidarity among correctional officers. Officers have a code of silence, which prohibits speaking with anyone about alleged deviance (Giallombardo 1966; Bowker 1980; Marquart 1986; Kauffman 1988; Farkas 1997). Officers' loyalty is to the other officers who engage in the same dirty work and understand the difficulties of the occupation. The most important rules that officers must abide by are the norms of the officer culture; not the formal rules of the organization (Conser 1980; Worden 1989; Skolnick 2002; Woody 2005). One of the norms of the culture is to not speak with outsiders, even in cases of alleged deviance. In this way, the code of silence prevents effective investigations into officer deviance (Conser 1980).

Dirty work also requires officers to engage in emotional labor (Crawley 2006). Officers must depersonalize the work and set aside their emotions regardless of the circumstances of the situation (Bannish & Ruiz 2003). Officers interact daily with the "worst" members of society and are often familiar with inmates' crimes, the details of

which may be horrifying. Officers also encounter assaults, rapes, and suicides. The combination of negative events means that officers must be able to manage their emotions during work. If officers are not able to manage their emotions in a culturally appropriate manner, they will fail to maintain adequate social distance between themselves and the inmates.

Emotional labor requires officers to “induce or suppress feelings in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others” (Martin 2003:112). Officers must maintain a “professional face” regardless of their true emotions. Instead of displaying emotions, officers resort to the use of humor, cursing, and the telling of war stories as a means of dealing with their feelings, while staying within the demands of the job (Crawley 2006). Finally, officers often develop “hardness” with time on the job (Kauffman 1988; Travis 1994; Martin 2003; Crawley 2006). This is described as a deadening of affect or the inability to feel empathy for anyone. The officer ceases trying to perform emotion and instead chooses to forego all emotion.

Correctional officers work in close proximity to inmates who are judged to be the worst members of society. This close work with deviants leads to corrections being considered “dirty work.” The designation of dirty work shapes much of the officer culture and demands officers maintain a social distance between themselves and inmates. The label dirty work also isolates officers from other members of society which increases officer solidarity and secrecy when interacting with outsiders. Finally, dirty work requires officers to engage in emotional labor to handle their emotions in culturally acceptable ways such as joking and storytelling as opposed to crying.

Role conflict.⁴

Role conflict is defined as a “lack of consensus concerning approved behavior in situations that are morally conflicting” (Grusky 1968:461). Role conflict originates in the organizational structure of the department. A department of corrections creates role conflict for officers by asking officers to complete contradictory tasks (Jacobs 1978; Crouch 1980a; Crouch & Marquart 1980; Hepburn & Albonetti 1980; Lombardo 1989; Crouch 1991). Specifically, poor relationships with superiors may contribute to role conflict (Hepburn & Albonetti 1980; Crouch 1991). If the superior routinely changes expectations or presents competing goals, role conflict is likely to occur.

Correctional officers experience role conflict from one primary source, competing demands of security and rehabilitation. Correctional officers’ original purpose in the prison was maintaining the security of the institution. Security remains a focal point for modern correctional officers; however, modern officers are also involved to varying degrees in the rehabilitation and treatment of inmates. This creates role conflict for the officers who are given the contradictory tasks of custody and rehabilitation (Carroll 1980; Crouch 1980a; Crouch & Marquart 1980; Hepburn & Albonetti 1980; Crouch 1991).

Treatment goals require officers to develop close relationships with inmates that minimize social distance (Carroll 1980; Hepburn & Albonetti 1980). Social distance must be minimized because treatment depends on trust between the person being treated and the one providing treatment. Minimizing social distance is antithetical to the core tenets of officer culture. Security considerations demand that officers keep maximum social distance from inmates to avoid being manipulated (Giallombardo 1966; Bowker

⁴ There is contradiction in the literature regarding the use of the terms role conflict and role strain (see Goode 1960; Johnson 1995; Kanter 1977; Simpson 2005). I use the term role conflict throughout my research to discuss conflict between competing demands within a single role.

1980; Hepburn & Albonetti 1980). The tenets of a treatment program contradict with major aspects of officer culture and create large scale role conflict (Hepburn & Albonetti 1980; Gregory 2002). Jacobs (1977) found officers in the 1970's typically maintained the security role and ignored their role as treatment agents (Jacobs 1977). The issue of role conflict is a prevalent theme in the literature on correctional officers. The changes in correctional ideology from rehabilitation focused, to rehabilitation as an afterthought, may have reduced the prevalence of role conflict for modern correctional officers. However, although a punitive approach dominates US prisons, rehabilitation programs remain in place. The dated nature of the literature on correctional officers prevents a definitive conclusion of whether role conflict persists for modern correctional officers.

The correctional officer occupation literature reveals several important findings regarding correctional officer culture. Officers perceive their work as dangerous and unpredictable which leads them to view inmates as untrustworthy, manipulative, lazy, selfish, violent and unpredictable. Negative characteristics associated with inmates influence how officers interact with inmates, and increases officer cynicism. Corrections' status as dirty work leads officers to attempt to maintain social distance from inmates and leads to officer solidarity, secrecy, and creates the need for the performance of emotional labor. Finally, the literature shows that role conflict is prevalent among officers due to their competing roles as agents of rehabilitation and security. These are the general findings in the literature regarding the impact of the correctional officer's occupational environment. I will now review the three previous studies which directly address the issue of correctional officer culture.

Previous Examinations of Culture

In the previous 40 years there have been three academic attempts to address correctional officer culture directly (see Farkas 1997; Kauffman 1988; Lombardo 1989). All three authors examined correctional officer culture through qualitative interviews, but none used field observation. The sole reliance on interviews creates limitations for each of the studies, but their work is important to review before moving to my research.

Lombardo was the first scholar to directly examine correctional officer culture (1989). Lombardo interviewed 50 officers in 1976, and a separate group of 50 officers in 1986.⁵ He found that officers were reluctant to see their fellow officers as a reference group, and sought to avoid social interaction with other officers away from work (Lombardo 1989). Lombardo also found a lack of consensus among officers on what would constitute a norm violation. For example, he found that only 12% of officers reported that “snitching” on another officer was against the “officers’ code” (Lombardo 1989). Based on his findings, Lombardo concluded that a cohesive correctional officer culture did not exist (Lombardo 1989).

In spite of his conclusion, Lombardo presented three themes of correctional officer work: a human services theme, an order maintenance theme, and a security theme (Lombardo 1989). The human services theme states that officers must meet inmates’ basic human needs, help them adjust to prison life and counsel them through personal crises. The human service theme was much more prevalent among officers in 1976 than in 1986. The order maintenance theme views officers as basically police within the institution, whose primary role is ensuring that the rules are followed. The order

⁵ There is overlap in the timing of Kauffman and Lombardo’s research, both collected data beginning in 1976.

maintenance theme was distinguished from the security theme which focuses on keeping inmates inside the institution. Lombardo found that only 17% of officers reported a security theme, but the security theme was more prevalent in 1986 than in 1976. He concluded security was a passive theme of the work while order maintenance and human services were active themes.

Kauffman, the second author to directly address correctional officer culture, performed interviews with 40 officers from 1976-1980. Kauffman interviewed all 40 officers before they began work then re-interviewed the 28 officers still employed two years later. Finally, she interviewed 6 of the 17 officers still employed after four years (Kauffman 1988). This longitudinal approach provides interesting insights into the correctional officer culture, and the process of socialization. For example, her methodology shows that after four years, 23 of the 40 original officers had quit the job. Kauffman also found a distinct officer culture separate from the administration, inmates, or treatment specialists. She identified nine norms prevalent within the officer culture and created a typology for correctional officers.

Table 2 shows the nine norms identified by Kauffman in descending order according to the strength of the norm on the left side of the table. Kauffman found the strongest officer norm was “always go to the aid of an officer in distress” (Kauffman 1988). New officers were judged primarily on their ability to conform to this norm, and violation of other norms was allowed if the norm of aiding fellow officers was upheld (Kauffman 1988). All nine of the norms that Kauffman identified relate to officer solidarity and maintaining social space between officers and inmates.

The strength of these norms is demonstrated in the finding that officers would support each others' punishment of inmates even if the punishment was perceived as unjust (Kauffman 1988). In other words, officer solidarity took precedence over the mistreatment of inmates. New officers were required to engage in sanctioning of inmates including physically beating inmates as a way to build solidarity. The issue of solidarity is critical as illustrated by one of the officers, "you learn to never talk about the institution to outsiders, you should only talk to other officers" (Kauffman 1988:111). The term "outsiders" is applied most commonly to the media, but also applies to an officer's spouse and family. Officers avoided speaking about the job with family primarily to "spare them the anguish and worry experienced daily at the prison" (Kauffman 1988: 112).

Kauffman found that the most often violated norm was the prohibition against showing sympathy for inmates (Kauffman 1988). Violation of norms received informal sanctions ranging from criticism to ostracization (Kauffman 1988). Officers who chose to violate the norms were openly criticized, harassed, assigned to undesirable posts, and ignored by other officers. In short, an officer who violated the norms would be ostracized from the occupational culture group.

Kauffman created a typology based on the attitudes officers held toward inmates and their co-workers. Table 3 illustrates Kauffman's typology. "Pollyannas" were more likely to view inmates as individuals, but were rare especially in high security institutions (Kauffman 1988). "White hats" viewed inmates as victims and opposed most of their fellow officers. "White hats" were even more rare than "pollyannas;" four of the five new officers with this orientation resigned within the first year. "Hard asses" looked

forward to confrontations with inmates and revealed in belonging to the officer “brotherhood” (Kauffman 1988). The majority of officers in Kauffman’s research were “burnouts.” Burnouts avoided both inmates and other officers and experienced psychological stress from the work. The psychological damage also destroyed the officer’s personal life. “Functionaries” did not care what happened at prison, viewed the work solely as a job, and stayed only for the money.

Table 2: Correctional officer Norms

	Kauffman 1988	Farkas 1997
1	Always aid an officer in distress	Always help an officer in danger
2	Don’t lug drugs in for inmates	Don’t get too friendly with inmates
3	Don’t inform on fellow officers	Don’t abuse your authority with inmates
4	Never make a fellow officer look bad in front of inmates	Back your fellow officers in decisions and actions
5	Always support an officer in a dispute with an inmate	Cover your ass and don’t admit mistakes
6	Always support officer sanctions against inmates	Carry your own weight
7	Don’t engage in any behavior that shows sympathy for inmates	Defer to the experience of veteran officers
8	Maintain officer solidarity against all outside groups	Mind your own business
9	Show positive concern for fellow officers	

Kauffman found that most officers moved through the various types during their career. Most new officers began their career as either “pollyannas” or “white hats” then became “hard asses.” Eventually the officers transitioned into “burnouts,” then the majority of officers concluded their careers by either becoming a functionary or resigning.

Table 3: Correctional Officer Typologies

Officer Type	View of Inmates	View of Officers
Pollyannas	Positive	Positive
White Hats	Positive	Negative
Hard Asses	Negative	Positive
Burnouts	Negative	Negative
Functionaries	Indifferent	Indifferent

Farkas is the final author to directly address correctional officer culture (Farkas 1997). Farkas conducted 79 qualitative interviews with correctional officers ranging from 1-3 hours in length (Farkas 1997). She found officers had a cohesive culture that emphasized solidarity and was maintained by the virtual invisibility of correctional officers to the outside world. Farkas also found a normative code among officers and identified eight norms which can be seen in table 2. Farkas confirmed Kauffman's finding that the most important norm of officer culture was to always help an officer in need. The norms of solidarity and social distance are still present in Farkas' work but new norms concerning the humane treatment of inmates and the achievement of teamwork also emerged.

Farkas' third norm is "don't abuse your authority with inmates." This is in sharp contrast to Kauffman's finding that officers were required at times to physically beat inmates. Another subtle shift from Kauffman's normative code is Farkas' second norm, "don't get too friendly with inmates." This norm is similar to the Kauffman's prohibition against "lugging" drugs, because both require maintenance of social space between

officers and inmates. However, Kauffman's norm references a formal prison rule as drugs are not allowed in the prison and are illegal in society in general. In contrast, Farkas suggested that even being friends with inmates, regardless of formal rule breaking violates officer norms.

The three direct examinations of correctional officer culture provide both a background and an impetus for my research. Lombardo suggested that there was no cohesive culture among correctional officers although he acknowledged that changes in prison structure may increase the likelihood that a highly cohesive correctional officer culture may emerge (Lombardo 1989). In contrast, Kauffman and Farkas both found a cohesive culture among correctional officers. Kauffman conducted her research in the late 1970's and found correctional officers were typically destined to burnout (Kauffman 1988). Farkas' research focused on the normative code that develops in correctional officer culture. A comparison of the cultural norms found by Kauffman in the late 1970's and Farkas in the early 1990's shows both similarities and important differences. Both authors point to solidarity and maintaining social space between officers and inmates as central norms of officer culture. However, Farkas found the humane treatment of inmates was also a part of correctional officer culture.

In this chapter I reviewed the historical development of correctional officers and modern officer culture. The existing literature on correctional officer culture provides a context as well as an impetus for my research. The information drawn from the general correctional literature is valuable for contextual purposes but also incomplete. Few studies have directly examined correctional officer culture, and no one has utilized field observation to do so. The shifts in officer culture present in interview data point to the

need to re-examine officer culture. I now turn to a discussion of my methodology which departs from previous research on correctional officer culture.

Chapter 3

Methodology

I conducted an ethnography of the occupational culture among correctional officers in a Midwestern state. My data are derived from two sources: participant observation and semi-structured interviews. I began my data collection by attending the state correctional officer training academy, and continued by conducting observations in various institutions throughout the state. I used a qualitative software package (Atlas) to manage and organize the data. I then analyzed the data using a modified grounded theory method with the primary goal of answering my research questions. I now turn to a detailed discussion of the specific methods utilized during the research.

Ethnography

Ethnography involves the observation of and participation in particular groupings aimed at determining how the group operates and what it means to be a member of that group (Neyland 2008). Ethnography has specific characteristics: it requires flexibility during research, involves collection of data from multiple sources and relies on the examination of unstructured or raw data (Atkinson & Hammersly 1998; Hammersly & Atkinson 2007). “What is happening here?” is the critical question ethnography must answer (Charmaz & Mitchell 2001).

Ethnography allows the researcher to get close to the people being studied and “to discover the details of their behavior and the innards of their experience” (Atkinson & Hammersly 1998:119; Finch 1986; Stacey 1988). Ethnographic research requires a balance between insider knowledge and an outsider’s curiosity (Rock 2001). The researcher must have some knowledge of the setting either from previous experience or

literature review or they will be unable to ask meaningful questions (Berg 2007; Hammersly & Atkinson 2007; Rock 2001). However, if the researcher is too familiar with the setting they risk overlooking the taken for granted aspects of the field (Hammersly & Atkinson 2007; Rock 2001). Over-familiarity is a risk for my research due to my extensive review of the correctional literature. However, prior to conducting the research I had little familiarity with the physical environment of prison, or the interactions between officers and inmates. This lack of familiarity allowed me to experience the institutions with an outsider's curiosity. My movement among different institutions and between the field and an academic setting maintained this curiosity throughout the project.

Ethnography involves a constant overlap between data collection, organization and analysis; it is not a linear method (Lofland, Snow, Anderson & Lofland 2006). The non-linear nature of ethnography requires a great deal of flexibility when conducting research which prevents adherence to a rigid methodology throughout the project (Neyland 2008; Rock 2001). Ethnographers typically enter the field with an ethnographic strategy to orient the research but remain open to modifying this strategy as the research develops (Neyland 2008; Rock 2001). While ethnography depends on informants and an understanding of the native language, it also requires checking of informant's accounts against other data (Atkinson & Hammersly 1998). The preferred method of ethnography is to triangulate data through multiple methods of collection such as interviews and participant observation (Berg 2007; Denzin 1978; Rock 2001). Triangulation of data allows the researcher to check the validity of statements against actual observed behaviors.

Ethnography was originally the enterprise of anthropologists (Neyland 2008). Malinowski is typically regarded as the first ethnographer for his work with the Trobriand Islanders (Malinowski 1922). The method was originally applied to examine “exotic” foreign cultures and then developed in sociology, especially at the University of Chicago (Hammersly & Atkinson 1998; Neyland 2008). As the method was adopted by sociologists, it was applied increasingly to western society (see Hannerz 1969; Whyte 1981). Historically ethnographers have argued their method is well suited to represent the nature of social reality in an accurate manner (Blumer 1969).

The anthropological and sociological applications of ethnography both point toward its usefulness in examining culture (Geertz 1973; Van Loon 2001; Wolcott 1999). As Atkinson & Hammersly (1998) state, “the issue of whether and how other cultures could be understood lies at the heart of modern ethnography” (pg. 113). In fact, ethnography is so well suited for the study of culture that Spradley (1979) defined ethnography as, “the work of describing a culture” (pg. 3). This is because ethnography puts the researcher in the midst of the people they study allowing the researcher to develop an intimate understanding of the group’s perceptions and behaviors (Berg 2007; Lofland et al. 2006). Ethnography creates an in-depth picture of the intangible elements of culture that are difficult for other methods to analyze (Neyland 2008).

One of the most recent adaptations of ethnography is the study of organizational and occupational culture (Neyland 2008). Ethnographic methods have been used to examine doctors (Becker 1961; Broadhead 1983), police officers (Conti 2006; Dick 2005; Herbert 1996; Van Maanen 1978), the juvenile court system (Cicourel 1976; Emerson 1969), home health care workers (Stacey 2005), and nurses (Chambliss 1996; Chiappetta-

Swanson 2005) among others. The purpose of organizational ethnography is “to uncover and explicate the ways in which people in particular work settings come to understand, account for, take action and otherwise manage their day-to-day situation” (Van Maanen 1979:540).

My research examines the culture and socialization process of correctional officers; issues which are well suited for ethnographic methods. I now turn to a discussion of the specific ethnographic techniques utilized in my research. In this section, I attempt to show the places where my initial ethnographic strategy had to be adjusted in reaction to the emerging demands of the field. The result is a methodology that is messy, which I believe is the reality of ethnographic research.

Current Research

The first issue in conducting my research was to determine what constitutes a correctional officer. The Prairie Department of Corrections (PDOC), like most correctional agencies, operates on a para-military rank structure. The rank structure includes in ascending order Officer, Corporal, Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain and Major. Previous literature suggests the rank of Sergeant is an appropriate cutoff to delineate between line and administrative staff (Farkas & Manning 1997). I examine custodial staff at the ranks of Officer and Corporal. There are minor differences in the job description and experience of corporals and officers. For example, Corporals are not allowed to be posted in gun towers, or housing units and certain posts such as the segregation unit require at least one corporal. However, the daily work experience of officers and corporals is virtually the same, and neither engages in managerial duties.

The term correctional officer is used throughout the remainder of this paper to refer to both officers and corporals in the PDOC.

Once the term correctional officer was operationalized, I had to address two critical issues faced by all ethnographers. The first issue is gaining access to the field (Berg 2007; Hammersly & Atkinson 2007; Neyland 2008). Field settings vary according to the level of restrictiveness of access (Lofland et al. 2006). Lofland et al. propose a 4-part typology of field settings according to the restrictiveness of access ranging from public places as the most accessible to private places as the least (Lofland et al. 2006). Correctional settings are private places which require a “formal invitation” to gain access (Lofland et al. 2006).

Prior to the start of data collection, I secured an invitation from the director of the PDOC to conduct research. This invitation granted me initial access to the field, but the nature of my research required access to be attained repeatedly during data collection. At each research site I met with the shift commander and the warden prior to beginning my data collection. These meetings served two purposes: to gain insight as to the views and perceptions of the command personnel and to build rapport with the individuals responsible for granting me access at specific institutions. Although the director had granted me formal access, I felt it necessary to secure permission to proceed at the institutional level.

After securing institutional access by meeting with wardens and shift commanders, I had to gain informal access to the field. I was granted access to the field by the administration, but if officers did not grant me informal access I would have very limited data. I gained informal access by establishing rapport with officers who I

identified as “stars” (Berg 2007). These officers were identified by watching interactions among officers during my initial day on a new shift. The “stars” were those officers who garnered the most respect from their co-workers. Gaining the trust of the star officers increased the likelihood other officers accepted me, and granted me access to a broad range of activities. The initial rapport was built by engaging in a variety of activities that did not directly relate to data collection (Hammersly & Atkinson 2007; Rock 2001). I built rapport by engaging in a variety of activities including playing softball and basketball with officers and going with officers to the bar after work to “unwind.”

The second issue is whether to conduct research overtly or covertly (Barnbaum & Byron 2001; Berg 2007; Erickson 1967). I decided to conduct research overtly by identifying myself as a researcher at the outset to all subjects. The decision to conduct overt participant observation was made after much consideration. Several authors argue that covert research is almost always unethical (Barnbaum & Byron 2001; Esterberg 2002), or that it violates the trust of the research subjects (Erickson 1967). There are, however, other authors that argue covert research is necessary with certain restricted access populations (Berg 2007; Miller & Tewksbury 2001).

Covert research has two primary benefits. First, it avoids the “Hawthorne effect,” wherein subjects change their behavior due to the presence of the researcher (Roethlisberger & Dickenson 1939). The “Hawthorne effect” is typically short-lived and can be overcome by a skillful ethnographer who is able to make himself “invisible” in the social setting (Berg 2007). I achieved “invisibility” by wearing a uniform and by using the language of officers which I learned during formal training. I also engaged in minor deviance, such as eating food from the segregation food cart, with officers. The second

benefit is that covert research allows the researcher to examine a setting that would not otherwise be accessible (Miller & Tewksbury 2001). In my case, however, I was able to gain full access to the field in spite of my standing as a researcher.

There are also two primary shortcomings of covert research. First, as stated above several authors argue that covert research is unethical or damaging to the field (Barnbaum & Byron 2001; Erickson 1967; Esterberg 2002). Second, covert research greatly restricts the range of data, interactions, and events available to the researcher (Hammersly & Atkinson 2007; Smith 2001). For example, covert observation would have allowed me to work in only one institution instead of examining the entire department. Also, new officers are typically assigned a post that limits their autonomy and at the Prairie State Penitentiary (PSP) and the Commanche State Correctional Institution (CSCI) they are isolated in housing units or gun towers. In contrast, by revealing my researcher role I was able to work in a variety of locations. There are also a number of experienced officers who refuse to interact with new officers until they have been with the department for at least one year. I was able to work with and informally interview several of these experienced officers because I revealed my role as a researcher and was thus given standing beyond “newbie.” Finally, I supplemented my observations with semi-formal interviews which would not have been possible in a covert role (Hammersly & Atkinson 2007).

In addition to the methodological considerations of the current research, there were two ethical issues I had to consider. First, my research was funded by the PDOC creating a potential conflict of interest. Second, during our initial meeting Director Dallas asked me to inform him of any major rule infractions on the part of the officers.

At no time during my research did I feel a conflict of interest due to my employment by the PDOC. I was paid for my research through the university and my pay was consistent with that of a graduate research assistant. This allowed me to consider myself a graduate assistant and not an employee of the department of corrections. Further, my findings were not presented to the department until after the conclusion of data collection. The timing of my presentation of findings allowed me to collect and present data that was representative without fear of the project being cancelled.

Director Dallas' request to report major rule infractions did not include a definition of what would constitute a "major" infraction. I decided that any instance of physical or emotional abuse of inmates or fellow staff would be considered a "major" violation. I witnessed several instances of officer deviance during my field work. However, I saw nothing that qualified as a "major" violation of the rules. When officers engaged in minor deviant activities (playing cards, reading magazines, eating food that they did not purchase) I typically joined them in committing the deviant act. The acts of minor deviance that I engaged in did not harm human subjects and aided in the data gathering process.

Setting.

I conducted a multi-site ethnography, collecting data at five institutional sites and several social settings. Collecting data at multiple sites allows for comparison between findings and creates a more nuanced understanding of the occupational group. Marcus argues the term multi-site does not refer simply to having more than one research location and comparing between sites (Marcus 1995). Instead, he suggests true multi-site

ethnography requires examining the connections between various sites (Marcus 1995). One method for achieving multi-site ethnography in this sense is to “follow the people” from one site to another (Marcus 1995). I applied this method to my research by beginning at the training academy with new correctional officer recruits, and then following these recruits into the institutional settings.

The setting for my research provides a context for the findings. Prairie has a state population of less than 5 million with two urban centers and a vast amount of rural area. The department of corrections houses less than 5,000 inmates statewide in a total of 10 facilities. PDOC facilities include two community corrections centers, a youth facility, a boot camp style facility, and six traditional secure prisons. I collected data at four of the traditional secure prisons and the staff training academy (STA).

The first research site was the STA which is staffed by a full time director and seven training specialists. The STA is located in the smaller of the state’s two urban centers, Jefferson, in a converted elementary school near a residential neighborhood. The STA provides non-residential training to all departmental employees. Training begins promptly at 0800 each morning Monday through Friday, and concludes at 1630 with a half hour lunch break around 1200. Employees return to their homes each evening and are not in training during weekends. Each training class contains a mix of correctional officers and non-custody staff. My academy class began with 11 officers, 5 caseworkers, 3 medical service workers, 1 librarian, 2 maintenance workers, and 1 administrative assistant.

Pre-service training lasts five weeks. Each class of employees is assigned two training specialists (TS) who guide the class throughout the training process, and provide

approximately half of the instruction. The primary TS assigned to my class was Akira, a white male in his early 30's who has been with the PDOC for 14 years. Akira has been at the academy for three years and prior to that spent his entire career in a custody role as an officer and corporal. The secondary TS assigned to my class was Lisa, a white female in her early 40's who has been with the PDOC for 18 years. Lisa has been at the academy for eight years and spent her entire career prior to the academy in a custody role beginning as an officer and promoting to the rank of Lieutenant.

The other half of training instruction is provided by a variety of guest instructors. These instructors are departmental employees who teach academy classes related to their particular expertise. For example, the legal issues course is taught by a departmental attorney. During five weeks of academy training we received instruction from a total of 36 guest instructors, including three other training specialists who were not assigned to our class.

The first of the four traditional secure prisons was Rivertown Correctional Center (RCC) located just north of downtown in the state's largest urban center, Rivertown. RCC is a medium/minimum security institution that holds approximately 700 male inmates. It is the lowest custody level secure facility in the system and nearly 60% of the inmate population is convicted of sex offenses. The institution has a campus design with 4 housing units and separate buildings for the kitchen, library, chapel, gymnasium and medical facilities. There are 12-14 officers per shift at RCC with one assigned to the institution's sole gun tower and one assigned to a perimeter vehicle leaving only 10-12 officers inside the institution at any given time. Officers at RCC are 12% female, 23%

non white, and 65% white males with an average age of 35.6 and an average of 5.1 years of experience.

The second traditional secure prison is the Prairie State Penitentiary (PSP) which is the oldest and largest prison in the state. PSP is located in Jefferson, and was built in the late 1800's but underwent a large-scale renovation in the early 1980's. In its present condition, PSP has a campus design and holds approximately 1,100 inmates ranging from minimum to maximum security. The institution has a 30-foot high stone wall on three sides and a total of nine gun towers which are staffed 24 hours per day by officers. There are typically 55-60 officers per shift at PSP and in addition to manning each of the towers there are two officers assigned to each of the eight housing units. Overall the inmate population at PSP is older and serving relatively lengthy sentences. Officers at PSP are 13% female, 10% non-white and 77% white males, with an average age of 32.9, and an average of 4.2 years of experience.

The third traditional prison is the Comanche State Correctional Institution (CSCI) located just outside of the small town of Comanche in rural Prairie. This is the newest facility in the state (less than 10 years old) and houses approximately 1,000 inmates ranging from medium to maximum security. In addition, CSCI contains a special management unit (SMU) which serves as a super maximum security facility. The SMU is home to inmates who have caused problems in the PDOC and also serves as "death row." CSCI has a modified campus design with three large housing units on the main yard and one central services building that runs the length of the facility and includes medical, religion, education, dining, canteen and the gymnasium. The facility has only one gun tower, staffed by two officers and utilizes two perimeter vehicles. There are

typically 55-60 officers per shift at CSCI. The institution houses the most violent and longest term inmates in the department and has a reputation throughout the state both among staff and inmates as the worst prison in the state. Officers at CSCI are 24% female, 4% non-white and 72% white males with an average age of 34.6, and an average of 3.1 years of experience.

The final research site is the state's only female prison: the Prairie Correctional Center for Women (PCCW) located in a small (8,000) rural area. As the sole female institution, PCCW houses approximately 350 inmates of all custody levels. PCCW has operated since the early 1900's and has been incrementally expanded over the decades so that the current layout of the institution is not easily observable from any one vantage point. The institution is home to a nursery program for expectant inmate mothers and allows overnight visits for older children. Due to these programs, it is the only institution in the state with no arsenal of either firearms or chemical agents. There are typically 10-12 officers assigned per shift at PCCW with no gun tower or perimeter vehicle. Officers at PCCW are 36% female, 0% non-white, and 64% males, with an average age of 40.2, and an average of 5.1 years of experience.

The state also operates the Prairie Correctional Youth Facility, a secure prison for youthful offenders. I did not examine the staff at the youth facility. The exigent research focuses on correctional staff at adult institutions, and I follow this precedent by focusing solely on the adult institutions in the state.

In addition to the five institutional settings, I collected data in a variety of social settings. These included various bars that officers frequent, after work basketball games

in the prison gym, Saturday morning officer vs. inmate softball games, restaurants and officers' homes.

Participant Observation.

Participant observation “refers to the process in which an investigator establishes and sustains a many-sided and situationally appropriate relationship with a human association in a natural setting for the purpose of developing a social scientific understanding of that association” (Lofland et al. 2006: 17). Participant observation requires spending considerable time with subjects in a field setting. The observer attends to what subjects say they value and believe, and what they actually value and believe (as demonstrated by actions) (Faubion 2001). Participant observation positions the researcher as a “stranger” who must depend on subjects for cultural learning (Lofland et al. 2006; Rock 2001; Wolff 1964). Participant observation is seen as the backbone of ethnographic research, and as such is an ideal method for studying culture (Faubion 2001). I now discuss how I engaged in participant observation in my research.

The initial stage of data collection was the observation of correctional officer recruits during pre-service training. I completed the five week pre-service training required of all officers in the PDOC. I entered training on the first day and assumed the role of observer as participant engaging in all the behaviors of a new recruit (Schatzman & Strauss 1973 for additional role typologies see Adler & Adler 1987; Gold 1958; Junker 1960). The decision to be a full participant while observing allowed me to build additional rapport and a more intimate knowledge of the group (Lofland et al. 2006).

On the morning of the second day of the academy I told my classmates about my research and invited them to ask questions at any time. At this time, I also secured

informed consent from all of the members of my academy class. I repeated the informed consent procedure for each guest instructor as they arrived to teach my class. I was accepted as a member of the group due to my total participation in the training. I completed each written test, practiced shooting on the range, engaged in the full range of self-defense skills and was present for the entire training period. An interaction with other officers at the end of the first week of training illustrates my acceptance.

There were two psychology doctoral students from a different university who were planning to conduct Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) research for the department. Both were white females in their mid 20's who were working as interns for the department and were required to complete portions of the training. At the end of our initial week of training it was time for the first of many exams. Once cadets completed the exam we walked to the break room and waited for the results. After the interns took the exam they were excused for the rest of the day. All of the cadets sat around a table in the break room chatting. Jackie, a new officer, said, "they must be smart if they can just come when they want to" referring to the interns. Jackie's resentful tone was clear, and was quickly followed by Marge, a female caseworker, discussing the inappropriate appearance of the interns. Marge said, "they both look like they are 12, and the one is dressed like a prostitute, I mean who wears that to a prison." The implication was that the interns were outsiders, however, I was sitting with the officers and my group membership was never questioned. As the training progressed a friendly banter developed among officers and I was often included in this banter, another indicator that I was accepted as a member of the group not viewed as an outsider.

The academy training is conducted primarily in a classroom setting for the first two weeks with students encouraged to take notes over the information presented. This setting allowed me to take field notes without being obtrusive. Field notes are critical to the final ethnographic product because they transform a fleeting social interaction into a permanent record (Berg 2007; Emerson, Fritz, & Shaw 2001; Geertz 1973; Hammersly & Atkinson 2007). Field notes should be completed in the field if possible, although in many settings taking notes in the field would be disruptive and cause distrust by subjects (Hammersly & Atkinson 2007). In general, field notes should be written as soon as possible after leaving the field (Berg 2007; Emerson et al 2001; Hammersly & Atkinson 2007).

Every evening I typed up field notes creating accounts of each day. My field notes were designed to be a-theoretical, descriptive accounts of the day's activities in accordance with accepted methods (Emerson et al. 2001). My notes were primarily descriptive but included the emotions I experienced and some other subjective impressions. Recently many ethnographers have begun to incorporate their own feelings and reactions into their field notes (Emerson et al. 2001; Hammersly & Atkinson 2007). There are three reasons for this practice: 1) the researcher's emotional reactions may mirror those that naturally occur in the setting; 2) even if not shared, emotional reactions may provide analytic leads; and 3) recording emotions over time allows the researcher to identify biases and prejudices in the research (Lofland et al. 2006). Based on the potential value of recording emotions, I included my emotions and initial reactions to new settings in my notes.

After the first two weeks, the academy training became much more “hands on” with considerable amounts of time spent in the academy gym, and on the firing range. My general approach to observation after the first two weeks of academy training was what Emerson et al(2001) call “participating in order to write.” This involves entering the field with the intent to remember as many details as possible to record later. In this approach the researcher puts positions him or herself to observe events for later recording and may even prioritize events in terms of importance to help remember (Emerson et al2001). I continued using the participating in order to write approach throughout the institutional observations.

I kept a small digital tape recorder in my car, and would spend the majority of the one hour drive home on non-classroom days recording notes as I tried to recall as much detail as possible about my day. Once I arrived home I would type up an account of the day from the recording. I did not actively filter the information that I recorded; instead I included all the information that I remembered from the day. However, there is a natural selectivity to fieldwork, and I undoubtedly attended to certain aspects of the field more than others. For example, my familiarity with the existing correctional literature meant that I was aware that conflict between officers and correctional administration is common. This awareness led me to attend to mentions of officer/administration relations. My increased awareness of certain issues makes those issues more likely to be recalled at the conclusion of fieldwork. This is an unavoidable potential limitation to my data.

After completion of the academy, I continued observations in the secure institutions. I chose to follow each of the nine officers from my class that completed the academy. One of the nine quit the department after one week on the job, thus I did not

get an opportunity to work with this person. The other eight officers were distributed as follows: one officer on second shift at RCC, two officers on second shift at PSP, two officers on 3rd shift at PSP, two officers on 2nd shift at CSCI, and one officer on 1st shift at CSCI. In addition, I worked five days on 2nd shift at PCCW despite none of my classmates working there. This was because as the only female institution in the state I thought it was important to gauge the culture of PCCW to see if it differed from male institutions. I chose 2nd shift because this was the most common shift for new officers to be assigned across the department.

One of the keys to observation is to view everything as “strange” and be skeptical of even the most mundane (Neyland 2008). As the researcher spends time in the field the strangeness is likely to wear off, decreasing the efficiency of observations (Burawoy 2003; Nelyand 2008). One method for solving this problem is the staggered approach to field work (Burawoy 2003). The staggered approach involves time in the field followed by time in the office examining data, or in the library revisiting the literature (Burawoy 2003). The point is to break from the field setting to change the researcher’s perspective back to that of an outsider. I employed this technique throughout my fieldwork examining institutional settings. I would spend 2-3 consecutive nights working shifts, then spend 3-4 days reading over notes and talking with my adviser. This allowed me to keep a fresh perspective and continuously view the field as “strange.”

I began my time at each new institution by working with one of the officers with whom I attended the academy. I was always in uniform and blended in as if I were a new officer on the shift. Prior to the start of each shift, officers gather for roll call, where they

receive their post assignments for the day. Any announcement deemed pertinent to the officer task is also shared at roll call. On my first day on a new shift, I would spend 2-3 minutes during roll call discussing my project and why I was present. I always concluded by telling everyone to approach me if they had any questions and I would be happy to answer them. After this initial mention I did not again address my role as a researcher although questions about my research arose from time to time.

In addition to the officers who I graduated from the academy with, I worked with 3-5 other officers on each shift. I employed two sampling techniques: purposive and theoretical sampling to determine the officers with whom I would work (Berg 2007; Charmaz & Mitchell 2001; Glaser & Strauss 1967). I spent my first day on a shift working with an officer I knew from the academy. During this first shift I employed purposive sampling to identify potential subjects to work with and interview. Subject identification was based on two criteria: their post and their openness. First, I sought to experience all officer tasks, therefore I tried to identify officers with diverse post assignments (see Lofland et al. 2006). For example, I worked on the yard, in housing units, in segregation units, in the kitchen, in the visiting room, in protective custody units, in the SMU, on death row, and with a field training officer. Second officers were chosen based on their perceived willingness to reveal information regarding their culture (Hammersly & Atkinson 2007).

As the research developed I began to employ theoretical sampling to accrue subjects for observation and interviews. Theoretical sampling involves returning to the field after initial analysis and purposely seeking subjects that can add detail to emerging themes in the research (Charmaz 1994; Charmaz & Mitchell 2001). For example, in my

research an early theme emerged regarding the issue of female officers being “compromised” by male inmates. There was concern among male officers and command staff that female officers were likely to become romantically involved with male inmates. This concern led to differential treatment of female officers by male officers and command staff. After this theme emerged, I sought to observe and work with more females in the male facilities.

The exception to the purposive and theoretical sampling techniques was at PCCW where no one I went through the academy with was employed. At this institution I met with the Major prior to my arrival and asked that I be allowed to work in a variety of posts. During my time at PCCW the Lieutenants typically assigned me to a post for each night, basically assigning me to work with specific officers. This assignment could potentially bias my findings as the Major and Lieutenants were likely to point me toward the best officers. However, PCCW is a small facility and I worked in close proximity to virtually every officer on second shift. This was due to the variety of posts I worked and my own autonomy while on duty. For example, I was assigned to the kitchen one night and worked with an officer viewed favorably by management. The kitchen closes at 1930, and 2nd shift lasts until 2300. Once the kitchen closed, I was free to move around the institution and interact with officers of my choosing.

In total, I worked 30, 8 hour shifts with various officers. During these 30 shifts I had contact with over 250 officers whose behavior I observed and who I was able to informally interview regarding their occupation and culture. At the conclusion of each shift I spent 20-40 minutes speaking into my recorder recalling the shift in as much detail as possible. Then I used the recording to type up an account of the shift in detail within

one week of the day I worked. The full shift accounts vary from 14 to 32 pages, with a total 1,080 pages of field notes.

Interviews.

Defining an interview can be problematic because interviews exist on a continuum of formality and structure. For example, Berg (2007) defines interviewing as “a conversation with a purpose” (Berg 2007: 89). In contrast, Lofland et al. (2006) discuss intensive interviewing which they define as, “both ordinary conversation and listening as it occurs during the course of social interaction and semi-structured interviewing involving the use of an interview guide” (Lofland et al. 2006: 17).

I employed “ethnographic interviewing” defined as interviewing “in which researchers have established respectful, on-going relationships with their interviewees, including enough rapport for there to be a genuine exchange of views and enough time and openness in the interviews for the interviewees to explore purposefully with the researcher the meanings they place on events in their worlds” (Heyl 2001: 369). Ethnographic interviewing depends on a high level of rapport with the subjects and an insider’s knowledge of the symbolic and real language of the subjects (Becker & Geer 1957; Berg 2007; Hammersly & Atkinson 2007). This makes ethnographic interviewing well suited for use in conjunction with participant observation in which rapport is established and an understanding of subject language is developed.

Interviewing is an essential technique for supplementing field observations in ethnography (Atkinson & Coffey 2002; Hammersly & Atkinson 2007; Lofland et al. 2006). Interviewing provides information on specific phenomena that are central to the group under study and demonstrates the ways in which members of the group view and

think about the phenomena (Berg 2007). In short, we can use what people say as a proxy for what they think, and their cultural values (Berger & Luckmann 1967; Curtis & Petras 1970). Interviews also allow the researcher to gain information about events and interactions which she/he is not able to observe directly, and to check inferences made from field observations (Burgess 1985; Neyland 2008).

Previous authors suggest interviewees are likely to be apprehensive about how the interviewer perceives them or their behaviors (Collins, Shattell, & Thomas 2005; Thomas & Pollio 2002). The interviewee's apprehension is reduced considerably through the building of rapport with the interview subject (Hammersly & Atkinson 2007).

Participant observation develops rapport with subjects reducing subject apprehension during subsequent interviews. The researcher and subject should have already developed rapport during the observation stage, making the interview more natural and comfortable for the participant (Hammersly & Atkinson 2007).

My research plan was to conduct a follow-up interview of each officer I worked with. Unfortunately, several of the officers whom I worked with did not return my phone calls or repeated attempts to schedule interviews. The inability to interview all desired subjects is a common problem in ethnographic research (Hammersly & Atkinson 2007). I conducted a total of 40 semi-structured interviews, including one with each of the 9 officers in my academy class. This small sample size is common in ethnographic interview studies (Lofland et al. 2006; Blee 2002; Liebow 1993; Smith 1990).

Semi-structured interviews include "a number of predetermined questions" but also allow interviewers the "freedom to digress; to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared standardized questions" (Berg 2007: 95; Neyland 2008). In each interview I

utilized a basic interview guide which is included as appendix A. During interviews, I probed for further information based on the officers' responses, using both pre-selected and spontaneous probes (Lofland et al. 2006).

Semi-structured interviews were chosen because of their benefits when compared to structured and unstructured interviews. Structured interviews involve asking the same set of predetermined questions to every respondent (Berg 2007; Lofland et al. 2006; Neyland 2008). Structured interviews try to establish the frequency of various phenomena and are based on the belief that the researcher knows the appropriate questions to ask (Lofland et al. 2006). Structured interviews are relatively quick and provide data that can be compared among subjects (Berg 2007). Despite the strengths of structured interviews, semi-structured interviews are more appropriate for ethnographic research because they allow respondents to determine what is worth knowing (Neyland 2008).

Unstructured interviews use no pre-determined questions and are often conducted in the field to supplement observations (Berg 2007; Neyland 2008). Due to the lack of questions, unstructured interviews are difficult to control and difficult to record (Neyland 2008). I utilized unstructured interviewing during my field observations to gain further insight into various phenomena. However, the actual interview portion of my data was semi-structured as a means to ensure some level of comparability and control over the data.

My interviews ranged from 50 minutes to 2 hours. All interviews were conducted outside the institution in either the officer's homes or various restaurants. With two exceptions, the interviews were conducted one-on-one with the officer. The first

exception occurred when two officers who were dating at the time arrived for an interview together resulting in a joint interview. The second exception involved a female officer who brought her husband to the interview. The husband was silent throughout the interview and he did not seem to affect the answers she provided although that cannot be known for sure.

Prior to the start of each interview, I asked the interviewee for permission to record the interview and each participant granted me permission. Audio recording is a common method for data collection in interviews but fails to capture the non-verbal communication of the subject (Hammersly & Atkinson 2007). When using audio recorded interviews the researcher must address the issue of transcription.

The first step to transcription is to decide who will transcribe the data. Previous authors suggest it is preferable for the researcher to transcribe their own interviews (Berg 2007; Lofland et al. 2006). Transcribing the interviews allows the researcher to truly “hear” what the subject is saying (Lofland et al. 2006: 107). Once a source of transcription has been identified, the researcher must decide if full transcription is necessary or if the interviews can be merely summarized (Hammersly & Atkinson 2007). Summary of interviews saves time but risks the loss of relevant data.

I transcribed the interviews verbatim into a Word document. Personally transcribing the interviews had two benefits: I was able to assess and improve my interviewing technique during the research and I became more familiar with the data. Listening to and transcribing previous interviews allowed me to identify strengths and weaknesses in my technique and improve future interviews. For example, after transcribing the first three interviews I realized that I was not pausing long enough

between probing questions, thus I was cutting off potential responses. I was aware of this during subsequent interviews and focused on pausing longer. The second positive outcome was a greater familiarity with my data. I conducted all the interviews, then listened to them again, and typed the content while transcribing them. The three exposures to the data made me much more familiar with potential themes, which guided subsequent observations and interviews.

Data management occurred throughout the research process. The process of data management began during the observations of academy training and continued until the completion of analysis. I now turn to a brief discussion of the methods of data management I used in my research.

Grounded theory.

The most prominent approach to qualitative data analysis is grounded theory (Charmaz & Mitchell 2001). A common problem of ethnography is that the researcher records so much data it becomes unmanageable; grounded theory helps with this issue (Charmaz & Mitchell 2001). Grounded theory was first proposed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967), who saw the method as a means to, “close the embarrassing gap between theory and empirical research” (1967: vii). Grounded theory is influenced by symbolic interaction and is not simply a methodology but a way of thinking about and conceptualizing data (Charmaz & Mitchell 2001; Morse 2007; Strauss & Corbin 1998). The central concept of grounded theory is inductive development of theory during interaction with data (Charmaz 1994; Glaser 1978; Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss 1987; Strauss & Corbin 1998). The inductive process leads to a non-linear relationship between data collection and analysis.

Grounded theory methodology calls for the researcher to enter the field with no preconceived hypotheses; only a general area of interest (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Holton 2007). The area of interest in grounded theory is generally the discovery and examination of social processes (Bigus et. al. 1994; Strauss & Corbin 1998). Prior to entering the field, the researcher should avoid reading existing literature on the area of study and instead read broadly in other disciplines (Glaser & Strauss 1967). Avoiding extensive review of the literature allows the researcher to view the field without bias, thus allowing theory to develop instead of forcing the data into preexisting theories (Glaser & Strauss 1967). Attempting to approach the field with a “blank slate” is a major challenge to grounded theorists (Kelle 2007). Even if a researcher avoids the literature on a subject, every person has a set of stock knowledge that is brought to the field (Kelle 2007). The stock knowledge of the researcher will influence data collection and analysis, making “true” grounded theory development nearly impossible (see Holton 2007 for a discussion of “true grounded theory”).

The desire to inductively develop theory intertwines the collection and analysis of data in grounded theory methodology (Charmaz 1994; Strauss 1987; Strauss & Corbin 1998). Grounded theory is a fluid research method that requires the researcher move between data collection, data management and data analysis phases in a non-linear manner (Charmaz 1994; Charmaz & Mitchell 2001; Glaser & Strauss 1967; Rock 2001; Strauss & Corbin 1990). In a grounded theory approach the researcher enters the field and collects data. The data is then put through an initial analysis and social processes are identified. Once these processes are identified the researcher returns to the field to gather more information regarding these processes. The return to the field may be informed by

theoretical sampling, or may involve additional or more focused questioning of non-theoretically sampled subjects (Charmaz & Mitchell 2001). The subsequent data are then analyzed and the researcher again returns to the field informed by the new discoveries in the data. This process continues until the researcher believes he has reached “conceptual saturation” (Glaser & Strauss 1967). The findings of the research and the method of data collection and management are both informed by the data itself (Charmaz & Mitchell 2001).

While many authors claim to use a grounded theory methodology, the term is often used to refer to simple qualitative analysis (Holton 2007). Holton (2007) offers a critique of self labeled grounded theory studies that fall short of the method. Among his criticisms is the argument that software packages, even for data management are antithetical to a grounded theory method (Holton 2007). He concludes by stating that grounded theory methodology is not an “a la carte” approach, but rather is “all or nothing.” These critiques along with the manner in which I analyzed my data lead me to call my data management and analysis a modified grounded theory approach.

Much of grounded theory methodology is used in other forms of ethnographic research that do not focus on theory development (Hammersly & Atkinson 2007). Several ethnographies focus on descriptive analysis describing social process without creating theory (Hammersly & Atkinson 2007). My project seeks to provide a descriptive analysis of correctional officers culture, thus it fits into a non-grounded theory qualitative analysis. Also, I conducted an extensive review of the literature on correctional officers prior to entering the field. This is contrary to grounded theory methods but fits with the suggestions of other qualitative researchers (Berg 2007;

Lempert 2007). Finally, the data management and analysis procedures I used were not directly in line with grounded theory methodology. I inductively analyzed the data, but the specific techniques I used were not informed by grounded theory. I now discuss the data management and analysis methods I used, and I point out the distinctions between my method and “true” grounded theory.

Data management.

In qualitative research raw data typically must be organized and processed before it can be analyzed. The process of organizing and processing data is data management (Berg 2007). Data storage and retrieval are the core of data management and are integrally related to data analysis (Berg 2007; Huberman & Miles 1994). When data collection was complete, I transformed all interview transcripts and field observation accounts by providing pseudonyms for each subject. I waited until data collection was complete to begin the formal coding process, which is a deviation from standard grounded theory methodology (Holton 2007). The interview transcripts and field accounts containing pseudonyms were then entered into Atlas qualitative data software. The use of a software package for data management represents a second deviation from “true” grounded theory. However, while software packages are not ideally suited for qualitative analysis, they are useful for data management activities (Fielding 2001; Lofland et al. 2006). Atlas software provides a means of managing qualitative data by dividing data into similar concepts for subsequent analysis. The primary method of data management in qualitative research is coding (Charmaz 2001; Lempert 2007; Miles & Huberman 1994). Codes are defined as, “the labels we use to classify items of

information as pertinent to a topic, question, answer or whatever” (Lofland et al. 2006: 200). Codes are used to organize data by separating it into similar concepts.

The codes I utilized came from two sources: a review of the literature and field experience (Charmaz 1994; Charmaz & Mitchell 2001). As outlined in chapter 2, there is a minimal amount of previous research on correctional officer culture. I was able to draw out concepts from the limited previous research as well as the general correctional officer literature. For example, previous literature identified negative attitudes toward superiors and inmates as components of correctional officer culture. I included codes for both of these attitudes in my list. The development of codes from previous literature is a third deviation from “true” grounded theory methodology. The other codes I used were developed inductively during the data collection process. While collecting data, several prominent themes of the officer culture emerged. For example, officer compromise is a focal point of the PDOC. Officer compromise refers to officers who engage in deviant behavior with or on behalf of inmates. Officers who bring contraband, drugs, or tobacco into institutions are an example of compromised officers. The primary concern about officer compromise in the PDOC involves the fear that female officers will become sexually involved with male inmates. I utilize codes for compromise, gender, and differential treatment of female officers based on this emergent theme. A complete list of the codes used in managing the data is included in appendix B.

Analysis.

Coding is the primary means of data management in qualitative research; it is also the initial stage of data analysis (Glaser 1978; Glaser & Strauss 1967; Lofland et al. 2006). In grounded theory analysis coding is a two-part process (Charmaz 2001). The

researcher first engages in initial coding which serves the dual purpose of data management and initial analysis (Charmaz 1994; Charmaz 2001; Strauss & Corbin 1990). Glaser (1978) calls the initial process substantive coding and says that the substantive codes relate directly to the empirical data. Initial coding examines the data line by line and asks “what is this,” “what is going on,” “what is this an example of” (Charmaz 2001; Cuba 1988; Strauss & Corbin 1990). As a result, initial coding often involves numerous codes that are quite varied (Lofland et al. 2006).

The second form of coding is focused coding which develops out of the initial codes (Charmaz 1994). Focused coding is less open ended and more conceptual than initial coding, and forces the researcher to develop codes that fit large chunks of the data (Charmaz 1994; Charmaz 2001). Glaser (1978) refers to the focused codes as theoretical coding and states, “theoretical codes conceptualize how the substantive codes may relate to each other” (Glaser 1978: 72). The process of coding in grounded theory research typically begins by examining text line by line to label what is happening. Once the line by line coding is complete, the researcher engages in a more focused review of the data seeking to connect the labels conceptually. Once focused coding is complete, the researcher engages in memoing to tie the various focused codes together into a theory (Charmaz 2001; Glaser & Strauss 1967).

Memoing is the process of writing out notes about ideas regarding the various codes and the way the data are shaping up (Lofland et al. 2006). Memos do not describe the research setting the way codes do; instead they conceptualize the data (Lempert 2007). Memos are a way for the researcher to record thoughts and ideas regarding how concepts relate to each other throughout the research process (Lempert 2007). The ability

of memos to spur creativity in the researcher makes them, “one of the most useful and powerful sense-making tools at hand” (Miles & Huberman 1994: 72). After the completion of coding, the researcher reviews the memos and ties them together to create a theory which explains the data. This theory is then tested by applying it to the chunks of data created during focused coding and by returning to the field with the theory in mind.

My analysis process was similar to the grounded theory approach presented above with a few critical exceptions. First, my analysis was primarily descriptive not focused on theory development. In the course of describing the data, I applied pre-existing theories to explain my findings and add depth to the description I did not, however, develop grounded theory.

Second, I did not engage in formal analysis until after the completion of data collection, which is antithetical to the grounded theory method. However, I did engage in informal analysis throughout the data collection process. I analyzed the data by reviewing field observations as I typed out formal field notes and by revisiting interviews as I transcribed audio recordings. I also discussed and talked through the data during semi-regular de-briefing sessions with my advisor during fieldwork. My review of the data coupled with de-briefing sessions combined to increase my awareness of emerging social processes in the field which I then attended to during subsequent data collection.

The third difference between my analysis and traditional grounded theory is that I did not engage in initial coding. Initial coding in a grounded theory approach serves to make the researcher aware of emerging social processes that can be examined in more detail through further data collection. While I did not engage in initial coding, my review

of the data resulted in the same outcome: an increased awareness of specific social processes during subsequent data collection. I coded data from the outset in search of conceptual connections that would link large chunks of the data, in grounded theory terms I started with focused coding (Glaser 1978; Glaser & Strauss 1967). This approach is consistent with ethnographic research where initial line by line coding is not as practical or efficient as focused coding due to the selective nature of participant observation (Charmaz & Mitchell 2001). Field notes are inherently selective (Emerson et al 2001), therefore the data has already been filtered prior to coding.

Once data collection was complete, I performed focused coding on the data to develop a conceptual framework of correctional officer culture and socialization. As I coded the data, I wrote several memos about how various codes related to each other, what the most important components of culture were, and how the socialization process operated. One of the most fruitful areas for memo writing was exploring variation in the data. For example, the socialization process is distinct for each institution, and officer culture varies among institutions and among shifts at the same institution. I wrote several memos proposing explanations for this variance and how it affected the impact of officer culture on new recruits.

Following the coding process, I re-visited memos to piece together the concepts I had discovered in the data. I then applied existing theory and explanations from my memos to the conceptual data to explain correctional office culture. The coded data were used to provide descriptive examples of correctional officer culture that fit within the applied theories. This method was used to answer my research questions. The remainder of this paper presents findings which address those questions:

- 1) How do correctional officers navigate their occupational world?
- 2) How are newcomers socialized into correctional officer culture?

Chapter 4

Cultural Scripts for Interaction with Administrators and Inmates

Correctional officers negotiate their occupational world with a series of cultural scripts. The cultural scripts serve as guides for behavior in the occupational setting. Officers interact with three primary agents in their occupational world: administrators, inmates, and fellow officers. In this chapter I examine the cultural scripts that guide officer interaction with administrators and inmates.

Distrust of Administrators

Administration includes three components: superior officers, institutional-level administration and central departmental leadership. I define correctional officer as any member of the custody force at the rank of corporal or officer. Therefore, sergeants, lieutenants, captains, and majors are superior officers. Institutional level administration includes deputy wardens and wardens at each facility. Officers have virtually no contact with central leadership and therefore are focused on cultural scripts at the superior officer and institutional levels.

Officer scripts vary by institution. For example, officers at PCCW use a script that views the administration as trustworthy and supportive. During fieldwork Corporal Terr⁶ offered his unsolicited opinion of the administration at PCCW:

“the one thing I will say about this place is that we have a good administration. You know the warden doesn’t have that much to do with the interior workings of the prison but he does a good job of keeping us in contact with the rest of the state. Then we have a terrific deputy warden he is fantastic, he will talk to you and really help you out and he is really in touch with what goes on inside the place.” (Terr 5-13-09)

In contrast, PSP, RCC and CSCI officers all generally displayed distrustful scripts regarding the administration at their institution. Corporal Powe spoke for 45 minutes

⁶ Demographic information for each officer quoted in the dissertation is included in appendix C.

about the “ineptitude” of the administration at PSP. At RCC, Corporal Lionel said: “the biggest problem here is the administration” (Lionel 2-06-09). At CSCI Corporal Teeny said, “its not a bad job, but the problem is that they (the administration) don’t give us the tools we need to do the job as well as we could” (Teeny 4-28-09).

Officers at PCCW use a different script regarding administrators than officers at the other institutions. The difference may be influenced by gender, as PCCW is the only female institution in the state. PCCW also operates at a lower security level (i.e., no firearms or chemical agents on the grounds) than the other institutions, and has fewer instances of violence. The lower security level may lead to less stress and more positive officer-administration relations. PCCW is also the smallest institution in the state in terms of inmate population and custody force size. The size of PCCW may reduce negative officer-administration relations by allowing more individual attention from supervisors and institutional level administrators.

Another possibility is a qualitative difference between the institutional administration at PCCW and the other institutions. Prior to working at PCCW, I met with the warden who gave me a tour of the facility. As we walked through the industries building, he was approached by an inmate who was upset about a recent misconduct report (MR). The MR was written about sexual activity that occurred in the industries building. In the MR, the officer stated he had seen the inmate engage in sexual activity by looking into a large convex mirror located in the corner of the building. The inmate spoke with the warden for 10 minutes and repeatedly asked him to look up at the mirror positioned above his head. The inmate said the location of the mirror made it impossible

for the officer to see what he claimed. Throughout the conversation the warden never looked up at the mirror. After we left the building the warden explained to me,

“She wants me to take a side with her, and they do that, they try to get a preemptive strike on me and get me on their side against the staff. I’m not going to do that I’m not going to side against staff until I see what happened, and its clear that I need to.” (PCCW 4-31-09)

The warden refused to even acknowledge the inmate’s allegations of staff misconduct by looking at the mirror. Instead, he gave the officer the “benefit of the doubt” in this situation. The warden expresses the belief that administration should support staff when a conflict emerges with inmates. Officers in other institutions view their administrations as failing to provide this type of support.

With the exception of PCCW, officers employ the same cultural script regarding the administration across the PDOC. The script is one of distrust: the administration does not support officers, is afraid of inmates and values inmates more than officers. The distrustful script leads to a “closing of the ranks” among officers. Officer solidarity increases as they support each other in opposition to the administration.

The officer culture in the PDOC believes the administration does not support officers. Corporal Wolfcastle sums up this idea:

“The job is okay but the administration sucks, they just don’t back you up. We found a shank one night that was probably a foot long, it looked like a damn sword and we took it to the Lieutenant. We found it in a common area where it really couldn’t be pinned to any inmate so the Lieutenant actually told us to go throw it over the fence to get rid of it. He knew that nothing would happen so it wasn’t worth the paperwork.” (Wolfcastle 2-11-09)

Wolfcastle says the frustration over the lack of support eventually leads to organizational deviance. Instead of following procedure and writing a report on the weapon, the Lieutenant ordered the officers to discard it. As a superior officer the

Lieutenant represents the lowest level of the correctional administration. The Lt. recognized the upper level administrators would not pursue the issue and handled the weapon informally. Discarding the weapon meant there was no investigation and the inmate responsible for the weapon faced no disciplinary action. It also meant the institutional level administration was never made aware of the presence of the weapon.

Lieutenants and Sergeants are buffers between institutional level administrators and correctional officers. Lt.'s and Sgt.'s recognize the need to handle some inmate deviance informally without involving institutional level administrators. The handling of inmate deviance informally creates organizational deviance. Superior officers order correctional officers to violate the formal rules of the organization. Officers interpret the presence of organizational deviance as a lack of support from the administration. However, organizational deviance is an effective means for organizations to accomplish their stated goals (Meyer & Rowan 1977; Monahan & Quinn 1997; Vaughn 1997). In this case, the Lt.'s and Sgt.'s recognize that organizational overload would occur if all inmate deviance was reported. The institutional disciplinary process could not handle that volume of inmate deviance. The Lt.'s engage in organizational deviance to avoid overload.

The distrustful script also views the administration as afraid of inmates, especially inmate lawsuits. Corporal Mirsam sums up this idea:

“The inmates keep asking and they keep receiving, see the administration is trying to pacify them, but what they're not getting is that they will continue to ask for other things. I think the administration is just avoiding a mass influx of grievances...it's kind of a limp way to go.” (Mirsam 2-27-09)

Mirsam suggests the administration has “surrendered” to the inmates due to fear of inmate grievances and subsequent lawsuits. In contrast, the officers are trying to be

firm but are not getting any support from the administration. A conversation between Corporal Powe and Corporal Powers illustrates the difference in how officers and administrators view inmates.

Powe: "I don't understand why we don't get to wear BDU's, they're cheaper, they're more durable and they're a hell of a lot more comfortable. I asked the major why we can't wear them and he said because they don't look professional. This coming from a guy who sits on his ass in his office all day and is never out on the yard. I understand if you have to interact with the public all day that you want to look professional, but we're out here with these fuckers (inmates) and I don't need to look professional for them."

Powers: "You know at our in-service training we have what I call a blow smoke up your ass session where management comes in and you can ask them questions. They told me that the reason we can't wear them is because they are intimidating to the inmates. Well fucking shit, we wouldn't want that then it might start to feel like a real prison around here." (Power 2-17-09)

Powe argues his superior officer is out of touch with the reality of being a correctional officer because he "sits on his ass in his office all day." The separation from correctional officer reality changes the way administrators view inmates. Powe refers to inmates as "these fuckers" a pejorative term that signifies the inmates are below him and need to be controlled. Powers discussion of comments made to him by an administrator is the most revealing concerning the difference in officer and administrator views of inmates. The administrator does not want to intimidate inmates, the insinuation is the administration is afraid of inmates and seeks to pacify them by any means necessary. This notion fits with Mirsam's argument that the administration has surrendered to the inmates.

The administration is viewed as afraid of challenging inmates even in something as benign as uniform structure. The administration is afraid of inmate rebellion, and inmate lawsuits. In contrast, officers want to challenge inmates, and believe a level of

intimidation is desirable for the institution. The difference in officers' view stems from their lack of fear of inmates.

The final component of the distrustful script regarding the administration is the belief the administration values inmates more than officers. An exchange with Corporal Powe and Corporal Powers during an evening shift at PSP illustrates this idea. The three of us were completing the fence check, which involves walking around the perimeter of the institution and checking to ensure the motion detectors on the fence are still working. During the fence check, we passed the base of tower 3, which other officers had told me was the worst tower to work. I asked Powe and Powers about working in tower 3.

Powers said,

“they still don't have the toilet fixed in there do they? That's some kind of bullshit man, you know if some inmate had to deal with that it would have been fixed by now.”

(Powe 2-17-09)

The toilet in the tower was broken and a portable toilet had been set up at the base of the tower. However, to use the portable toilet the tower officer would have to be relieved by another officer. Staff levels were rarely sufficient to allow relief so officers could use the restroom. I then asked if they thought officers were treated differently from inmates. Powe responded,

“You worked in Rivertown and here, you see this bullshit, do you think if that was an inmate toilet they would have let it be non-working for 6 months, and make the inmate shit in a bag and pick it up when his shift was over, I don't think so.” (Powe 2-17-09)

Powe is clear that inmates are given preferential treatment by the administration. He is alluding to a cultural script: the administration values inmates more than officers due to fear of lawsuits brought by the inmates. Inmate lawsuits are a common occurrence

but officers rarely sue the administration because they have other available courses of action. For example, an officer can file a grievance through a union representative or quit his/her job. The script strengthens officer solidarity by presenting the administration as a “common enemy.” Group cohesion is often built by rallying against a common enemy (Durkheim 1933). The distrustful script regarding the administration functions to build cultural cohesion among officers.

The cultural script of administrators valuing inmates over officers is present despite formal attempts by the administration to display the value of officers. For example, several times during academy training officers were told they were valued. In one instance during a legal issues course the instructor said:

“Employee discipline requires just cause, inmate discipline requires some evidence. Employees get a huge packet of information when charges are filed; they get copies of all evidence and procedures. In contrast the inmate only gets the MR. I will assure you we don’t discipline an employee based solely on what an inmate says. This drives inmates crazy because in an inmate disciplinary action all you need is one officer’s word. Inmates say when I tell you about employee misconduct you never believe me, true.” (STA 9-19-08)

The instructor is clear officers have more rights than inmates, and the administration is more trusting of officers. However, once recruits enter the institution they interact with experienced officers and learn cultural scripts. The process of learning cultural scripts from experienced officers is addressed in detail in chapter 6. The impact of teaching cultural scripts is new recruits soon believe the administration values inmates over officers.

Cultural Contradiction

Correctional officers’ primary responsibility is the maintenance of order. The need to maintain order leads to the most critical occupational “problem” facing

correctional officers: interacting with inmates (Crouch & Marquart 1980; Sykes 1958). Officers must learn to interact with inmates in a manner that maintains order.

Sykes (1958) conducted research at the New Jersey State Penitentiary in the early 1950's and found officers were dependent on inmates to carry out the tasks of correctional work. Sykes found officers were rarely allowed to employ physical force. Also, the officially sanctioned rewards available to inmates were insufficient to influence behavior. Officers were left to offer unofficial rewards in the form of allowing minor deviance by inmates in exchange for major rule compliance (Sykes 1958).

Sykes did not use the term "negotiated order" for the practice of ignoring minor inmate deviance to secure order. However, subsequent correctional scholars have applied the term to describe the maintenance of control within prisons (Wolfgang 1979; Kalinich 1986; Fleisher 1989; Eigenberg 1991; Farkas & Manning 1997; Britton 2003). Order in prison is based on an understanding between officers and inmates that some minor rule violations will be tolerated in exchange for compliance with major rules (Fleisher 1989; Lombardo 1989; Eigenberg 1991; Sparks et. al. 1996; Hassine 2009). Correctional officers cannot enforce every rule because there is a tipping point to control. Enforcement of minor rules will lead to inmate irritation negating the negotiated order (May 1980a; May 1980b; Rhodes 2004; Hassine 2009). The definition of rules as minor or major is constantly being re-negotiated among inmates and officers.

Correctional officer cultural scripts provide guidance for interacting with inmates in a manner that maintains the negotiated order. The scripts guide how officers view inmates, and how officers interact with inmates. The two most prevalent cultural scripts regarding inmates are a dehumanizing script and an empathetic script. The dehumanizing

script views inmates as untrustworthy, manipulative, and “dirty⁷.” The empathetic script views inmates as human beings who made a mistake and are therefore deserving of empathy.

Dehumanizing script

The dehumanizing script regarding inmates consists of two components: inmates are untrustworthy and manipulative, and inmates are “dirty.”

Officers are taught to view inmates as untrustworthy and manipulative beginning the first day of the academy. The first day of training was conducted at the PDOC central office building and consisted primarily of completing paperwork. Recruits gathered in a conference room for the first hour of the day for an initial orientation. After the orientation, recruits dispersed throughout the building to be finger printed, have blood drawn for a tuberculosis test, and be fitted for uniforms. The human resources representative told us as we prepared to leave the room,

“There are inmate porters in the building, so don’t leave any valuables here. You can leave your books, I doubt they’ll want those, but take your purses and other valuables.”

(STA 9-08-08)

Within an hour of beginning a career in corrections, recruits are told explicitly inmates are untrustworthy. Even inmate porters, who typically have the best institutional records, will steal anything valuable if given the opportunity. The view of inmates as untrustworthy and manipulative is also prevalent in the informal officer culture. An example of the view that inmates are untrustworthy and manipulative comes from a shift at PCCW.

⁷ The dehumanizing script views inmates as physically dirty and diseased. The script also views inmates as dirty in a Hughesian sense (Hughes 1971) morally and socially tainted.

I was working with Corporal Terr when Lt. Doctorn approached us and the following exchange took place:

Doctorn: “Look the inmate who is in charge of the garden now has been spending a lot of time down there and she has already spent more time down there this year than she did all of last year. Now maybe she just has a green thumb but I’m kind of doubting that’s it, so you should probably keep an eye on her.”

Terr: “You know she told me and I don’t know if its true or not be she said she has a degree in horticulture. Of course that is probably just to help her grow her marijuana.”

(PCCW 5-20-09)

They both laughed at this comment and then Doctorn walked away. Corporal Terr and Lieutenant Doctorn both use the dehumanizing script. In this case, the Lt. suggests the inmate is manipulating staff through the garden. The action of putting extra work into the garden, which would normally be viewed as a positive attribute, leads to increased distrust of the inmate. The dehumanizing script influences the officers’ interpretation of the inmate’s actions and motives.

The officers place the inmate into a “double bind.” The inmate is placed in a situation where any action they take supports the officer’s negative view of the inmate (Bateson 1972;1973). If, as in this case, the inmate works hard in the garden they are suspected of being manipulative. If, the inmate does not work hard they are seen as lazy. In either case the inmate’s actions lead to a negative perception by the officers.

Officers believe inmates are always trying to manipulate them, and should never be trusted. However, the nature of the job requires some level of cooperation between officers and inmates. Corporal Smithe discusses the need to extend minimal trust to certain inmates:

“I was always told that if an inmate is moving his lips he’s lying. That’s how like I said I had to learn. There are certain inmates that I can have a working relationship

with. You have a new inmate say in the kitchen I get a new inmate. There are ones that I worry less about; you know being a new inmate if they tell me something I'm going to check up on it. If they tell you something check on it for shits and giggles to see if he's bullshitting me. If he's bullshitting me right off the bat he's up to no good. I check up on stuff like that, I like to see if that person is telling me the truth." (Smithe 4-9-09)

Corporal Smithe believes inmates are untrustworthy and manipulative. Smithe also acknowledges the reality of correctional officer work requires minimal trust between officers and inmates. Smithe admits he moderately trusts some inmates as a necessity of the job. Smithe also discusses the method for determining if an inmate will be trusted. New inmates are asked questions typically about their sentence or crime. Information about inmate crimes is easily verifiable with a check of the inmate's records. Smithe compares the inmates' responses to their records to gauge the amount of trust the inmates deserve. If an inmate lies about basic information such as his crime he is "up to no good."

Officers extend a minimal degree of trust to inmates out of pragmatic concerns. Inmates carry out a number of tasks that allow the prison to function. Inmates cook meals and clean housing units among other essential tasks that require a degree of trust. Officers in the PDOC extend trust to the untrustworthy to maintain order.

The final component of the dehumanizing script is that inmates are dirty and less than human. This view is typically expressed in the language officers use to refer to inmates. Officers commonly refer to inmates as "pieces of shit," "dirtbags," or "shitbags." These terms are interesting in the images they suggest about inmate value. Inmates are labeled as feces, filth, and garbage. These terms dehumanize the inmate making it easier to maintain social distance between officers and inmates. The terms also illustrate a visceral response among some officers to inmates.

An example of the belief that inmates are less than human comes from Corporal Shepard. I worked in the kitchen one evening when a food service worker told me, “you know some of the staff will call them (inmates) dirtbags or scum or whatever, but they’re not they’re people.” In response to her statement Shepard said,

“I’m sorry but I have to disagree with Sides when she said that some of us think that they are dirtbags. They (inmates) are scum they are the boils on the armpit of society that’s why they are here. They are the scum of society and can’t follow the rules that’s why they are here, so yeah some of us think that because its true.” (PCCW 5-19-09)

Shepard disagrees with the assessment of inmates as humans, instead stating they are scum due to their inability to follow societal rules. He says officers view inmates this way because it is a fact. His statements illustrate the dehumanizing script but also reveal the emotional nature of officer cultural scripts. Correctional officer cultural scripts are not only guides for behavior, they are manifestations of deep felt emotion. Officer scripts are intertwined with emotions, especially fear and anger. Officers fear for their safety, their job security and their social standing. These fears influence cultural scripts, the scripts then guide officer behavior in a manner that reduces threats to officer safety, job security and social standing. For example, officers distrust administrators primarily because they are afraid of losing their job. The distrustful script guides officers to behave in a way that reduces the risk of losing their job.

Empathetic script.

Correctional officers also employ an empathetic cultural script regarding inmates. The empathetic script is centered on the belief that inmates are humans who made a mistake. Despite Corporal Shepard’s assertion that “inmates are less than human and that’s a fact,” there is variation in how officers view inmates. The variation comes in two forms. First, there is variation across officers, which will be discussed in more detail at

the end of this chapter. In short, some officers view inmates much more negatively than others. The second form of variation is across inmates. The same officer may view some inmates as “shitbags” while viewing others empathetically. The difference is based on situational context and previous interactions with the specific inmate. Corporal Shepard is in the first category, he views all inmates negatively in all circumstances.

Corporal Nicker directly refutes Corporal Shepard’s assertion:

“I know you’ve heard some of the talk out there from some of the officers, they call these inmates dirtbags you heard it. I know you’ve heard it, I know how these guys are they call them shitbags you know it seems to me that those who live in glass houses shouldn’t throw stones. I suppose if I look back at my history I probably should have been thrown in jail a few times too, you know for being dumb.” (Nicker 5-15-09)

Nicker’s comments capture the empathetic script regarding inmates. Nicker suggests officers and inmates are more similar than either would like to admit. She also demonstrates a level of empathy for the inmates, by admitting she could easily have been in prison herself. Nicker employs an empathetic script and disagrees with the dehumanizing language other officers use to describe inmates.

Corporal Violet expresses a similar view:

“I’ve learned not to be judgmental they’re (inmates) understanding they’re compassionate. When I went in I was like they’re inmates they obviously deserve to be here. I still think they all deserve to be there obviously, that’s the law, but not all of them are terrible people or pieces of shit some of them are good people. Like we can’t just look at their label and think we know them.” (Violet 2-19-09)

Violet says she held more negative views of inmates as a member of the public than as a member of the correctional officer culture. Sykes (1958) found officers began to view inmates more favorably over time. The day to day interaction with inmates led officers to see them empathetically. The dehumanizing script is applied to all new

inmates. The empathetic script is only applied after a number of officer-inmate interactions within the prison.

Pragmatic Implications

The use of both the empathetic and dehumanizing scripts by officers have pragmatic implications. Adoption of the empathetic script is necessary for officers to achieve negotiated order. Some level of empathy for inmates is necessary for officers to allow minor deviance to occur. Institutional overload would occur if every instance of inmate deviance was addressed. Additionally, inmates would reach a tipping point and rebel if every instance of deviance was addressed. The result is a need for negotiated order within the institution.

Sykes argued seeing inmates as empathetic figures also increases the risk that officers will become “compromised” (1958: 58). When officers ignore minor deviance it leads them to grow close to inmates. Empathetic officers who grow too close to inmates risk committing deviant acts for their new “friends.” Sykes argued officers have no means to achieve social distance due to the necessity of negotiated order. I argue the dehumanizing script serves the pragmatic purpose of combating compromise.

The dehumanizing script is a defense mechanism for officers. Inmates as untrustworthy and manipulative components of the script call for officers to approach all inmates with suspicion. Approaching inmates with suspicion reduces the likelihood an officer will be successfully manipulated by an inmate. Adoption of the script leads to interactions with inmates that are cautious and protect the officer.

The dehumanizing script also leads officers to increase social distance between themselves and inmates. The primary responsibility of correctional officers is to

maintain security which requires social distance between officers and inmates (Giallombardo 1966; Bowker 1980; Hepburn & Albonetti 1980). However, officers and inmates have similar social characteristics, and spend significant portions of their day together (Poole & Regoli 1981). The dehumanizing script reduces the risk of compromise by keeping a minimal social distance between officers and inmates. Officers need to employ both the empathetic and dehumanizing scripts to maintain order without being compromised.

Script balance.

Script balance is the ability to employ both the empathetic and dehumanizing scripts depending on the situational context. Script balance is necessary for officers to maintain order without being compromised. Officers do not see the use of both dehumanizing and empathetic scripts as contradictory⁸.

Officers who use either script exclusively create more occupational problems for themselves and other officers. The dehumanizing script serves as a defense mechanism for officers. However, several officers commented to me that the majority of inmates do not cause problems and want to serve their time without incident. The following excerpt from Officer Comicbo captures this idea:

Me: “In general how would you characterize the inmates?”

Comicbo: “Most of them I would say probably 80% of the inmates are there to do their time and get the hell out, that is their attitude. You know, I’m here to do my time I might fuck around a little bit but I’m here to do my time and get out.” (Comicbo 4-16-09)

⁸ See Simi & Futrell 2009 for a discussion of a similar balancing act among members of white power movements. White power activists typically conceal their true beliefs during everyday interactions with non-members. Concealment contradicts their purpose as members of a social movement but is seen as necessary to function in society. Correctional officers also engage in apparent contradiction for the purpose of social survival.

Comicbo is expressing a common view among officers regarding inmates. The consensus among officers is 75% of inmates are trying to just serve their time and get out. Officers believe the empathetic script should be applied to this 75% of inmates. Unnecessarily applying the dehumanizing script to unproblematic inmates threatens the negotiated order.

Officers who employ only the empathetic script regarding inmates also create occupational problems for themselves and other officers. Officer Lance discusses Officer Mayord whom Lance believes is using only the empathetic script toward inmates.

“Then you’ve got people like Mayord who has gotten better I think he understands that this is what people see from him. I don’t think he would ever bring anything in for inmates for selfish reasons, I think he would get too sympathetic....You really just can’t be nice, you can’t be a nice guy to the inmates because they take advantage of that. If it were a situation where they only asked for things they needed you could be nice but that’s not the way it works. That’s not how they play what they do is they try to see who’s friendly and who’s going to help them and they exploit that person so it was kind of easy to tell that Mayord was heading in the wrong direction.” (Lance 2-27-09)

In this quote Lance discusses Sykes’ concept of compromise. An officer who employs only the empathetic script is likely to become compromised by inmates. Officers are taught the consequences of getting compromised by an inmate, ranging from loss of job to death, during formal training and informal socialization. Officers who apply only an empathetic script risk experiencing these consequences.

Although a small number of officers internalize one script exclusively, most officers internalize both. Officers that internalize both scripts regarding inmates must decide which script to employ in any given situation. Officers make a value judgment regarding the individual inmate, and the situational context and use the appropriate script. I now turn to a discussion of cultural scripts that guide officer-inmate interaction.

Respect for Dehumanized Others

Ironically, both the empathetic and dehumanizing scripts result in officers treating inmates with respect. Officers believe the empathetic script should be applied to the majority of inmates. The dehumanizing script also leads to inmates being treated with respect, due to fear of the inmate.

A respectful approach to inmates is taught during formal academy training, and as part of the informal socialization process. For example, during the second week of academy training Akira said:

“There is nothing wrong with saying thank you to an inmate. You will find that eventually if you continue to be respectful to inmates they will come around and be respectful to you, or as respectful as they can be.” (STA 9-18-08)

The statement illustrates the formal view that treating inmates with respect should be the norm of officer culture. Akira finishes this quote by saying “or as respectful as can be.” This indicates although inmates should be treated with respect, they remain “outsiders” (Hughes 1994). A respectful approach to inmates is also advocated in the informal officer culture.

During the fourth week of academy training, recruits spend four days in their respective institutions (in my case PSP) conducting on the job training (OJT). The four days are the initial opportunity for informal socialization into the officer culture. Recruits interact with experienced officers and begin to see the differences between formal training and the “real world.” During my first day of OJT I worked in a control center with Corporal Gunter. After a short time in the control center, Gunter asked if I wanted to help him conduct some cell searches. Before we stepped onto the gallery to begin our searches, Gunter said:

“Be professional, be courteous, these guys are human beings and if you treat them well they will treat you well. Some guys come in here and get caught up in being the boss, you’re the boss (of the inmates) you are, you are the one managing all these inmates. If you are a dick about it and are irritating them than you are going to make it a bad situation for you and for me and I don’t want that, so treat them with kindness and respect and you’ll get along fine.”

(STA 9-30-08)

Gunter relays the appropriate approach to inmate interaction to new officers. The approach he relays echoes the formal training. Both the formal and informal officer culture stresses treating inmates with respect, or more broadly, “treating inmates like human beings.” This is the appropriate method for interacting with inmates whether officers are using an empathetic or dehumanizing script. Treating inmates respectfully helps maintain the negotiated order of the prison.

The empathetic script says inmates “deserve” respect. Officers employing the empathetic script believe there is little difference between inmates and officers. Atkins said,

“Inmates are people. I’ve always treated inmates like human beings until they acted like something else. I have done things that could have landed me in prison, but I’m not there so there is not that much of a difference between us and them.” (Atkins 11-21-08)

Corporal Carpanza shares this view:

“One of the big problems in prison is that a lot of guys come in and treat the inmates like dicks. They’re still people, and you have to treat them like it, you can’t just treat them like shit because they’re inmates. They’re still people and you have to treat them like it.”

(Carpanza 2-04-09)

Officer Atkins and Corporal Carpanza both employ an empathetic script regarding inmates and conclude inmates should be treated with respect. Atkins allows for the possible need to employ a dehumanizing script by saying some inmates may not deserve

respect. He says he treats inmates like humans “until they act like something else.” He acknowledges that in some cases the dehumanizing script regarding inmates is necessary.

Even when officers employ the dehumanizing script they approach inmates respectfully due to fear. Numerous officers expressed a desire to treat inmates with respect as a form of protection against inmate violence. The notion was initially presented during the second week of formal training. During an emergency preparedness course the instructor said:

“The way we do business is firm, fair, and consistent. Also treating inmates with respect, if you do this than when something happens (a riot) you will be treated better by the inmates.” (STA 9-16-08)

The idea of respect leading to officer safety is prevalent in the informal officer culture as well. Corporal Teeny concurred with the instructor’s view but took the issue a step further:

“I know that when the time comes and they (the inmates) take over the prison if that happens and the inmates know I treat them fair, I treat them like a human being instead of the scumballs that other people think they are...So again when the riot comes I will probably be protected I will probably be one of the ones they will throw in inmate gear, even though they all know who I am, because I treat them fairly. I am going to treat them all fairly like I would anyone in the outside world.” (Teeny 4-28-09)

Teeny employs a dehumanizing script regarding inmates but still treats inmates respectfully. Teeny reiterates the idea presented by Patty that treating inmates with respect will help ensure his safety in the event of a riot or hostage situation. Teeny goes beyond suggesting inmates will treat him better and says specifically that inmates will “protect” him. Teeny believes inmates will protect him in a hostage situation because he has treated them respectfully.

During an interview, I asked Officer Bouvier why she treats inmates with respect, she said:

“I don’t know, I mean with me its like I don’t want, some of them are murderers. I’m not going to piss them off nor do I want to because if something was to happen, you know like Lisa (training specialist during academy training) had that inmate save her ass. You know I would want that to happen to me, you know I don’t want 70 inmates getting ready to kill me.” (Bouvier (11-18-08))

Bouvier’s primary reason for a respectful approach to inmates is fear. She points out that she is outnumbered during the course of her duties, and suggests like Teeny that treating inmates with respect may lead to protection. The dehumanizing script frames inmates as dangerous because they are manipulative, untrustworthy and dirty. In spite of the danger, officers must work with inmates every day, and treat inmates respectfully to increase their own safety.

Sykes (1958) found a similar situation over 50 years ago. Officers in New Jersey viewed treating inmates respectfully as necessary due to the threat of violence against officers. Officers specifically mentioned the possibility of being taken hostage and beaten during a riot situation. The fear of physical assault led officers to treat inmates respectfully. Sykes concluded that officers treated inmates with respect out of fear without recognizing a dehumanizing script regarding inmates. He believed officers developed empathy for inmates over time. The dehumanizing script frames the inmate as dangerous, increasing the influence of fear on officer-inmate interactions. Officers in Sykes’ study treated inmates respectfully out of fear despite viewing inmates empathetically. Officers in my study hold both empathetic and dehumanizing views of inmates. Dehumanized inmates are by nature viewed as dangerous meaning the need to treat these inmates respectfully out of fear is much greater.

Officers who employ the dehumanizing script must negotiate a contradiction between treating inmates with respect and not trusting inmates. Not trusting inmates is a

central component of the negative script and part of the formal training. During the first week of the academy training specialist Lisa said:

“Respect is huge, trust in a prison system is huge. Trust is important even if it is staff trusting inmates. Inmates deserve a certain amount of trust, still you should double check all their stories.” (STA 9-12-08)

Lisa says inmates deserve to be trusted then tells recruits to check anything they tell you. Lisa’s approach is similar to Corporal Smithe who will ask an inmate a question, and then check the answer after the inmate leaves. Checking an inmate’s answer in this way allows the inmate to think they are trusted without the officer actually trusting the inmate. The method allows officers to maintain the negotiated order while still adhering to the cultural script of not trusting inmates.

The practice of checking inmate answers after the inmate leaves is an inversion of Goffman’s concept of institutional display. Goffman discussed institutional display as a front put on by agents in a total institution for high ranking officials and visitors (Goffman 1961). For example, Goffman cites the presence of inmate crafted murals in high traffic areas of total institutions as institutional display (Goffman 1961:105). Goffman argued institutional displays were not devoid of “substantive implications.” Although displays were not true representations of reality, they held value for the inmates involved. For example, although most inmates were not given the freedom to paint, the inmate who crafted the mural was. In this case, the mural is a front, but the inmate who created it received a substantive reward from the institutional display process.

In the case of officers checking inmate stories, the display is made for inmates, not for outsiders. The officer displays trust in the inmate by accepting the answer the inmate gives. The symbolism of this display allows the inmate to feel “human” which in

turn helps pacify the inmate. The exchange is only a display, once the inmate leaves the scene the officer ends his or her performance and checks the information provided. The check of information again reduces the inmate to the status of untrustworthy other.

Although the officer does not actually trust the inmate, the inmate can temporarily have some of their humanity returned.

Script balance is necessary to maintain the negotiated order of prison. There is variation in how well officers achieve script balance. Officers characterize each other based on the degree to which they appropriately balance the dehumanizing and empathetic scripts. I now discuss a typology of correctional officers based on the ability to achieve script balance.

Internal Characterization of Fellow Officers

The most prevalent type of officer is nameless, and demonstrates script balance. I call this type the “CO.” Approximately 80% of officers are CO’s, with 10% falling into each of the other categories. The breakdown in officer typology suggests deviant officer types are rare. In fact, the lack of deviant officers is a function of CO’s forcing deviant officers out of the profession. At any given time more than 10% of officers may fall into a deviant category. Deviant officer types, huggers and pokers, fail to achieve script balance. Officers who are deemed incapable of achieving script balance are given outsider status and forced to leave the occupation by other officers. The process of forcing outsiders to leave the occupation is discussed in detail in chapter 5.

Officers in the “CO” category approach inmates respectfully. However, CO’s maintain a social distance and only offer as much help to inmates as required by the job.

For example, while working with Corporal Hutz we encountered an inmate who had arrived at the institution earlier that day.

Inmate Smith: “Hey man how do I get a new pair of pants?”

Hutz: “You need to write a kite (an inmate request form) to laundry and let them know that your pants don’t fit and they will take care of you.”

Smith: “So if I do that can I get my new pants tomorrow morning?”

Hutz: “Yeah, probably if you write the kite now. You know normally you could go up and get them now but I know the laundry supervisor already left for the day.”

The exchange was carried out with the utmost professionalism on the part of Corporal Hutz. However, he did not offer to retrieve a new pair of pants for the inmate personally. Hutz also did not offer to deliver the kite to ensure it was waiting for the supervisor in the morning. Hutz treated the inmate with respect while maintaining the required social distance. Hutz is an example of an officer who falls into the category of CO. “Co’s” balance the empathetic and dehumanizing scripts and serve as the norm by which the two deviant officer types are judged.

The second officer type is referred to as the “hugger.” “Hugger” is a term used by officers because this type officer is too close to inmates relationally. Huggers employ only the empathetic script regarding inmates and as a result fail to maintain the social distance between themselves and inmates.

I asked Officer Wendell what the word hugger meant and he said:

“They go above and beyond to help the inmates, they don’t help staff as much as other staff do. Okay let’s say they (inmates) sent their laundry bags in, well half the time they come back and they are missing something, like a pair of socks. If you look in their rooms and they don’t have an extra set you might go get them some. If they’ve got more of whatever they’re asking for then they don’t need it. You know wait until they don’t have it then go get it. A hugger will probably say okay I’ll get you a brand new pair.”
(Wendell 5-5-09)

Wendell defines a hugger as someone that goes out of their way to help inmates.

He then uses the example of providing a basic human service need to the inmate as being

a hugger. “Huggers” use only the empathetic script, therefore fulfilling basic human needs is reasonable. A “CO” would not take the inmate’s word that he is out of socks. A “hugger” would believe the inmate and meet the need.

I observed the term hugger being applied when I worked with Officer Owmel in the special management unit where all inmates are locked down. Because inmates are locked down, officers take a supply cart down the gallery twice per night to give inmates items such as toilet paper, kites, and canteen sheets. Teeny was helping us with the supply cart and shortly after we started down the gallery we ran out of kites. Owmel started telling the inmates we were out of kites, which drew complaints from most of the inmates.

Teeny said, “I can go get some.”

Owmel replied, “quit being such a hugger.”

Again, fulfilling a basic need the inmate cannot meet for themselves is labeled as “hugging.” Segregation inmates have no freedom of movement, therefore all of their needs are met through sending kites. For example an inmate sends a request to medical regarding an illness then medical responds. Without kites segregation inmates are isolated with no means of meeting their needs. In this case the term was applied as a joke between two friends. Teeny ignored this comment and left the gallery to retrieve some kites. After Owmel and I moved to the next gallery, Teeny returned with a large stack of kites.

As he passed us he said, “are there inmates down there who need kites?”

Owmel looked at him and said, “who cares, fuck em!”

Teeny said, “No, I’ve got them (the kites) I can just take them down there.”

Owmel then yelled at him, “You are such a fucking hugger Teeny!”

Teeny replied, “I’m not a hugger I’m just doing my job here.” (CSCI 4-6-09)

This exchange illustrates the threshold for being labeled a hugger. Corporal Teeny was trying to do his job and prevent more work for another officer who would have to retrieve more kites later. Owmel viewed his actions as being “too kind” to inmates and she jokingly called him a hugger. She says, “who cares, fuck ‘em!” Owmel said this with a smile on her face, but in a tone that suggested she was serious. This indicates her belief that inmates as a whole are not deserving of having their basic needs met.

Even in a joking context Teeny was somewhat offended at being called a hugger and felt it necessary to justify his actions. Officers recognize the culturally acceptable approach to inmates is to balance dehumanizing and empathetic scripts. The label “hugger” means the officer has not achieved balance and they are not a “full member” of the officer culture.

When used seriously the term “hugger” is an insult to the officer. When I asked him about being called a hugger Officer Comicbo said:

“Yeah if somebody calls you a hugger even in a joking manner you kind of get a little perturbed and defensive about it. You know I’m not a hugger you know I don’t let these guys do whatever they want.” (Comicbo 4-16-09)

Officer Owmel had a similar reaction when I asked her about being called a hugger

despite her use of the term toward Corporal Teeny:

“I would be mad because I’m not, I don’t get involved I don’t run down the gallery 50 million times, if I’m out on the yard I don’t you know like if they ask me to do something I’m not going to go run and take care of it right now, I will do it later.” (Owmel 4-8-09)

Comicbo and Owmel both express the belief that “huggers” are seen as deviant by the officer culture. Officers who are labeled “huggers” are less respected by their fellow officers because they fail to achieve script balance. Huggers are also seen as deviant because they are more susceptible to inmate manipulation. A hugger is the equivalent to a “sucker” in larger society. The “sucker” is similar to Goffman’s concept of the “mark” (Goffman 1952). Goffman defines a “mark” as “any individual who is a victim of certain forms of planned illegal exploitation, the sucker, the person who is taken in” (Goffman 1952:451) Goffman argues individuals typically build an image of themselves as “not the sort of person who is taken in by anything” (Goffman 1952:453). Victimization by the illegal exploitation destroys this conception of self and forces the individual to re-evaluate their identity. After the victimization, the destruction of self is a constant source of embarrassment for the individual.

Huggers face a similar set of problems to marks. The correctional officer role requires individuals to conceive of themselves as not the sort of person who is taken in by anything. The close relationships huggers form with inmates make them susceptible to inmate manipulation. Victimization by inmate manipulation destroys the non-gullible conception of self that is central to the officer role. Therefore, huggers are seen as equivalent to marks in society at large, and the hugger label is a constant source of embarrassment for the officer.

The final type of officer is referred to as a “poker.” “Poker” is a term created by officers because officers in this category unnecessarily irritate inmates or “poke them with a stick.” Pokers employ only the dehumanizing script regarding inmates. CO’s

believe pokers increase the dangerousness of the job for all officers through their behavior. Corporal Terr addresses the issue of pokers as dangerous:

“There are a lot of guys that come in here and they just want to poke the inmates. They just poke at them and poke at them until they explode and again its just not worth it. They (the officers) don’t realize that poking the inmates makes all of our lives harder and puts us in danger.” (PCCW 5-13-09)

Terr is clear that “pokers” create a more dangerous environment for all officers not just for themselves by unnecessarily irritating inmates. Pokers’ failure to employ the empathetic script means they are incapable of acting in situationally appropriate ways when dealing with non-problematic inmates. Pokers treat all inmates as troublesome and create problems for themselves and other officers as a result.

Pokers are looked down on by other officers for solely pragmatic reasons. Terr discusses his displeasure with pokers in terms of the problems their behavior creates for other officers. He says pokers, “make all of our lives harder and puts us in danger.” Terr does not mention a moral objection to the behavior of pokers. His focus is on the threat pokers pose to the negotiated order of prison.

The pragmatic objection to pokers leads to a nuanced application of the term to officers. Defining an officer as a “poker” is based more on the inmate’s reaction than the behavior of the officer. Two examples of officers that could be labeled as pokers will illustrate this point. The first example occurred one night while I was working with Corporal Dave. Near the end of the night we were sitting in an office chatting with case worker Kent and Corporal Dann. An inmate came to the office and asked for a “canteen sheet” which is an order form for the inmate canteen. The technical name of the form is an inmate property order form, but officers and inmates refer to it as a canteen sheet.

The inmate asked for a canteen sheet and Corporal Dann said, “We don’t have any of those.”

The inmate said, “What do you mean, you’re out?”

Dann replied, “No, I just don’t have any forms that say canteen sheet.”

The inmate then said, “Oh I see um, can I have a canteen request form, shit I don’t know what its called.”

The inmate started to get frustrated but realized showing her frustration would not help her cause and remained calm. After this statement Dann stepped into the back office where the forms were kept, looked at a form and said,

“Yeah this definitely isn’t a canteen sheet.”

The inmate continued trying to guess the technical name of the form for the next five minutes while Kent and Dave both laughed at the game. Finally, Dann said, “oh I guess I will just give it to you.”

The inmate took the form and quickly left the office. (PCCW 5-20-09)

Dann was using the negative script regarding inmates and clearly engaged in “poking” the inmate. The inmate was the butt of their joke, providing officers with some momentary entertainment. After the incident neither officer viewed Dann or the interaction negatively. In this case, the inmate did not react to the poking, and Corporal Dann was not labeled as a “poker.”

The second example comes from a shift I worked in the SMU at CSCI. One of the inmates in the SMU is Hector Snaken, a mid 30’s Hispanic inmate, serving a life sentence for first degree murder. Snaken has a history of assaulting officers and inmates in prison. In spite of his history, Corporal Sheen decided to “poke” Snaken.

Snaken was a very religious inmate and had few belongings in his cell. Sheen conducted a routine cell search, and found Snaken's Bible, which was "altered." Inmates are not allowed to alter their property in any way; the rule is intended to prevent the crafting of weapons or concealing of contraband. Snaken had created tabs for his Bible by taking several scraps of paper and attaching them to the various books of the Bible with toothpaste. The Bible was technically "altered," but "CO's" would typically ignore this minor offense. (CSCI 4-6-09)

If a "CO" took the Bible they would then go to Snaken and explain the reason for their action. Sheen confiscated the Bible and submitted it to the evidence custodian. This meant the Bible would not be returned to Snaken for at least one week. Sheen could have written his report and given the Bible back to Snaken, but chose to submit the book as evidence.

CSCI conducted a tornado drill on the night I worked with Owmel. The drill meant there were 7 officers in the unit control center including Sheen. Snaken called the control center on his cell's intercom repeatedly during the 30 minute tornado drill.

Snaken, "He fucking broke my headphones!"

Sheen laughed and said, "Who?"

Snaken, "That fucking guard who was in my cell earlier, he broke my headphones and stole my Bible."

Sheen, "Okay, sorry, can't talk now." Then Sheen hung up on Snaken and the other officers in the control center laughed.

Then Sheen told the other officers, "He's pissed because I confiscated his Bible when I searched his cell earlier."

Snaken then called back and said, “you fucking hung up on me he broke my headphones.”

Sheen, “I did not break your headphones they were already like that.”

Snaken, “Are you the one that searched my cell?”

Sheen, “Yeah, and I will get you some new headphones.”

Snaken, “When?”

Sheen, “In a little while.”

Snaken, “When?”

Then Sheen again hung up on Snaken, which drew more laughs from the other officers.

A minute later Snaken called back in, this time Sheen ordered Owmel to answer the phone.

Owmel, “How can I help you?”

Snaken, “Where is Sheen?”

Owmel while stifling laughter, “He’s in the bathroom what do you need?” As she finished this sentence she started to laugh and a few other officers also broke into laughter which was audible over the intercom.

Then Owmel as she was laughing said, “Okay, gotta go” and she again hung up on Snaken.

After this exchange Sheen turned to Unit Manager Moe and said, “Do you want me to put the Bible into evidence or do you want me to give it back to him? Either way I’m writing him up but what do you want me to do with the Bible?”

Moe, “What’s wrong with the Bible?”

Sheen, “he took a bunch of kites and tore them up and made little scraps of paper with them. Then he took some toothpaste and stuck them to the pages of his Bible making little tabs to mark the books. I took it because its altered.”

Moe, “look I don’t really care that he did that, I don’t think its that big of a deal but I’m not going to tell you what to do so you can do what you want.”

Sheen, while laughing, “Okay then its going into evidence.”

Shortly after this exchange the tornado drill ended and I left the control center. About an hour later a radio call came out for several officers to report to the armory. When Owmel heard the call she said, “Oh shit they are going in on somebody’s ass.” A few minutes later we returned to the office and found out what had happened. Snaken took the 13 inch television in his cell, placed it inside a pillow case and swung it into his cell wall. He then found two 6-inch pieces of glass in the debris, and wired them to each of his hands. This gave him two large homemade knives to use as weapons. Snaken then covered the window to his cell and began screaming,

“Come in and get me I’m going to kill you motherfuckers!” (Owmel CSCI 4-06-09)

During the next four hours the Lieutenant on duty tried to talk Snaken into giving up. Finally, two teams of five officers dressed in riot gear, entered the cell to subdue Snaken. As the officers entered the cell Snaken stabbed Corporal Smithe in the back. Luckily Smithe’s stab vest stopped the attack. As the group tumbled to the ground Snaken bit officer Simpson on the shoulder. When the ten officers landed on top of Snaken, he hit the concrete floor face first and bloodied his nose. I later learned Snaken was HIV positive meaning the bite to Officer Simpson and the bloody nose were both

exposure risks. Sheen's decision to poke an inmate led to four hours of stress for several officers and two minor injuries, and potential exposure to HIV for ten officers.

In the control center, the incident resembled the interaction between Corporal Dann and the female inmate at PCCW. An officer was "poking" an inmate and other officers thought it was funny. Once Snaken turned violent the interpretation of Sheen's actions changed dramatically. After this incident most officers were irritated with Sheen for "poking" the inmate.

Corporal Smithe told me,

"I sat next to Sheen in role call the next day and I made it clear that I wasn't happy. I mean that bullshit just makes you lose respect for people." (Smithe 4-09-09)

Owmeel concurred,

"It irritates me, I mean why couldn't you have just given him the Bible back we wouldn't have had to go through all this. You know who cares he marked the chapters big deal its not like he was taking the pages out so he could make cigarettes with because that's what they use th Bible for because the paper is so thin. You know its not like he was doing that he just marked his chapters who cares you know make our jobs easier" (Owmeel 4-08-09)

These two examples illustrate the pragmatic nature of being labeled a poker by officers. Both examples include clear indications of officers unnecessarily irritating inmates. Only one officer was labeled a poker for his behavior. In the first example, the inmate remained calm in spite of the "poking" and Corporal Dann was not labeled a poker. In the second example, the inmate reacted with violence that led to stress and injuries to other officers. Corporal Sheen's poking threatened the negotiated order, which is the reason officers typically apply the "poker" label. (Sheen's behavior was seen as funny until it threatened the negotiated order.)

The actions of each officer were similar but the cultural reaction was different.

Pokers are seen as deviant because they threaten the negotiated order of the institution.

However, pokers only threaten the negotiated order if their behavior elicits a negative reaction from inmates. If an officer pokes an inmate and the inmate does not react negatively, the behavior is accepted by other officers.

Correctional officer culture operates on a series of scripts which guide interactions with various agents. The three most prominent agents within a correctional setting are administrators, inmates, and fellow officers. In this chapter I examined the cultural scripts officers use to interact with administrators and inmates. The primary cultural script regarding administrators is one of distrust. This leads to resentment of the administration while increasing officer solidarity.

There are two competing cultural scripts regarding inmates, an empathetic script and a dehumanizing script. The empathetic script views inmates as human and deserving of empathy. The dehumanizing script views inmates as untrustworthy, manipulative, and dirty. The majority of officers, however use both cultural scripts. Officers choose which script to use based on the inmate and the situational context. Both scripts lead to a generally respectful approach to inmates. Officers using a dehumanizing script extend respect to inmates based on fear of the inmate. Officers using an empathetic script believe inmates deserve respect.

Some officers use only one of the scripts and base all inmate interaction on that script. The difference in script usage leads to distinctions among officers. Officers use these internal distinctions to classify their peers who fail to achieve script balance. Officers who employ both scripts are called "CO's." A small group of officers use only the empathetic script and are called huggers. Huggers minimize the social distance between inmates and officers. Finally, a second small group of officers use only the

dehumanizing script and are called pokers. Pokers approach inmates aggressively and cause unnecessary conflict. Both huggers and pokers create problems within the institution and thus both types are viewed as deviant adaptations.

Interacting with inmates is one of the most critical components of a correctional officer's job, and the cultural scripts guiding these interactions are central components of officer culture. An equally important component of a correctional officer's job is interaction with fellow officers. I now turn to a discussion of the cultural scripts regarding fellow officers.

Chapter 5

Cultural Scripts Regarding Other Officers

In this chapter I examine the cultural scripts that guide interaction among correctional officers. The principal inter-officer cultural script emphasizes “protecting” other officers. Officers should protect each other from a variety of physical and symbolic threats. Protection of fellow officers is one of the most important cultural scripts correctional officers employ. An exchange that occurred while working with Corporal Comicbo illustrates the importance of officers “protecting” each other.

Driving the perimeter vehicle is seen as one of the worst job assignments at CSCJ because it isolates the officer from other officers. Late in the morning Corporal Skinner, who was in charge of the yard, approached a group of four officers including myself, Corporal Comicbo, Corporal Agnessek, Officer Wolf, and Corporal Neskin. Corporal Skinner asked for volunteers to drive the perimeter vehicle during the second half of the shift. Several minutes of silence followed his request, and all of the officers avoided eye contact, until Neskin said:

“You know what I’ll do it, fuck it, I’ll do it. I’ll jump on that grenade for you guys I don’t really care. Yeah I can take a grenade for you guys once in a while” (Neskin 4-14-09)

Neskin views volunteering to drive during the second half of the shift as a significant sacrifice. The sacrifice is justified by the protective script of officer culture. Neskin compares his sacrificial act to “jumping on a grenade” which is viewed as the ultimate self sacrificing act among military personnel. Correctional officers are rarely given the opportunity to sacrifice personal safety for fellow officers. Despite, popular beliefs, and even academic rhetoric to the contrary corrections work is not exceedingly

dangerous. Therefore, seemingly minor sacrifices, such as driving a perimeter vehicle for half a shift, become important symbolic opportunities to protect fellow officers.

Protection of fellow officers, especially self-sacrificing protection strengthens the cohesiveness of the culture. Durkheim (1984) and Erickson (1966) both argue groups unite against common enemies. The act of protecting other officers from common enemies demonstrates unity among officers. Officers protect each other from three common enemies: the administration, inmates, and outsiders.

Officer Deviance

Two standards of officer behavior exist: formal standards governed by the administration and informal standards governed by officer cultural scripts. The dichotomy leads to multiple definitions of officer deviance. Formal officer deviance refers to acts that violate official institutional regulations but are not perceived as deviant by officers. Many of these behaviors are seen as normal and even desirable by officers despite violating formal regulations. For example, cursing at inmates is officially prohibited making it an act of formal deviance. However, a majority of officers believe cursing at inmates is an effective means of communication.

Informal officer deviance refers to acts that violate officer cultural scripts. Often, acts that are officially sanctioned are considered informal officer deviance. For example, an officer who informs the administration that a fellow officer is cursing at inmates has committed an act of informal deviance. Informing the administration about formal deviance violates the protective script and is therefore informally deviant. The formal and informal standards of officer behavior often conflict. However, there is some overlap between formal and informal standards.

Total officer deviance refers to acts that violate both official institutional regulations and officer cultural scripts. For example, an officer who introduces contraband to the institution commits an act of total officer deviance. The introduction of contraband is prohibited by official regulations and violates the protective script.

Officers who engage in formal deviance are protected by other officers through protective silence. Protective silence is an extension of the “code of silence” among uniformed personnel. The “code of silence” was first identified among police officers in 1953, and has been extended to other uniformed para-militaristic occupations (Ivkovic & Shelley 2008; Pershing 2003; Westly 1953). The code of silence is a cultural prohibition against reporting misconduct by other officers. Researchers disagree about the purpose of the code of silence, some argue it ensures police autonomy, others suggest it insulates officers against punitive responses to misconduct (Ivkovic & Shelley 2008). Among correctional officers protective silence prevents punitive disciplinary action by administrators in cases of formal deviance. Protective silence is not necessary in acts of informal deviance, and acts of total deviance are not protected by other officers.

Protective Silence

Surprisingly, officers believe one of the biggest threats they face is the administration. As discussed in chapter 4, officer-administration interactions are guided by a distrustful script regarding the administration. The distrustful script leads officers to “protect” each other from the administration. Officers’ primary means of protection from the administration is the “code of silence.” The “code of silence” prohibits informing on fellow officers. The strength of the code is demonstrated in an exchange from PSP.

I was in a control center with Corporal Powers, Corporal Hartman, Corporal Rup, and Corporal Ther. The officers were discussing their new post assignments. Rup mentioned that he and Hartman were both assigned to turnkey.

Rup said, “the last time we were in there together we had to write up Williamson, he (Williamson) was in there and he was pissed and he reared back and kicked the shit out of the door out of turnkey. He hit it in the middle and as soon as he did the top window just spider webbed. I was like oh shit, it was impressive but still I was like, yeah I was looking the other way and didn’t see shit.”

Hartman then added, “Yeah, he wrote himself up right away and did the paperwork on himself to tell them (superiors) what happened, but they still said we had to file the paperwork also. We didn’t want to write him up and he already put himself on paper so we didn’t understand why we had to put it down also. As soon as he did it we were both like I didn’t see shit.”

Then Ther said, “That’s when you say I was back doing strip searches and I heard a boom I didn’t see anything.”

Hartman responded, “Yeah that’s what we wrote in our reports, was that we didn’t see anything even though he said he did it.” (Powers 2-24-09)

The exchange illustrates the importance officers place on the “code of silence.” Officer Williamson engaged in a deviant act that could not be ignored because of physical evidence. The presence of physical evidence meant Rup and Hartman could not remain silent; the broken door had to be explained somehow. The two officers decided to report that they had not seen how the door was broken. This approach allowed them to avoid reporting the deviance and uphold the “code of silence.” Williamson chose to confess his actions and immediately filed a report admitting what he had done. The code of silence is so strong that despite Williamson’s confession Ther argues the officers should have still denied seeing anything. Hartman and Rup agree with this and state their reports denied seeing anything. Even in the presence of physical evidence and a confession acculturated officers will not violate the code of silence.

The code of silence protects officers from investigation into formal officer deviance. Due to the code of silence, administrators are unlikely to know about formal officer deviance. In cases such as the broken door where the deviance is impossible to conceal, the code of silence prevents effective investigation. The use of protective silence is based on the combination of the distrustful script regarding the administration, and the protective script regarding fellow officers. Officers must protect each other because the administration cannot be trusted.

I now turn to a discussion of officer protection from inmates.

Inmates

Inmates are the greatest threat to officers both physically and symbolically within the prison. As noted above, the physical danger inmates pose to officers is greatly exaggerated even among correctional officers. Corporal Teeny discusses an instance of officer protection from inmates:

“There are several occasions where I’m sitting there holding a shield (to forcibly enter an inmate’s cell) and trying to decide. We had an inmate that said he had a two foot long shank and we had to go in on him. That’s where we had the guy that had just had the surgery and I’m standing there with the damn shield sitting there thinking I’m going to get hurt, I’m going to get hurt because they (the administration) won’t let us use chemical weapons or an inert round or the shotgun with a beanbag. I had to sit there and decide and the only thing that kept me there, because I about dropped the shield and said fuck you I’m leaving I quit. The only thing that kept me there was that somebody else was going to have to do it, and I would rather it be me than someone else.” (Teeny 4-28-09)

Teeny says he was aware of the danger he faced by entering the inmate’s cell and considered quitting the job on the spot. He chose to stay and sacrifice his own interests for other officers. It is impossible to know Teeny’s actual motives for staying and facing the armed inmate. It is possible that other job opportunities might have been unavailable if he quit, or that Teeny thrives on the excitement of confrontation. Teeny, however,

presents his actions as sacrificing personal safety to protect other officers from a dangerous inmate.

The daily routine of a correctional officer is boring and monotonous. Officers have few chances to protect each other from physical danger. As a result, the few instances when a physical threat occurs become embedded in the folklore of the occupation.

Folklore is a term coined by William Thoms in 1846 to describe oral traditions, legends, ballads, and myths that are essential to a culture (Berger & Del Negro 2004; Brunvand 1976; Thoms 1965). Folklore is an essential element of culture and no culture exists that does not include folklore (Bascom 1965a). Folklore justifies cultural values, rituals and beliefs, and is essential for the socialization of new members (Bascom 1965b; Burke 2004; McCarl 1976). The socialization function of folklore will be discussed in more detail in chapter six. In this chapter folklore addresses physical threats faced by correctional officers. Several other occupations use folklore to address physical threats, police (Rumbaut & Bittner 1979), the military (Burke 2004), fire-fighters (McCarl 1976), fishermen (Poggie & Gersuny 1972). The folklore in those occupations is focused on handling an established physical threat. Correctional officer folklore constructs physical threats that are not objectively prevalent.

Correctional officers rarely face physical threats from inmates. The most common threat an officer will face is being asked to help forcibly remove an unruly inmate from his cell. Yet, for an officer to face this threat a number of chance occurrences must happen simultaneously. The officer must be working when the inmate becomes unruly, the officer must be assigned to a post (likely the yard) that can be left,

the Lieutenant must call for the officer specifically, and finally the inmate must decide to engage the officers. Inmates rarely become so unruly that they must be forcibly removed from their cells.

For example, CSCI has by far the highest occurrence of cell extractions in the PDOC. At CSCI officers are assembled for a cell extraction 3-4 times per week. Even rarer is an inmate who chooses to engage the officers once the cell extraction is ordered. Typically once the 5 officers are in place to perform a cell extraction the inmate chooses to cooperate and the threat is neutralized without confrontation. At CSCI only 1 out of every 10-12 unruly inmates choose to engage the cell extraction team. CSCI officers are the most likely in the PDOC to engage in a cell extraction, and at CSCI cell extractions occur approximately once per month. This combination of events means an officer's likelihood of facing a physical threat from an inmate is very low.

In spite of this reality officers perpetuate the myth that their job is extremely dangerous. Our society bestows respect and prestige upon "dangerous" professions (Nakao & Treas 1994). An even higher level of prestige and honor is reserved for those professions who face danger to protect others (Nakao & Treas 1994). For example, among the most honorable professions in our society are the police and the military both of which face danger to protect society at large. Correctional officers share much in common with police and military personnel; they are uniformed public servants who officially protect the public (Farkas & Manning 1997). However, correctional officers do not receive the prestige or honor of either police or the military. Teeny is making a claim to deserve the same prestige and honor by saying he not only faces physical threats, but does so to protect others. Importantly the others Teeny protects are not members of

society but his fellow officers. This distinction strengthens the cohesiveness of officers, who are undervalued by society at large. However, protecting fellow officers in isolation from the public also limits the amount of prestige and honor afforded correctional officers.

Inmates rarely pose physical danger to officers, however the few instances when they do serve important symbolic purposes. Officers cling to instances of physical danger to bring honor to the profession and to the individual officer who faced the danger. Contrary to popular opinion, the primary danger inmates present is the compromise of officers.

Compromise

I borrow the term compromise from Sykes (1958) to describe instances of officers becoming too close relationally to inmates. Previous authors have discussed correctional officer “boundary violations” that include romantic or sexual relationships between officers and inmates (see Baro 1997; Marquart, Barnhill, & Balshaw-Biddle 2001). I combine “boundary violations” with the introduction of contraband into prisons by officers. Both boundary violations and contraband introduction represent significant “compromises” of officer ethics and values.

Officers believe both forms of compromise threaten their safety. Corporal Mirsam

explains the danger presented by introducing seemingly benign items:

“I’m never going to look down on somebody for bringing in Copenhagen (chewing tobacco) or something for themselves. If I ever saw them hand something like that to an inmate I would drag them up to the Lt.’s office myself. There’s just lines you can’t cross, that jeopardizes my security.”

Me: “How so?”

Mirsam: “Well you know you’ve been bringing in weed for me all the time, now I need a gun and you will bring me one or you will go to jail.” (Mirsam 2-27-09)

Mirsam argues for a “gateway drug” approach to contraband. The officer initially smuggles tobacco, then marijuana and eventually weapons. The introduction of any contraband is seen as a threat to officer safety due to the risk of escalation. Mirsam would ignore protective silence and report an officer who gave an inmate contraband. Compromise is an act of total deviance and does not qualify for protective silence. Officer culture is dependent on a sense of cohesiveness among officers because outsiders do not understand the occupation. An officer who is compromised violates the cohesiveness of officer culture and presents potential danger for other officers.

The correctional officers in my sample report viewing sexual compromise as more deviant than non-sexual compromise. Sexual compromise threatens officer safety for two reasons. First, officers believe sexual relations with inmates will lead to the introduction of contraband. An illustration of this occurred when Officer Atkins was discussing the impending arrival at RCC of inmate Jimbo whose reputation for violence preceded him. Atkins said:

“I guarantee within 6 months he’ll have some female bringing stuff (contraband) in for him. He’ll sweet talk some female staff member into bringing in whatever he needs because that’s how he operates.” (Atkins 1-21-09)

Sexual compromise violates the dehumanizing script regarding inmates. The dehumanizing script views inmates as “dirty” and disgusting. An officer can bring tobacco into an institution for an inmate in exchange for money while still believing the inmate is dirty. However, engaging in romantic or sexual activity with an inmate requires the officer to disregard the dehumanizing script. An officer who is sexually

compromised views the inmate as desirable, as opposed to less than human. Non-sexually compromised officers violate the protective script; sexually compromised officers violate both the protective script and the dehumanizing script. The violation of two cultural scripts attaches an even greater stigma to sexually compromised officers than non-sexually compromised officers.

The difference between sexual compromise and non-sexual compromise is illustrated by Caseworker Borton. During the first week of the academy Lisa discussed what it was like to be a female correctional officer. Borton stood up and addressed the class saying:

“I’ve worked in corrections before and I have to tell you ladies, and I guess gentlemen too, there is nothing worse than seeing a female officer turned bad.” (Borton 9-9-09)

Lisa followed this statement by saying “it happens to guys too.” However, Borton was clear that a distinction exists and later told me in private:

“When female staff get corrupted it hurts, it really hurts me at least but I’m an older guy. I know men get in trouble too, but normally not for having sex with inmates that is so much worse.” (Borton 9-9-09)

The distinction officers make between sexual and non-sexual compromise leads to a gendered interpretation of compromise. Officers are more apt to protect each other from sexually compromised officers than from non-sexually compromised officers. Most PDOC inmates are male, therefore female officers face greater scrutiny, often based on minimal evidence of wrongdoing. Officers rely on intuition and experience to subjectively determine if a fellow officer is “dirty.” Several officers mentioned the presence of “red flags” as keys to knowing when an officer was compromised. I asked Corporal Sherr for an example of a “red flag” and he said:

“They’re (the compromised officer) either telling too much about their personal life, they like the fact that they have something personally in common so they will talk about that certain thing. To an extent I do that too, you know you get them talking about their music or whatever, but if it goes too far and you’re not paying attention to your surroundings then it’s a problem.” (Sherr 5-21-09)

I also asked officers for examples of “red flags” regarding sexual compromise specifically. Corporal Smithe replied:

“It’s how they interact with the inmates, if they are close with the inmates then you can kind of tell. What I’ve seen is...Okay there was a staff that got fired not too long ago she hooked up with the inmates. She was real strict when you were around but as soon as you walked off she would be chatting with the inmates again. She was playing both sides of the fence. Or if they are walking around the yard with inmates walking with them, or talking to inmates a lot.” (Smithe 4-9-09)

Both quotes reveal the subjective nature of determining officer compromise.

Sherr admits he has conversations with inmates based on shared interests, but delineates himself from compromised officers by saying it becomes a problem if the officer is no longer paying attention to his surroundings. However, even “good” officers routinely chat with each other or inmates while virtually ignoring the yard for periods of 10-15 minutes. I observed Sherr ignore the yard to chat with both inmates and officers during fieldwork.

Smithe gauges female compromise based on the amount of time officers spend talking to inmates. He specifically says officers who walk with inmates on the yard or talk to inmates “a lot” are likely to become compromised. He does not provide a definition of what amount of time constitutes “a lot.” The distinction between compromised and non-compromised officers is subjective. The use of subjective criteria to label officers as compromised is problematic because of the consequences compromised officers face. Officers who are proven to be compromised are terminated and possibly prosecuted for criminal activity.

The other form of evidence used against officers suspected of compromise is the accusation of inmates. The dehumanizing script calls for officers to never trust an inmate. The issue of compromise, especially sexual compromise, leads officers and superiors to believe inmate accusations.

Officer Douglas told me about a female officer who had recently been fired for sexual compromise:

Douglas: "They found some tobacco and stuff in this inmate's room and she (the officer) was always hanging out with this particular inmate. I mean this girl was sending up all kinds of red flags from the minute she started. They thought it was her bringing in the tobacco but they weren't sure. Then they went in one day and searched his room and found a picture of a staff member naked from the neck down."

Me: "How did they know it was a staff member?"

Douglas: "That's what the inmate told them. So they already suspected her and they called her into the Lt.'s office. They asked if it was her in the picture and she said yeah, so she got walked out." (Douglas 4-13-09)

During a search of an inmate's cell an officer found a picture of a female nude from the neck down. The officer asked the identity of the female in the picture and the inmate said it was an officer. Normal officer-inmate interaction calls for even minor details provided by inmates to be verified. In this case, an inmate accused a staff member of a career ending offense and the officer believed the accusation without verifying the inmate's claim. The officer took the accusation to the administration who accused the female officer of sexual compromise. The female officer admitted it was her in the picture and was fired.

Douglas does not acknowledge the violation of the dehumanizing script regarding inmates. Douglas and other officers I talked to about the incident accepted the practice of trusting an inmate's word regarding sexual compromise. Compromise is a serious issue

among officers because it is seen as a threat to officer safety. Trusting inmates in instances of sexual compromise suggests officers place more importance on the protective script than the dehumanizing script.

Officers are labeled compromised based on intuition and inmate accusations. The lack of evidence means many officers who are labeled compromised continue to work in the institution. Officers who are labeled compromised but continue to work in the institution are immediately given outsider status.

Protection from Outsiders

An outsider is defined by officers as anyone who does not adhere to correctional officer cultural scripts. Outsiders can be divided into two categories internal and external outsiders. External outsiders include anyone who is not employed by the department of corrections. The general public, judges, police officers and any individual that works in the prison in a volunteer capacity are external outsiders. Internal outsiders are employees of the department of corrections who do not adhere to correctional officer cultural scripts. Administrative staff and inmates are internal outsiders, while other officers typically are not. Compromised officers and those who fail to protect other officers are deemed outsiders. Officers will typically try to force outsiders to leave the profession. While officers must work with administrators and treatment staff who are outsiders, they will not tolerate an officer who is an outsider.

Officers who are subjectively labeled compromised and given outsider status but still work within the prison are disproportionately female. Sexual compromise is much more difficult to prove; therefore officers who are sexually compromised are more likely to remain employed. The result is differential treatment of officers based on gender.

Gender profiling.

Officers in my sample were acutely aware of the risks of sexual compromise. The PDOC emphasizes sexual compromise throughout officer training. Within each institution sexual compromise is again emphasized. The result is a belief that the PDOC has a significant problem with sexual compromise. Liger, a female officer, told me:

“you know Prairie leads the nation in females getting walked out for sexual involvement with inmates. Yeah, the national report came out on the PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) stuff and Comanche was number one in the nation.” (Liger 4-20-09)

Liger believes Prairie as a whole, and her facility specifically, are the national leaders in sexual compromise of female officers. The national PREA report did not break down the prevalence of staff sexual activity at either the state or institutional level (Beck & Harrison 2007). The belief that sexual compromise of female officers is far more prevalent in the PDOC is common among officers. As a result, female officers are subjected to “gender profiling” in which all female officers are presumed sexually compromised until they prove otherwise.

Officer Gloria was working in master control at a male prison when I talked with her. She discussed the issue of “gender profiling:”

“I didn’t like being out on the yard it is very, very difficult on female officers here because so many female officers get walked out. It leads to other staff not trusting female staff members, so I would be doing the same thing that other staff are doing but they would tell me I’m doing it wrong or say that I’m smiling too much. Other staff just think you are going to get walked out for getting sexually involved with an inmate. I fought my way through because I need the job and the money is just good enough to keep you here, but as soon as I could I bid onto this post” (Gloria 10-02-08)

Gloria is clear male staff believe all females are going to be sexually compromised. She discusses the stress this belief places on female officers. Gloria says

she was treated differently due to her gender, and she bid into a post in master control to avoid gender profiling.

Most officers, male and female, engage in “gender profiling” of new officers. New female officers are watched more closely than male officers, and are subjected to a different set of standards. There is only one female prison in the PDOC so the profiling may be a matter of opportunity. Because the PDOC inmate population is 92% male, female officers are much more likely to work with male offenders than vice versa. Therefore, females may be disproportionately profiled due to inmate population characteristics. However, male officers at PCCW did not believe gender profiling occurred. For example, I asked Corporal Sherr:

Me: “Are males more scrutinized here because of the potential for sexual relations with inmates?”

Sherr: “I don’t think so. I think if you do your job, if you’re not doing your job you are going to get found out you know. The same thing happens, I mean there are females, there was a female Lt. that I didn’t know and she was going blatantly into other females’ rooms so it doesn’t matter if you are male or female. It doesn’t matter gender, you’re not scrutinized out here as a male.” (Sherr 5-21-09)

Sherr points out that although he works in a female prison, female officers can still be compromised. He then states unequivocally that officers are not judged based on gender at PCCW. Corporal Dave, who also works at PCCW, takes this idea a step further:

“You know an inmate talking to the females and see maybe sometimes the females could get more easily wrapped up in the inmates feelings and things. Where for the most part us men kind of blow it off you know I’m not there to be your mom. Some of the female officers get wrapped up about you know so and so (inmate) doesn’t feel good or doesn’t really like this and its like well who really cares.” (Dave 5-21-09)

Dave agrees with Sherr that males are not subject to gender profiling at PCCW.

Dave suggests even at PCCW female officers are more vulnerable to compromise. Dave

relies on gender stereotypes to claim female officers are more likely to get emotionally involved with inmates. The root of sexual compromise is emotional attachment between the officer and inmate. Dave suggests the attachment can be present even without sexual relations. He also suggests, based on gender stereotypes, that females are always more vulnerable to sexual compromise.

Gender profiling does not occur at PCCW. Instead, male officers warn each other about possible inmate attempts at compromise. Corporal Terr speaks about this form of protection:

“You know the other thing is that here we do a pretty good job of watching out for each other. You know when somebody starts I try to tell them how things work and what to do or not to do. Even once you’ve been here for a while we still really try to watch each others backs because one thing about women is that they are always trying to run some kind of game on you. Women are so manipulative that they are constantly trying to get something over, so we watch out for each other.” (PCCW 5-13-09)

Terr says officers protect each other by warning other officers about potential inmate attempts at compromise. Terr says women are very manipulative and they are “always trying to run some kind of game.” Inmate manipulation is part of the dehumanizing script but Terr frames the script in terms of gender stereotypes. The manipulative nature of female inmates means officers must warn each other about inmate attempts at compromise. In contrast, officers rarely warn female officers in male institutions about inmate attempts at compromise. Instead, female officers are closely observed and quickly labeled as compromised.

At male prisons both male and female peers and superior officers all engage in gender profiling. Female officers are subjected to more scrutiny and are held to different standards of inmate interaction. The following excerpt from an interview with Corporal Violet illustrates the different standards for inmate interaction.

Violet: "I've been written up twice for talking to an inmate. I was just out standing by the fence and an inmate came up and was like 10 feet away and we were talking about what his job was. The conversation lasted about half an hour and there was a caseworker standing in the bubble just watching. They wrote me up because I was out there talking for half an hour with an inmate."

Me: "What was the actual write up for?"

Violet: "Talking to an inmate for an extended period of time."

Me: "So what is the time limit?"

Violet: "I asked that also and I've gotten lots of different answers. From my supervisors they say 5 minutes and then you need to move on. From the staff, I approached the people that wrote me up and they told me the inmate can ask you a question, you answer it then you're done. That is entirely not what they do at all."

Me: "Is the standard for how long you can talk to an inmate the same for males and females?"

Violet: "Absolutely not, absolutely not. I've I don't know if you know who Axon is but he hangs out with inmates. He got a call over the radio and said back over the radio that he was in the middle of a conversation and it needed to wait. If I were to say that I was having a conversation with an inmate you need to wait I would be back in the Lt's office. I mean people that know me well say that's just dumb, its just a double standard." (Violet 2-19-09)

Violet discusses a time when she received a write up (a disciplinary action) for talking to an inmate too long. She says the standard for how long an officer is allowed to talk to an inmate is a subject of debate. Superior officers say the limit for talking to an inmate is 5 minutes, but other male staff suggest much less time. Violet also says there is a double standard where male officers have more leeway to talk with inmates than female officers. I witnessed officers stand and talk with inmates for 20-40 minutes several times during fieldwork.⁹

⁹Because Violet had over 1 year of experience without incident, the Lieutenant viewed the write up as a mistake, not a "red flag." She received a verbal reprimand as punishment for the write up and remains employed with the PDOC.

The double standard Violet discusses is the product of gender profiling. The belief that all female officers will be sexually compromised leads to more strict limits on female interaction with inmates. Officers try to prevent sexual compromise by limiting the opportunity for female officers to develop emotional attachments with inmates. Lt. Gunderson, a male Lieutenant, was forthcoming about the use of a double standard for inmate interaction:

Me: "How do you treat new officers when they come on shift?"

Gunderson: "They come in and I give them their expectations. I give them some expectations of the place especially second shift. I set aside a time for Captain Horatio (female captain), Helen Lovejoy (the unit manager) and another Lt. (female) to come in and talk to the ladies only during training. What they're doing is telling the new ladies this isn't a place for relationships as far as with the inmates. I always tell them ladies this is a tougher job for you get used to it. You are going to be sitting taking to an inmate in center yard and I will see you from a window in the office and if you are talking to them for three minutes I'm going to call you on the radio. If I see a male staff talking to an inmate for 15 minutes I'm not going to sweat them. I tell them (the females) get used to that, its favoritism or whatever its harder on you as a female and that's the speech I've used since I became a Lt. in 1999." (Gunderson 3-20-09)

Gunderson makes three important points in his comments. As a Lt. Gunderson is the highest ranking officer on second shift. He says he trains all new females to "get used to" the double standard of inmate interaction. Gunderson recognizes people may perceive the differential treatment as unfair or favoritism, but suggests it is just part of the job. Gunderson's comments make it clear that gender profiling and the resultant double standard for inmate interaction are institutionalized components of the correctional officer occupation.

Gunderson also discusses the time limit double standard that governs female officers' interactions with inmates. Gunderson says a three minute conversation between a female officer and an inmate is grounds for further investigation. He then says male

officers can talk to an inmate for 15 minutes without drawing suspicion. When these numbers are added to Violet's response, the arbitrary and subjective nature of the time limit becomes clear. Depending on who you ask officers can talk to inmates for anywhere from 1 to 15 minutes.

The final point Gunderson makes is more subtle. He says he calls in three high ranking female officers to discuss the double standard with new females. The discussion is aimed at leading the new females to accept the double standard as normal. Male peer officers and superior officers embrace gender profiling and a double standard. The use of high ranking females by Gunderson suggests female superior officers also embrace gender profiling.

Officer Bouvier discusses gender profiling by female officers:

Bouvier: "The experienced staff are pretty helpful but they have a problem with trusting women at first. I don't know if its because of past problems with female staff and inmates, but they said usually if you pass that probation period they are more accepting."

Me: "Have you noticed that?"

Bouvier: "No female talked to me when I first started. The males did, like the sergeants most of the corporals, its like the more time you spend with them they kind of know how you work so then maybe the trust comes in. I mean you can see an inmate and a male officer talk for 15 or 20 minutes and you don't think anything of it. When you see a female staff and an inmate talk for 15 or 20 minutes its like what are they talking about what's going on?"
(Bouvier 11-19-08)

Bouvier says even female officers are likely to engage in gender profiling and differential treatment of new female staff. She says the experienced female officers did not talk to her until after her 6 month probationary period was complete. Experienced female officers' approach to new females is due to the cultural script of protection.

Several female officers told me during interviews that sexual compromise of a female officer was worse than compromise of a male officer.

For example, during an interview I asked Officer Largo:

“Does it affect you differently as a female when a female staff member gets walked out for having a relationship with an inmate?”

Largo: “Yes. Because then you’re gonna have people looking at you like everything is gonna be under a microscope from now on. Like we lost those two caseworkers in one month so they’re watching us females a lot more than what they’re watching the males. Its kind of hard because if you mess up just a little bit, you know you’ll have people staring down your back.” (Largo 1-29-09)

Largo says female compromise increases the scrutiny faced by other female officers. A female who is friends with a compromised officer receives stronger scrutiny and even avoidance, especially from other female officers. The added scrutiny leads experienced female officers to avoid new females until the new females have “proven” themselves. New female officers “prove” themselves by completing their probationary period without being labeled compromised. In contrast, as Bouvier suggests, male officers are willing to talk to and help females acclimate to the job. Bouvier is clear that in spite of this help from males a gendered double standard exists for inmate interaction.

Both male and female peers and superior officers practice gender profiling and apply a double standard to new female officers. Officers use gender profiling and the inmate interaction double standard to “protect” each other. These methods are seen as ways to prevent compromise, which threatens officers. Once an officer is believed to be compromised, they are given outsider status and other officers begin to force them out of the profession.

Counseling, ostracization, retaliation, and active removal.

The primary cultural script regarding fellow officers emphasizes protection. An officer who violates the protective script is deemed an outsider and faces informal discipline from other officers. Officer Barlow explains:

“Whatever you do, never write up staff because you will quit by yourself after you do. They’re (veteran officers) like you know they say you are supposed to (write up other staff) but we are kind of one team against inmates, so if you write us up you know. Once I write somebody up nobody is going to back me up ever, nobody wants to talk to you, they’ll talk to you but they’re just...you’re going to be able to tell that they don’t like you. Either you are going to quit or you are going to get fired when you get in trouble and nobody backs you up.” (Barlow 11-08-08)

Barlow discusses the consequences of violating the cultural script of protection, and being given outsider status. An officer given outsider status faces four methods of informal discipline. The first and least invasive form of discipline is to be confronted by a veteran officer and counseled about the norm violation. Corporal Carpanza discusses this approach:

Me: “How do you handle it if a guy writes up other staff?”

Carpanza: “Then I pull him aside and be like what the fuck are you doing? Now I can’t live anybody’s life for them you know if something bad happens then that’s on the person that did something bad. It’s the same thing you go to the person first and try to have a conversation with them about it.” (Carpanza 2-04-09)

Carpanza argues the appropriate approach to an officer who violates the script of protection is to talk to them and find out why they did it. This approach is only used in dealing with new officers, because there is an expectation veteran officers “know better.” The new officer is told that his/her actions were wrong according to officer and taught a more appropriate response. If the officer continues to violate the script after informal counseling more invasive techniques are employed.

The second and most prevalent reaction to violation of the protective script is ostracization. An officer who violates cultural scripts is ignored by other officers to send a message of disapproval. The officer is initially ostracized only to change their behavior. Corporal Lionel discusses the process of ostracizing an officer for writing up fellow staff:

Me: "If an officer starts green sheeting (writing up) people how do you handle that?"

Lionel: "Leave them alone, don't say nothing around them don't do nothing around them, only talk to them about the function of the job, anything personal is gone and that's it done. We'll give them some time, try again see what happens, give them some time try again see what happens, and then I don't know where the point is but there's eventually a point where you're like that's it I'm done with them, that's it I can't trust them no more, nobody can trust them anymore. At that point you just leave them alone, they'll cut their own head off, they'll start creating problems for themselves the administration will eventually see it and they'll cut them loose and that will be the end of it." (Lionel 2-06-09)

Lionel discusses a series of chances given to an officer. The officer is ostracized as informal punishment and then the ostracization is ended. If the officer's behavior does not change ostracization resumes and then again ceases. Eventually the officer reaches a threshold where they are deemed incapable of "protecting" other officers. Once the officer is deemed incapable of protection, he/she becomes an outsider. Ostracization is then used to drive outsiders from the profession.

The use of ostracization is especially interesting with officers who are believed to be compromised. Officers believe they can be tainted by association with an officer who is compromised. Ostracization of compromised officers is not only to punish the officer but also to protect other officers from social contamination. However, ostracizing officers who are labeled compromised can have unintended consequences.

Bartholomew, the chief administrator for the STA, spoke about the potential for ostracization to lead to compromise:

“I think there is not enough supervision, not enough staff, not enough watching each other’s back. The inmate fills the void that is there when they look for that human support, and it boils down to human dynamics. Nobody is an island and when they get put in that housing unit with 50 or 60 inmates all day and very little staff contact they are going to seek that human relationship.” (Bartholomew 10-16-08)

Bartholomew expresses his belief that ostracization of “compromised” officers may lead to officer compromise. Similar to criminological labeling theory, the compromised label leads to actual compromise (see Lemert 1951; 1967 for a discussion of labeling theory). Labeling theorists believe that an act of primary deviance (typically a minor deviant act) leads to an individual being labeled as deviance. The deviant label closes off legitimate opportunities and causes others to view the individual with suspicion. The result is more serious secondary deviance stemming from the deviant label. Similarly, the compromised label is applied to officers based on subjective and arbitrary evidence. Other officers will ostracize the “compromised” officer due to the label. The resulting isolation (closing off of legitimate opportunities for social interaction) will lead the officer to seek interaction with inmates. The inmates will seize the opportunity to initiate a compromising relationship with the inmate.

Officer Fergie provides an example of this process. Fergie was labeled compromised despite a lack of evidence. During our interview Fergie told me about the process of meeting with her supervisor to review her interactions with inmates.

Following the meeting, other officers stopped talking to her:

Fergie: “The inmates started talking about it (the allegations) and they would come up to me and say crap.”

Me: “What kind of things would they say?”

Fergie: "I was told to watch my back and that people were talking. I asked the inmate what he was referring to and he said rumors, we get our information from staff and people are talking. Then another inmate came up and said, "I don't want you to be chased out by staff being rude" and that he heard I'm having problems with other staff." (Fergie 5-07-09)

Fergie was ostracized by other staff then inmates approached her to provide human interaction. The inmates told her they were aware of her situation and presented themselves as sympathetic to her suffering. One inmate said, "I don't want you to be chased out by staff being rude." The comment suggests Fergie is not doing anything wrong and her real allies are the inmates not the other staff. The inmates are attempting to build a relationship based on mutual distrust of staff with Fergie. If Fergie engages in this relationship she will become compromised.

Officers who are compromised, or who demonstrate an inability to adhere to cultural scripts are labeled outsiders. Officers must interact with outsiders (administrators and support staff) on a daily basis, but will not tolerate a fellow officer who is an outsider. Lionel and Barlow both discuss the use of ostracization to force an officer out of the profession. Counseling a script violating officer is intended to make them aware of their violation and change their behavior. Ostracization initially serves a similar purpose. Once it becomes clear the behavior will not change, the purpose of ostracization is to drive the officer out. Driving the officer out is also the purpose of the third form of informal discipline: retaliation.

The norms of officer culture do not apply to outsiders. Therefore, once an officer is deemed an outsider, he/she is no longer eligible for protection by other officers. Retaliation typically involves officers writing disciplinary reports about the outsider. The reports attempt to provide evidence the officer has been compromised. Although "hard"

evidence is difficult to gather, eventually the volume of disciplinary reports leads to the dismissal of the compromised officer. Writing up an outsider is supported and may even be cause for celebration among officers.

The act of punishing an outsider through a disciplinary write up clarifies the boundary of acceptable behavior in officer culture. Outsiders present an opportunity for officers to join together against a common enemy. The act of uniting against a “deviant” officer strengthens cultural solidarity (Durkheim 1984). The process of forcing outsiders to leave the profession reiterates the rules of officer culture and strengthens cultural solidarity among officers.

The experience of officer Fergie demonstrates the tactic of retaliation. Fergie did not get along with a veteran caseworker and wrote him up after one month on the job, she told me:

“I went to Ms. Stacey (the caseworker’s supervisor) and I’m just like its not letting up so she was like okay well I have to have you write a report on it. Which I later found out is the way to screw yourself immediately because staff do not take kindly to having green sheets written on them. So apparently its like an unwritten rule that you never write green sheets on other staff so although I have a whole bunch of them in here (her file).” (Fergie 5-07-09)

Fergie acknowledges the “unwritten rule” regarding not writing up fellow staff. She then says she has numerous write ups from officers in her file. Her failure to protect fellow officers led to her being written up several times. Fergie was labeled sexually compromised, which led to the steps of informal counseling, and initial ostracization being skipped. Officers immediately began the process of forcing Fergie out of the profession.

Occasionally, ostracization and basic retaliation do not force the officer out of the profession. If the outsider is resilient to these methods officers engage in active removal. Carpanza discusses the use of active removal to force an outsider to leave the profession:

“I’ve seen steps taken to run people out. They start getting buried under a mountain of green sheets, if they want to write petty stuff somehow or another it seems they start getting a lot of petty write ups put on them let’s just say. There’s things that can be done you know what I mean. Like central control, not the current central control guy but the previous one would tell somebody yeah you don’t have to call in every half hour I’ll just write you down when the perimeter makes their call. When I’m up there (in the tower) I don’t call in he just writes me down. You’ll hear Krustof, the perimeter will call in all zones clear and secure and they you’ll hear the tower repeat it. Krustof when he answers the perimeter he’ll say 10-4 tower and perimeter. Well so this person was told don’t bother to call in and then central control wrote them up for not doing their call ins, so there’s steps that can be taken to deal with these things.” (2-04-09)

Carpanza says outsiders are “buried under a mountain of green sheets.” Officers write up the outsider for any violation of rules, no matter how minor. This technique is similar to retaliation. However, Carpanza says officers go a step further in forcing outsiders to leave. He recounts an instance of officers creating a write up situation by lying to the outsider. Failing to perform the 30 minute call in from a tower is considered a major rule violation because it compromises institutional security. An officer who is written up for this is likely to be put on probation. Once an outsider is on probation he/she is only a few minor write ups from termination.

Creating a write up situation for an outsider is an example of active removal. Officers force the outsider to leave the profession by any means necessary, including deception. An officer who violates the protective script regarding other officers is given outsider status. Once labeled an outsider, other officers will force the person to leave the profession through a series of graduated sanctions.

Conclusion

Officers' primary cultural script regarding other officers is one of protection. Officers in the PDOC must protect each other from compromise, the administration, inmates, and outsiders. Sexual compromise is seen as more threatening and more dangerous than non-sexual compromise. However, evidence of sexual compromise is difficult to attain. Officers rely instead on intuition and inmate accusations to determine officer compromise. Due to the difficulty in attaining evidence, officers who are sexually compromised are less likely to face formal sanctions. The issue of sexual compromise leads to a disproportionate focus on female officers.

Male, female and superior officers all practice gender profiling. New female officers are assumed to be destined for sexual compromise until they prove otherwise. The result of gender profiling is a higher degree of scrutiny for female officers and a gendered double standard for inmate interactions. Gender profiling and the double standard for inmate interactions are designed to protect officers by preventing compromise.

Officers who violate the protective script are given outsider status. Once an officer is given outsider status, other officers will try to force them out of the profession. Officers force each other out of the profession through ostracization, retaliation, and active removal. If ostracization does not force the outsider to leave the profession officers turn to more aggressive tactics.

Officers use retaliation to force outsiders to leave the profession. Officers file large volumes of disciplinary reports against the outsider. Eventually the volume of disciplinary reports either leads the administration to fire the officer, or leads the officer

to quit. In extreme cases officers use active removal to force outsiders to leave the profession. Active removal involves officers creating opportunities for disciplinary write ups through deception.

Cultural scripts guide officer behavior regarding the three primary agents in the prison: administrators, inmates, and other officers. New recruits are taught these scripts during the process of informal socialization. In chapter six I discuss the process by which recruits learn cultural scripts.

Chapter 6

Socialization of New Officers

Correctional officers employ a series of cultural scripts to guide their interactions with other agents (administrators, inmates and fellow officers) within the setting. New officers are taught these scripts through formal and informal socialization. Formal socialization is the official teaching of the technical aspects of the job (Myers 2005). Formal socialization also teaches recruits the formal values and norms of the organization. Informal socialization is the teaching of unwritten occupational cultural norms and values to new officers (Myers 2005; Van Maanen & Schein 1979). Informal socialization occurs through interpersonal communication between veteran and new officers. Prior to examining the formal and informal socialization of correctional officers, the issue of anticipatory socialization must first be addressed.

Anticipatory Socialization

Members of various occupations experience anticipatory socialization (AS) prior to beginning employment (Conti 2006; Ott 1989). AS occurs when people adopt the values of a group they aspire to, but have not yet joined (Ott 1989). AS makes the actual socialization process much easier and quicker for the new employee (Gibson & Pappa 2000). Correctional officers, however, typically “drift” into the job from “blue collar” work (Farkas & Manning 1997; Lombardo 1989), which reduces the opportunity for correctional officers to undergo AS. My findings refine previous research on drift and AS among correctional officers.

Similar to previous research, officers in my sample typically “drifted” into the correctional officer occupation from “blue collar” work. The majority of officers had

previously been employed in fast food, agricultural or factory work. The experience of Officer Drede is typical in terms of drift. Drede told me:

“My husband has worked here for 10 years and he really likes it. I was working at a plant in Commanche and it closed so I came here for a job.” (CSCI 3-30-09)

Like most other officers in my sample, corrections work was not Drede’s first choice; it was an occupation of “last resort.” Most officers’ primary motivation for beginning a career in corrections is extrinsic. People become correctional officers because the pay and benefits are better than other available jobs.

Consistent with previous work, I find people “drift” into the career of correctional officer. Occupations with high levels of drift experience little AS. AS is most prevalent when individuals desire to enter an occupation for a long period of time, and is typically experienced through family members or close friends who are already in the occupation (Ott 1989; Conti 2006). When individuals “drift” into an occupation the pre-employment period is not spent seeking information. Instead, the pre-employment period is spent working in other unrelated occupations that do not provide AS.

Due to drift, AS through family and friends is less prevalent for new correctional officers. Instead, new officers experience faulty AS through media depictions of corrections.

Corporal Wolfcastle discussed the result of media driven AS:

“Based on movies and stuff, I kind of had a predetermined idea of what inmates were like before I started working there. Basically that they are there for a reason they’re all just animals. Some of the stuff they’ve done and stuff you know. A lot of them have changed that, but a lot of them are just pieces of shit there too.” (Wolfcastle 2-13-09)

Wolfcastle says he entered corrections with very negative, media based, perceptions of inmates. These depictions, however, were challenged by a contradictory

working experience. A second officer, Corporal Kent, suggested his AS provided guidance on the proper way to interact with inmates. Kent was asked to perform cell searches and said:

“awesome you mean the ones where they just like break shit. You know when you watch the tv and those old prison movies where they are up on the third tier and they just throw shit right off the edge and break shit that’s awesome.” (NCCW 5-14-09).

Kent and Wolfcastle are representative of the perceptions of prison most new officers bring to the academy. In the absence of family and friends, officers derive inaccurate perceptions of the correctional world from media accounts. Due to the pervasiveness of the inaccurate perceptions, correctional officer academy training directly addresses faulty AS.

During an interview Bartholomew, the director of the STA, told me:

“People watch these shows, like Oz and Prison Break, then they ask me if they are accurate, I tell them to watch a documentary on A&E or something if they want to know. Of course if a movie showed what prison life was really like it would be way too boring, it would end up on the cutting room floor. 95% of the time the job is boring but that 5% of action is what people focus on.” (Bartholomew 8-04-08)

Bartholomew believes most new officers are influenced by inaccurate media depictions of corrections. The other members of the academy staff share this belief and repeatedly address media images during training. For example, Lisa told the class during the first week:

“The days of verbally or physically abusing inmates are gone. This ain’t the *Shawshank Redemption* or *Cool Hand Luke*. If you happen to cringe under certain cuss words get over it, because it is just going to happen (the inmates will cuss at you) Just remember that you can’t cuss back.” (STA 9-10-08)

Akira echoed this sentiment during the third week:

“I can guarantee you that corrections is nothing like *Cool Hand Luke!*” (STA 9-22-08)

These two examples demonstrate academy instructors' attempts to overcome faulty AS. Whereas most occupations with high drift experience no AS, correctional officers experience faulty AS through the media. A lack of AS increases the difficulty of successfully gaining membership into an occupational culture. Faulty AS makes successful integration to occupational culture more difficult, making effective formal and informal academy socialization critical for new officers.

Formal Academy Socialization

Socialization of new officers, both formal and informal, begins in the staff training academy (STA). Formal socialization teaches new recruits the technical skills needed for the job. Officers are taught technical skills directly, and through the provision of a realistic preview of the job.

A critical component of new officer socialization is surprise. Surprise is defined as "differences between what they (new recruits) anticipate in new situations and their actual experiences" (Lois 1990:115). Surprise stems from recruits' inaccurate perceptions of the occupation. Typically, inaccurate perceptions of an occupation are corrected by anticipatory socialization. However, correctional officers experience faulty anticipatory socialization, which creates inaccurate perceptions of the occupation. Agencies can minimize surprise by providing recruits with realistic job previews prior to entering the occupational field (Lois 1990; Miller & Jablin 1987).

The PDOC attempts to provide a realistic job preview for new recruits throughout academy training, culminating in one week of on the job training (OJT). An example of realistic job preview occurred during the second week of academy training. The recruits watched a video of a mock prison assault. After the video the recruits were given 11

minutes to write a report about the incident. Several of the recruits complained about the lack of time. After 11 minutes, Training Specialist Lisa collected reports regardless of whether they were complete and then said:

“Just FYI (for your information) in the real world the Lt. is just gonna’ cuss you out if you are not done, not make you turn in an incomplete report. The reason we give you such a small amount of time is to see how people respond under pressure. Once you get in your institution you are going to be under pressure when you write reports.” (STA 9-17-09)

The report writing exercise demonstrates the time constraints and high-pressure nature of the occupation. The exercise also teaches new officers the emphasis on documentation they will encounter on the job. All of the officers in the class thought writing a report in 11 minutes was an unreasonable request. Several officers also struggled to write an informative report based solely on the facts they witnessed. By providing a realistic job preview during training, the officers are less likely to experience surprise when they are required to write a report on the job.

The majority of academy training is spent on formal socialization, including teaching officers technical skills for the job. Informal socialization also occurs during academy training. Virtually all academy instructors and guest instructors began their careers as correctional officers. Thus they understand the correctional officer culture, and in addition to teaching technical skills these instructors transmit cultural values.

Informal Academy Socialization

Informal socialization occurs in the academy through the use of stories. Cultural scripts are “contextual, informal, unofficial, shared and emergent” (Lois 1990) and, as a result, they are difficult to transmit to new members. Story telling effectively communicates cultural scripts because the stories are open to interpretation by

newcomers (Brown et. al. 2005). Stories do not expressly state norms; they require the listener to interpret meaning (Brown et. al. 2005). The term “story” has an ambiguous definition that varies among authors (Gabriel 2004). However, most researchers agree the chief purpose of the story is to transmit cultural norms and values to new members (Taylor & Van Every 2000; Brown, Denning, Groh, and Prusak 2005; Neuhauser 1998; Mohan 1993; Denning 2005).

During the five weeks of training at STA, a total of 110 stories were told to new recruits by training specialists and guest instructors. The primary message of these stories was teaching recruits a “proper” view of inmates. A story told by Mental Health Specialist Carlson during the first week of training illustrates the inmate mindset:

“An inmate tried to hang himself from his toilet with his feet and hands bound behind his back. He was laying in a prone position with hands and feet bound, when an alert officer saw him. The staff saved him, and preserved the knots to indicate that he had done it himself. The inmate tied his hands like that to try to get staff in trouble after his death. The position of the body would have made it look impossible for the inmate to have hung himself, and the logical conclusion would be that the staff had executed the inmate in his cell. This inmate was not a good guy, he told me once he was mad that when he shot a girl in an office the gun jammed so he couldn’t empty it into her.” (STA 9-11-08)

The story teaches recruits the dehumanizing script regarding inmates. Carlson says the inmate was committing suicide in an attempt to manipulate officers and get them fired. Even in death the inmate was untrustworthy and manipulative. Carlson concludes by telling officers the inmate was “not a good guy.” Carlson’s description of the inmate’s crime and lack of remorse demonstrate the inmate is “dirty.” While the majority of academy stories teach new officers a “proper” view of inmates, other cultural values are also taught through academy stories.

Respectful treatment of inmates.

Stories also stress the importance of treating inmates respectfully. A story told by Akira during the first week of the academy illustrates the norm of respect:

“A DEC (Diagnostic and Evaluation Center) inmate named Smith came out after he was supposed to be locked down in his cell. He had an unauthorized cup that was not state issue. I told Smith to lock down, and give me the cup, and he ignored the order. I followed Smith back to his cell and locked him in. Then I told him I was going to go get an MR and search his cell and confiscate the cup. Smith felt like my telling him what I was going to do out loud was a challenge to him. Two days later a shank was found in Smith’s cell, the shank was to be used to kill me, but it was my day off when it was found. The point of the story is not to “front off” inmates in front of their friends.” (STA 9-12-08)

The story demonstrates the dangerous nature of inmates and the importance of treating inmates respectfully. The story presents an interesting dilemma for the negotiated order officers seek to maintain. Most CO’s would consider possession of an unauthorized cup a minor infraction and ignore it. In this case, the inmate ignored a direct order which is considered a serious infraction by most officers. Akira could not let the inmate ignore a direct order and acted accordingly. However, Akira’s actions were judged by the inmate to be disrespectful. The result was an impending attack on Akira’s life. Akira had to enforce the rule regarding disobeying a direct order because violation of the rule threatens the negotiated order. Yet Akira’s enforcement of the rule also threatened the negotiated order. The solution is to enforce the rule but not in front of other inmates. The story teaches new officers the value of treating inmates respectfully.

The STA formally socializes officers through the use of realistic job previews. However, several officers told me they thought the STA was inaccurate in its depiction of correctional officer work. Officer Terwil and Officer Violet provide typical assessments of the validity of the STA job preview:

Me: “What did you think about STA?”

Violet: “It was kind of rough, kind of boring, and they actually made it seem much worse than it is. As a female I thought it was gonna’ be really bad like they were gonna’ be all over me making comments all the time and shit. I really haven’t had to deal with that much.”
(Violet 2-10-09)

Me: “Do you feel like the academy got you ready?”

Terwil: “I think the academy prepared me for the worst, so you’re even more nervous when you start because you’re expecting fighting all the time and forced cell moves every other day and all that stuff because they set you up for the worst of the worst in the academy.”
(Terwil 4-28-09)

Violet and Terwil suggest the STA overemphasizes inmate harassment and the danger of the job. Both officers say they expected the job to be “much worse” than it actually is. The preview provided by the STA is incongruent with officers’ working experience. Officers enter correctional work expecting violence and inmate harassment to be constant. Instead, they find violence is a rare occurrence and inmate harassment, while common, is not constant.

The STA may intentionally overemphasize the danger of the job to make new officers more cautious. Several officers reported the job was easier and more enjoyable than they anticipated based on the academy preview. Ironically, the incongruence between the job preview and officers’ working experience can lead to officer surprise, the condition which the preview is designed to prevent.

Regardless of the accuracy of the STA preview, there is consensus among officers that academy socialization provides only a foundation for the occupation. Officers learn most of the cultural scripts after entering the institution and beginning work. Even Akira,

who is a training specialist at the STA, believes most of the occupation is learned on the job:

“I tell people in training we are preparing you, its like military training we are preparing you for war, but nothing, I don’t care how many stress fires you do prepares you until you are actually in the midst of warfare. Same thing happens with corrections we can do role play we can do all this other stuff, but until they are immersed in that environment that’s when you find out if they are capable to make that personality change that they need to do to survive in the environment.” (Akira 10-16-08)

Akira is clear no amount of academy socialization adequately prepares an officer for the job. Academy socialization provides an important foundation for officers.

Recruits truly become officers only after they are immersed in a correctional setting and informally socialized into the culture.

On the job socialization

New officers experience both formal and informal socialization after leaving the academy and beginning their career. Formal socialization is achieved through on the job training and work with field training officers at each institution. Informal socialization is more prevalent and involves learning cultural values from veteran officers. Most informal socialization occurs directly; veteran officers explicitly teach new officers cultural values, and norms for behavior. Prior to overt teaching of cultural values, new officers must be accepted by veteran officers.

Proving grounds and acceptance.

Informal socialization is dependent on veterans teaching new officers the appropriate cultural scripts and norms of being a correctional officer. Teaching cultural scripts requires the presence of both veterans and new officers yet, veteran officers often avoid new officers. The avoidance of new officers stems from formal socialization. Part

of formal socialization teaches officers that all rule infractions, no matter how minor, should be reported. For example, during the first week of academy training Akira said:

“When you see something wrong (in the institution) fix it. I know when you enter as a new hire you want camaraderie not conflict but still, never let your fear of making enemies prevent you from doing the job according to policy. No matter how small follow all procedures to the letter, if one officer doesn’t and another does it creates conflict between the inmates and the officer who follows procedures.” (STA 9-10-08)

Akira says all procedures should be followed exactly. The instruction means if a veteran officer engages in formal deviance, the new officer should report it. Akira frames reporting formal deviance in terms of the protective script. Allowing even minor infractions to occur endangers officers who follow procedures. Ironically, the protective script is the basis of the code of silence. A new officer who adheres to Akira’s advice and reports formal deviance violates the code of silence. Veteran officers know new officers are being formally socialized to violate the code of silence. As a result, veteran officers initially distance themselves from new officers. In addition to fearing write ups, high turnover rates also lead veterans to avoid new officers. Corporal Lance discusses the problems new officers present:

“A lot of veteran staff don’t want to talk to new people because they see it all the time. They see new people come in, they are there for 6 months they do something stupid, bring in stuff for inmates, fall in love with inmates, things like that and they get fired. So why would you take the time to get to know new staff. Another big thing is how much they push watching other staff members in the academy, rightfully so but they do it in the wrong way in my opinion. That makes a lot of the veteran staff really weary.” (Lance 2-27-09)

Lance is clear that veterans are leery because of the formal socialization new officers receive. Veteran officers are also reluctant to invest time and energy in an officer who is likely to quit or be fired in less than a year. In order to be accepted, new officers must prove themselves to veterans.

New officers prove themselves in a number of ways. One of the most important means of proving oneself is adherence to the code of silence. Veteran officers provide opportunities for newcomers to demonstrate adherence by engaging in minor deviance, cultural humor, field interrogation and hazing of newcomers.

The deviance dance.

The majority of PDOC officers engage in some type of deviance ranging from ignoring minor inmate rule infractions to being compromised. When a new officer enters an institution veteran officers become cautious about engaging in formal deviance. For example, officers who work third shift (2000-0600) often play cards to pass the time. Officially this is being inattentive at post and is grounds for a disciplinary write up. I asked Officer Martin about playing cards with a new officer present:

Martin: “For most people, at least if you were smart about it you wouldn’t play in front of a new guy because you don’t know how they are going to react. I mean obviously coming in you probably know you’re not supposed to play cards. So you know some people I’m sure have reported it to the Sgt.’s or Lt.s.”

Me: “So how do you know when its okay to play cards with a new guy?”

Martin: “Maybe just kind of see how they are, you know if they are pretty laid back and pretty cool with everything.” (Martin 5-05-09)

Martin says veteran officers will avoid playing cards in front of the new officer until they know the officer is “pretty cool.” The new officer must demonstrate an ability to adhere to the code of silence. However, veteran officers are reluctant to engage in deviant behavior in front of the new officer. This means new officers do not see many deviant acts, so they have few opportunities to demonstrate adherence to the code of silence. One method new officers can use to gain acceptance is to engage in minor

deviant acts. The new officer may bend or break minor rules to demonstrate to veteran officers they are “okay” with the behavior.

New officers must be careful when they engage in deviance because they are on probationary status for the first six months of their career. Probationary status makes engaging in deviance a high risk activity. Additionally, while most veteran officers engage in deviance, some do not. New officers must “read” the veteran staff to gauge if they are accepting of deviant behavior. At the same time, the veteran officer is “reading” the new staff member to gauge if they are accepting of deviant behavior. The result is what I call the “dance of deviance.” Officer Bumble discusses the dance of deviance:

Me: “How do the experienced officers treat you as a new guy?”

Bumble: “Some really good, some are kind of weary about new officers coming in especially about like reading on post and talking bad about other officers, because one got in trouble for doing that in front of a new officer once. Now everybody is kind of like I’m going to see how he, like I’m going to make him be here for a while before we start screwing around to see if he’s going to be a tattletale and do everything by the book.”

Me: “How do you overcome that weariness as a new officer?”

Bumble: “They (veteran officers) might loosen up a little bit if you don’t follow all the rules, but it also depends on the corporal because if they do everything by the book then they are going to expect you to do it by the book. The new officers kind of have to look and see well how are they doing everything. I noticed he didn’t do everything by the book so I thought well he might be a little bit looser. That kind of gives me the signal that maybe this guy is not gonna’ be strictly by the book like if I talk bad about somebody he’s not going to run and tell the shift supervisor. So experienced officers are reading new guys and new guys are reading experienced officers. So I mean if I’m with somebody new I do everything by the book to get that first impression then if I notice they do things after a while then I’ll change ‘cause it’s easier to go in there and do everything by the book than to go in there and not and have them mad about it and try to change their impression of you.” (Bumble 11-19-08)

Bumble relays a piece of cultural folklore regarding the danger of new officers.

The folklore reinforces veteran officers’ distrust of new officers. In response, veteran

officers conduct a “feeling out” process for new officers before accepting them. The most intricate element of the feeling out process is the deviance dance.

Bumble discusses the deviance dance, where both the veteran and new officer judge if the other engages in deviance. Bumble suggests new officers have to see how closely the veteran officer “goes by the book.” The veteran officer is cautious of the new officer so he/she is likely to follow procedures more closely. The veteran officer is also watching the new officer to see if he/she “goes by the book.” The result is both officers engaging in impression management while trying to “read” the other. The officers “dance” with each other by offering subtle hints at their willingness to engage in deviance while avoiding openly engaging in deviance. The deviance dance is only one part of the process of “feeling out” new officers. New officers are also judged through the use of humor.

Humor.

Veteran officers “read” new officers to gauge their ability to adhere to cultural scripts and norms. One method officers use to “read” new officers is humor. Humor is an essential part of organizational life, and especially occupational culture (Linstead 1988). Humor builds cohesion among occupational groups (Terrion & Ashforth 2002), provides a release from the boredom and tediousness of daily tasks (Ari & Sion 2005; Tracy, Myers, & Scott 2006), and relieves stress (Ari & Sion 2005; Scott 2007). Most importantly for this research, humor is a means of socializing new members of an occupational group (Ari & Sion 2005; Case & Lippard 2009; Terrion & Ashforth 2002; Tracy et. al. 2006). Humor socializes new members in two ways. First, culturally appropriate views of the occupation are passed on through the telling of jokes (Hafferty

1988; Tracy et. al. 2006). Second, new officer internalization of norms is judged based on response to officer humor (Scott 2007). Audience laughter at a joke is dependent on a culturally constructed, shared, worldview (Scott 2007).

Veteran officers make potentially offensive jokes in the presence of new officers. For example, during a night shift at PCCW I was in the visiting room when Corporal Lehelp answered the visiting room phone. Lehelpe spoke for a few minutes and hung up laughing. He then told me,

“That was Rivi he called up here to ask me what the official candy bar of PCCW is. I said what and he said the Klon Dike bar.” (PCCW 5-15-09)

The joke is a play on words referring to homosexual activity among female inmates. The use of “dike,” a common derogatory term used to refer to lesbians, is potentially offensive to new officers. However, the term is in line with the dehumanizing script. Veteran officers tell potentially offensive jokes to determine if the new officer has internalized cultural scripts. Laughter at inappropriate jokes demonstrates internalization of cultural scripts because a culturally constructed worldview is necessary to “get” the joke.

Rivi’s joke serves another purpose which humor often fulfills: it distances cultural members from others. Humor is often used to create social distance between and exert superiority over members of an occupation and their clients (Case & Lippard 2009). In this case, Rivi’s joke highlights a component of inmate culture that is seen as deviant by officers (homosexuality is traditionally viewed as deviant behavior and remains deviant in the hyper-masculine culture of correctional officers). Rivi points out that inmates continue deviant behavior after being sentenced to prison. The continued deviance of inmates maintains officers superiority and encourages a social distance from the inmates.

The use of humor to socialize new officers also increases cohesion among officers. The most common means of increasing cohesion is through “putdown humor.” An exchange between two officers away from work illustrates the cohesion building nature of socialization through humor. I was at a bar after an evening shift with Corporal Wolfcastle, and Officer Lewis. Near the end of the night the following exchange occurred:

Wolfcastle: “I’m gonna fuck you, I’m gonna fuck you tonight, I’m gonna pee in your butt and then I’m going to fuck you.”

Lewis: “Really you’re going to pee in my butt?”

Wolfcastle: “No I’m going to straight up fuck you tonight, so get ready because you are going to get fucked! That’s what’s going to happen there are about 4 or 5 guys on our shift and we’re going to grab you, there will be restraints involved and we are going restrain you and then we’re all going to fuck you in the ass.” (Bar observation 3-09-09).

The exchange demonstrates three aspects of the use of humor in socialization. First, Wolfcastle’s comments are deviant and would not be seen as humorous in society at large. Therefore, a new officer would only laugh at the “joke” if he (this type of joking is reserved for new male officers) has internalized cultural scripts. If the new officer is still using pre-officer cultural scripts he would most likely be offended by the comments.

Second, Wolfcastle’s comments are a form of “putdown humor” directed at a new officer. Putdown humor is defined as insults, demeaning jokes, teasing, or sarcasm use to derive amusement at the expense of something or someone (Terrion & Ashforth 2002). Within hyper-masculine occupational groups members are given license to insult one another, but outsiders are not allowed to insult any member of the group. Therefore, if putdown humor is directed at a new member it demonstrates acceptance by the group. In this case, Wolfcastle’s comments relay to Lewis that he has been accepted.

Finally, the specific nature of the putdown humor used by Wolfcastle (homosexual joking) is also a function of socialization. Male officers in the PDOC regularly engage in joking about homosexual behavior. In a study of Israeli military units (uniformed, military and hyper-masculine culture), Ari and Sion (2005) found homosexual jokes were used to demonstrate dominance. Military personnel who were higher in the informal rank structure portrayed themselves as dominant in homosexual jokes while new personnel were portrayed as submissive. The authors found the most common expression of dominance was to “fuck someone in the ass” (Ari & Sion 2005:667). Wolfcastle is engaging in the same display of dominance. The nature of his joke relays acceptance to Lewis and communicates that Lewis is still in a position of submission to the more experienced officer.

New officers are judged by their performance in the deviance dance, and their reaction to culturally constructed humor. Veteran officers also engage in direct information gathering about new officers to judge their acceptability.

Information control.

Veteran officers judge new officers by asking seemingly benign background questions. Several officers told me they ask new officers a series of questions to gauge if the officer should be accepted. Corporal Hutz compared the questioning of a new officer to “field interrogation in the military” (Hutz 1-28-09). Corporal Lance describes an instance of “reading” a new officer in this manner:

“I read them, I read them for the first hour to see how this guy is going to be. I had one, Muntz, when I was training him I was cautious for the first hour or so. Then he told me he used to be a used car salesman, so he is obviously not going to rat me out. He explained to me that part of the reason he lost his last job is that someone was screwing with him and ratted him out. I know right there, this dude is not going to fuck me over.” (Lance 2-27-09)

Lance decided Officer Muntz was acceptable based on questions about his previous employment. Muntz gained the acceptance of Corporal Lance based on the technique of “field interrogation.” Corporal Lance shared the information obtained during the field interrogation with other veterans. The sharing of information about new officers allows veteran staff to collectively accept a new officer.

During an interview Officer Wendell discussed the practice of sharing information about new officers:

Me: “When you have a new guy come in at the end of the night do you tell other officers what you thought of him?”

Wendell: “You know individually you might be like well what do you think of this guy, kind of throughout the rest of the week just be like so what do you think of this person. Some people are like well its hard to say he’s only been here one night some people will be like, already, back away from him and keep your distance.”

Me: “So officers talk to each other about new guys?”

Wendell: “If a guy has been there two weeks and I haven’t worked with him I probably know pretty well what I’m dealing with. I mean you’ll hear different things around and stuff like that, word spreads pretty fast.” (Wendell 5-05-09)

Veteran officers “read” the new officer and decide if the officer should be accepted. Wendell says veteran officers exchange assessments of new officers at the end of shift or after work. Officers “compare notes” and reach agreement whether the new officer should be accepted. The agreement is then circulated through the informal information sharing network. Even if a veteran officer has not worked with a new officer, he/she is likely to have an opinion of the newcomer. Wendell suggests the process of evaluating new staff and reaching agreement on their acceptability occurs within two weeks. Another practice that occurs throughout the six month probationary period is hazing.

Hazing.

In addition to the deviance dance, humor, and field interrogation, new officers are evaluated by their reaction to hazing. Hazing is defined as “initiation rituals by which newcomers to an organization are harassed and humiliated as a test or preparation for acceptance into the group” (Ostvik & Rudmin 2001:18). Veteran officers “haze” new officers to gauge their reactions. If the new officer complains about the treatment or refuses to accept the hazing as justified he/she will not be accepted. If the new officer accepts the hazing and participates without complaint he/she will be accepted into officer culture.

Shit jobs.

Hazing in the PDOC takes many forms. New officers are expected to take verbal abuse from veteran officers and are typically given the “shit” jobs. Hazing new officers by assigning them the least desirable task, or what are often referred to as “shit jobs” also serves as informal socialization. Corporal Carpanza discusses the assignment of “shit jobs:”

“When I started I had friends already there, and my friend that worked there had been there for enough time that he was already in with everybody else. Right away they seen that I was his personal friend so I was in. They also knew that I wasn’t going to cry and whine when they picked on me, they enjoyed it. He told me right away you’re going to get shit on for 6 months and that’s just the way it is. You know back then we did the fence check between the fences, and then you did refuel when you were done. You get accustomed to being there and you know what is supposed to be a slight or a shit detail even though nothing there is bad. You still get into that, you’re institutionalized for lack of a better word and you’re like man they’re messing with me. In reality, big deal you’ve got to go turn a switch on and fill out a couple of fuel tickets you know. You quickly learn what is supposed to be the shit job.”
(Carpanza 2-04-09)

New officers are given “shit” assignments until they complete formal probation.

New officers are expected to accept the tasks they are given without complaint. The

hazing ritual is a way for veteran officers to assert their superiority and dominance of new staff. The submission to a bad assignment without complaint signals deference to veteran officers. New officers who submit to veterans by not complaining are quickly accepted and socialized by veteran officers.

Carpanza also discusses the concept of a “shit” assignment. He says none of the “shit” tasks are actually difficult. The officer culture labels certain tasks as “bad,” and an officer who is assigned these tasks is being slighted. Carpanza gives the example of the fence check, which involves an officer walking around the perimeter of the institution. An outsider may not see the fence check as a difficult assignment. However, officer culture says this task should be reserved for informal punishment or new officers. The cultural meaning attached to the task creates the hazing experience. If a new officer is going to experience hazing, he/she must first internalize the cultural meaning attached to occupational tasks. Only after internalizing the cultural meaning can a task be viewed as a “shit” assignment.

New officers also experience more creative methods of hazing designed to gauge their acceptability.

Big daddy yum yum.

In addition to assigning new officers shit jobs, veteran officers haze new officers in more creative ways. During an evening shift at RCC I was treated as a new officer and subjected to a creative form of hazing. Although this example is unique to RCC similar rituals exist at all PDOC institutions.

Shortly after dinner I was in the dining hall with several other officers. Corporal Julius was “running the yard;” he was in charge of assigning tasks to each officer over the

course of the night. The responsibility of assigning specific tasks allows the corporal who is running the yard to haze new officers. Julius asked me, "Have you ever done dining before?"

"No."

Julius, "Well then I guess you're going to have to do it. Here's the deal, when the inmates come into dining they have to have their shirts tucked into their pants if they are wearing a white shirt or a khaki button down, their sweatshirts can hang out. They also are not allowed to wear anything on their head other than religious headgear, and they can't wear shower shoes to dining. Also they can't have their headphones on and they can't be flashing any gang shit, nothing hanging down out of their pockets, you got it?"

"Yeah."

After that Julius said, "Alright here's the deal we are going to play Big Daddy Yum Yum. You are going to stand at the front of the serving line and make sure all the inmates are following the dress code. I am going to stand at the end of the line with Kodos and make sure you don't miss any. If you miss one then for the rest of the night any time I ask you what my name is you are going to say, Big Daddy. Then I am going to ask you and how does Big Daddy taste? And you are going to say, Yum Yum."

Julius then laughed while walking away, as Kodos said, "I am going to help him make sure that when you screw up we catch it."

Officer Jones, then told me, "I am going to stand over here with you and distract you to make sure you screw this up." (RCC 1-26-09)

After a few minutes inmates began to enter the dining hall and I quickly realized it was impossible to enforce the dress code. The temperature was in the 20's outside and all the inmates were wearing coats when they entered the dining hall. The coats hung lower than their shirts, and I could not see if the inmates' shirts were tucked in or not. It was only clear if inmates' shirts were tucked in after the inmates sat at a table and removed their coats. When dining was complete I was told I had missed three shirts. Despite my failure, Julius did not follow through with the Big Daddy Yum Yum routine.

Officer Jones approached me shortly after dining and said, “You missed three, but don’t worry about it man I still miss them, its not that big of a deal.” (RCC 1-26-09)

The “Big Daddy Yum Yum” game is played with new officers to gauge their willingness to accept hazing. The three veteran officers in the dining hall worked together to embarrass me and make me feel uncomfortable. The point of the game is to place the new officer in a “no win” situation. The veteran officers then watch to see if the newcomer complains about the inherent unfairness of the game. I laughed at the game, did not complain and was willing to participate in the ritual. The veteran officers granted me acceptance based on my response. Jones told me “not to worry about it” because I handled the hazing appropriately. If a new officer successfully navigates the deviance dance, field interrogation, humor and hazing, they will be accepted into the officer culture. Once new officers are accepted, the process of informal socialization begins in earnest.

Informal socialization methods.

Prior to being informally socialized by veterans, new officers must be accepted. The process of gaining acceptance includes modest amounts of informal socialization. However, the informal socialization process does not truly begin until the officer is accepted. Once accepted, the new officer is taught cultural scripts through three primary methods: new officer questioning, overt teaching of scripts, and observation of veteran officers.

New officer questioning.

Newcomer questioning is an essential form of socialization in organizations (Louis 1990). Newcomers ask veterans questions to help clarify understanding of the

occupation. Questions posed by new officers typically relate to technical aspects of the job, and not matters of officer culture. During interviews I asked officers what advice they would give new officers about how to do the job. Corporal Arbor summarizes the most common answer:

“Probably ask a lot of questions, don’t think that there is a dumb question we are here to help you. If you are not sure about something I would rather you be like hey look, versus going and doing it wrong.” (Arbor 3-03-09)

Arbor says the best way for new officers to learn the job is to ask a lot of questions. Most of the officers in my sample thought new officers should ask questions about the technical aspects of the job. New officer questioning is primarily a means of learning the technical aspects of the job and not cultural scripts. However, occasionally new officer questions are answered in a manner that teaches cultural scripts.

An example comes from an evening shift at PSP. I entered a control center near the end of shift and observed Corporal McClure train Officer Drima. McClure was working through the training manual with Drima:

Drima asked, “Are there special instructions for inmates that are stamp collectors?”

McClure said, “Look as for the stamp collectors fuck them, lick and stick them on the wall, light them on fire, whatever the fuck you want to do.”

Then Officer Doar added, “Yeah and you can do the same thing with the stamps too.”

Drima asked for clarification about his responsibilities in “doing” the job. The response of McClure, and especially Doar, communicates the dehumanizing script to Drima. McClure says inmates’ property is not valued and can be destroyed. Doar then uses humor to suggest the same is true of inmates. Inmate property and the inmates can

be destroyed and discarded because they are less than human. Drima asked a question concerning technical aspects of the job and was given an answer that revealed an officer cultural script. The outcome reveals the intertwined nature of officer cultural scripts and the technical aspects of the job.

Although new officer questioning occurs, most cultural scripts are transmitted overtly without a prompt by the new officer.

Overt teaching of scripts.

The most prominent method for informally socializing new correctional officers is the overt teaching of scripts. Once new officers have been accepted, they can be directly taught cultural scripts without fear of reprisal. For example, Officer Martin told me:

“After I started I had some guys tell me, like I know you heard in the academy that everything is by the book we don’t do everything by the book you know don’t write everybody up and stuff like that, you know its not like what you learned in the academy.” (Martin 5-05-09)

After being accepted, veteran officers told Martin directly never to write up other staff. Another illustration of how norms are taught overtly involves the dehumanizing script.

Prior to an evening shift at PSP Corporal Capti approached me. Capti said:

“Look here’s a piece of advice I give to all new officers. You really have to watch the inmates because they like to work in pairs or groups to work on officers, especially in the bubbles (control centers). What will happen is you’ll be in the bubble and you’ll have a group of 2 or 3 inmates that are just refusing to lock down and telling you to fuck off, and being a real pain. Then like a godsend straight out of heaven another inmate will appear and tell you hey I think you’re doing a good job and I appreciate it you want me to take care of this for you? Then he will walk down to the rowdy inmates and tell them to shut up and lock down. After that they will all act like little angels for the rest of the night. What really happened is it was all a set up and they were all in it together it was just an attempt at getting to that officer. So a couple of days later that same inmate will come up to the officer and say you know I helped you out the other day and I hope you really appreciated that. The officer will say yeah I did and then the inmate will say well now I need you to do me a favor. What you have to do is when the

inmate comes up to you and asks if you need help you just have to say no, get away from me I can handle this. You just have to be stone cold toward the inmates, so they know you can't be messed with. If you come at the inmates like that then they walk away and say man you can't talk to that guy and they leave you alone." (PSP 2-11-09)

Capti frames his "lesson" by saying inmates especially like to do this to officers in the bubbles. Most new officers are initially assigned to a control center (bubble). The warning Capti gives is especially meaningful to a new officer who is going to be spending his/her first six months in a bubble. Capti presents his warning as one way inmates try to "work on officers." The underlying assumption is all inmates are constantly trying to manipulate officers. New officers encounter enough instances of inmates trying to manipulate staff that his warning appears accurate. The overt nature and the message of Capti's warning are clear: inmates are manipulative and untrustworthy. Capti concludes by saying "you have to be stone cold toward the inmates." Capti justifies this approach as a defense against compromise.

In addition to overt teaching of scripts, new officers are expected to interpret cultural scripts by watching veteran officer behavior.

Observation of veteran interactions.

New officers are also socialized by observing the appropriate and inappropriate behavior of veteran officers. New officers watch the way veteran officers interact with the administration, inmates and other officers. The interactions are then defined as demonstrations of appropriate or inappropriate behavior by other veteran officers. Through this process the new officer learns the cultural scripts guiding interaction with the other actors in the institution. Corporal Terr discussed the value of observing veteran officers:

“What I tell new people is just stand back for six months, just stand back and observe, don’t do anything. I mean talk to staff, don’t write inmates up it takes a year to even understand the job. Just stand back and watch, watch how I interact with inmates, watch how the next person does, watch how the next person does and just figure it out from there.” (Terr 5-21-09)

When new officers watch veteran officers they are observing cultural scripts in action. The kind of observation Terr suggests is a form of “vicarious learning” (Bandura 1969). Vicarious learning involves individuals learning social norms by observing the behavior of others and the consequences they face for their behavior (Bandura 1969). Terr says a new officer should watch several veterans interact with inmates and then “figure it out from there.” The new officer should figure out the underlying cultural script based on the commonalities of veteran officer-inmate interaction.

Veteran officers use new officer observations to teach cultural scripts. Typically the observation of veteran officer behavior is accompanied by direct teaching of cultural scripts. A veteran officer will discuss what the new officer sees and teach the culturally appropriate way to interpret the observation. Corporal Mirsam discussed an instance of using an indirect observation to demonstrate the protective script to new officers. He was discussing the way officers handle an officer who repeatedly violates the protective script when he said:

“So yeah once they’re at that point, we just ignore them, that’s what a lot of people do with Drije. They won’t talk to him they just stay away from him. They use that as an example for new people they’re like do you notice how this guy never gets talked to, that’s because he likes to green sheet.” (Mirsam 2-27-09)

New officers observe the way veteran officers interact with Officer Drije. Veteran officers use this observation to illustrate the consequences of violating the protective script. Veteran officers tell new officers not to “green sheet” other officers (protective script), but they rely on the new officers’ observations of the consequences of

“green sheeting” to illustrate the point. New staff combine their own observation with overt teaching by veteran staff to internalize the protective script and its consequences.

A second example of learning cultural scripts through observation combined with direct teaching occurred on an overnight shift at PSP. I was working with Officer Martin and Officer Oldje, who was working his first shift. Shortly after midnight, Officer Patche entered the control center.

Patche said, “I was just over in 7 and the inmates had to sit on their bunks for like 30 minutes because they kept screwing up the count. Finally when I went in to help them I walked through the bay and all the inmates were like bitch, you fucking bitch and one of them said oh she looks like she’s got a wet pussy on her. I just yelled back hey don’t be talking about my body parts like that.”

Oldje said, “Well you should write them up.”

Patche, “Who am I going to write up I don’t know who said it?”

Oldje, “Write them all up!”

Patche, “Yeah, because I want to do 89 MR’s tonight.”

After this exchange Patche noticed an MR that Oldje was writing on an inmate. She said,

“Are you writing someone up?”

Oldje replied, “Yeah, I’m writing him up because he flipped me off.”

Patche laughed at this and then said, “You’re writing him up for flipping you off? Why don’t you walk over to 7 and you can have a field day because they just called me a fucking bitch and talked about my wet pussy and I didn’t write anybody up. That shit’s not even going to stick!” (PSP 3-02-09)

After these comments Oldje kept quiet and a few minutes later Patche left the control center.

Patche relayed the dehumanizing script to Oldje by telling him about the inmates’ comments. Patche also showed Oldje the importance of negotiated order and the way to

maintain the order. The comments directed at Patche by inmates indicate a lack of respect shown to her and females in general. Despite the lack of respect, Patche ignored the comments and did not seek formal sanctions for the inmates. Patche told Oldje she did not seek formal sanctions because of the negotiated order. Patche then added that an MR for flipping off an officer is “not even going to stick.” This comment communicates two things to Oldje. First, the administration is going to consider the act minor and not apply formal sanctions. Second, the officer should also consider the act minor and ignore it for the sake of the negotiated order.

Patche demonstrated appropriate inmate interaction by ignoring the minor deviant act. Ignoring the inmates’ comments is culturally appropriate because ignoring the comments upholds the negotiated order. Patche then overtly taught Oldje the importance of the negotiated order by telling him the same principle applies to his MR. The combination of observation and overt teaching helps officers internalize the importance of negotiated order.

New correctional officers learn cultural scripts through a process of socialization. During formal training, socialization teaches new officers some aspects of the officer culture, and the techniques for “doing” the job. After formal training, new officers must “prove themselves” before informal socialization can begin.

New officers prove themselves by engaging in the dance of deviance, and by withstanding hazing from veteran officers. If the new officer does not “snitch” about minor deviance or complain about hazing they are accepted into officer culture. Once new officers are accepted, the informal socialization process begins. During informal socialization, new officers are exposed to cultural scripts through three primary

techniques: overt teaching, new officer questioning, and observation of appropriate veteran officer behavior. Eventually the new officer internalizes the cultural scripts and becomes a full member of the correctional officer culture. If script internalization does not occur the new officer becomes an outsider and is driven from the occupation as outlined in the previous chapter.

Chapter 7

Discussion and Conclusion

The current research examined correctional officer culture in a Midwestern state. Specifically, I examined how correctional officers negotiate their occupational world, and how newcomers are socialized into membership in the culture. Officers negotiate their occupational world through cultural scripts which guide interactions with correctional administrators, inmates and other officers. In this chapter I review the major findings of the research, examine the strengths and limitations of the research and offer policy implications and recommendations for future research based on my findings.

Major Findings

The current research was exploratory in nature and stemmed from two research questions: how do correctional officers negotiate their occupational world, and how are newcomers socialized into correctional officer culture?

Officers negotiate their occupational world through a series of four cultural scripts. The occupational world of correctional officers consists primarily of interactions with three other agents: administrators (including superior officers), inmates and other officers. Cultural scripts guide officer behavior and attitudes toward each of these agents. I now review the four cultural scripts officers employ, beginning with the script for interacting with administrators.

Distrustful script.

The cultural script regarding administrators is one of distrust. Officers believe administrators value inmates more than officers. Additionally, officers believe inmates are treated better, primarily due to fear of inmate lawsuits. The script leads officers to

minimize information sharing with administrators. The impact of the distrustful script is a lack of communication between officers and administrators.

Interestingly, the distrustful script varies across institutions in the PDOC. In contrast to RCC, CSCI and PSP, officers at PCCW use a script that views the administration as trustworthy and supportive. The difference may be influenced by gender, as PCCW is the only female institution in the state. PCCW also operates at a lower security level (i.e., no firearms or chemical agents on the grounds) than the other institutions, and has fewer instances of violence. The lower security level may lead to less stress and more positive officer-administration relations. PCCW is also the smallest institution in the state in terms of inmate population and custody force size. The size of PCCW may reduce negative officer-administration relations by allowing more individual attention from supervisors and institutional level administrators.

Another possibility is a qualitative difference between the institutional administration at PCCW and the other institutions. Perhaps administrators at PCCW are in fact more supportive of correctional officers. The variance in this script demonstrates that the structure and actions of administrators influences officer cultural scripts. Interestingly, the distrustful script is the only script which varies at an institutional level. Cultural scripts regarding inmates vary at an individual level. I now turn to a review of the scripts regarding inmates.

Empathetic & dehumanizing scripts.

There are two competing cultural scripts regarding inmates: an empathetic script and a dehumanizing script. The empathetic script views inmates as human beings that made a mistake. The dehumanizing script views inmates as untrustworthy, manipulative,

and “dirty.” The majority of officers use both cultural scripts. Officers choose which script to use based on the inmate and the situational context. Both scripts lead to a generally respectful approach to inmates. Officers using a dehumanizing script extend respect to inmates based on fear of the inmate, while officers using an empathetic script believe inmates deserve respect.

Both the empathetic and dehumanizing scripts have pragmatic implications for officers. Adoption of the empathetic script is necessary for officers to achieve negotiated order, while the dehumanizing script insulates officers from compromise.

Order in prison is based on an understanding between officers and inmates that some minor rule violations will be tolerated in exchange for compliance with major rules (Fleisher 1989; Lombardo 1989; Eigenberg 1991; Sparks et. al. 1996; Hassine 2009). Correctional officers cannot enforce every rule because there is a tipping point to control. Enforcement of minor rules will lead to inmate irritation negating the negotiated order (May 1980a; May 1980b; Rhodes 2004; Hassine 2009). Correctional officer cultural scripts provide guidance for interacting with inmates in a manner that maintains the negotiated order.

Maintenance of the negotiated order through the empathetic script carries a risk of officer compromise. When officers ignore minor deviance it leads them to grow close to inmates. Empathetic officers who grow too close to inmates risk committing deviant acts for their new “friends.” Sykes (1958) argued officers have no means to achieve social distance due to the necessity of negotiated order. I argue the dehumanizing script serves the pragmatic purpose of combating compromise.

The dehumanizing script is a defense mechanism for officers. The script calls for officers to approach all inmates with suspicion. Approaching inmates with suspicion reduces the likelihood an officer will be successfully manipulated by an inmate. Adoption of the script leads to interactions with inmates that are cautious and protect the officer.

The dehumanizing script also leads officers to increase social distance between themselves and inmates. The primary responsibility of correctional officers is to maintain security which requires social distance between officers and inmates (Giallombardo 1966; Bowker 1980; Hepburn & Albonetti 1980). However, officers and inmates have similar social characteristics, and spend significant portions of their day together (Poole & Regoli 1981). The dehumanizing script reduces the risk of compromise by keeping a minimal social distance between officers and inmates. Officers need to employ both the empathetic and dehumanizing scripts to maintain order without being compromised. In other words, officers must achieve “script balance” wherein they employ both the empathetic and dehumanizing scripts.

Some officers fail to achieve script balance and use only one of the scripts to interact with inmates. The difference in script usage leads to distinctions among officers. Officers use these internal distinctions to classify their peers who fail to achieve script balance. Officers who employ both scripts are called “CO’s.”

A small group of officers use only the empathetic script and are called “huggers” because they minimize social distance between themselves and inmates. The minimal social distance between huggers and inmates creates the opportunity for close personal relationships. The increased likelihood of close personal relationships between inmates

and huggers leads to an increased risk of compromise. Compromised officers threaten the negotiated order of prison and officer safety.

A second small group of officers use only the dehumanizing script and are called pokers. Pokers also threaten the negotiated order of the prison. Pokers approach inmates aggressively and cause unnecessary conflict. Pokers are likely to enforce even minor rules therefore irritating inmates and pushing the institution to the tipping point of rebellion. Both huggers and pokers threaten the negotiated order and thus both types are viewed as deviant adaptations by other officers.

Protective script.

The principal inter-officer cultural script emphasizes “protecting” other officers. Officers should protect each other from a variety of physical and symbolic threats. Protection of fellow officers, especially self-sacrificing protection strengthens cohesiveness among members of the culture. Durkheim (1984) and Erickson (1966) both argue groups unite against common enemies. The act of protecting other officers from common enemies demonstrates unity among officers. Officers protect each other from three common enemies: the administration, inmates, and outsiders.

The distrustful script leads officers to “protect” each other from the administration. Officers’ primary means of protection from the administration is the “code of silence.” The “code of silence” prohibits informing on fellow officers. The prohibition ensures officers will not be “unjustly” terminated by an untrustworthy administration. In short, officers protect each others’ status as officers from the administration who can remove that status.

Inmates are the greatest threat to officers both physically and symbolically within the prison. Although the potential for physical danger exists, the primary threat inmates pose is compromise of the officer. Compromise describes instances of officers becoming too close relationally to inmates. Boundary violations, which include romantic or sexual relationships between officers and inmates and contraband introduction represent significant “compromises” of officer ethics and values.

An officer who is compromised violates the cohesiveness of officer culture and presents potential danger for other officers. Officers protect each other from this threat by labeling compromised officers as outsiders. If an officer is believed to be compromised he/she is given outsider status and regarded as a threat equivalent to other outsiders.

An outsider is defined by officers as anyone who does not adhere to correctional officer cultural scripts. Officers will typically try to force outsiders to leave the profession. While officers must work with administrators and treatment staff who are outsiders, they will not tolerate an officer who is an outsider. Outsiders are forced out of the profession through a series of informal discipline techniques including counseling, ostracization, retaliation, and active removal.

Officers negotiate their occupational world by employing a series of cultural scripts. Specifically, the distrustful, empathetic, dehumanizing and protective scripts guide officer interactions with the agents in their occupational world. These scripts are taught to new officers through a socialization process.

Socialization.

New correctional officers experience both formal and informal socialization.

Formal socialization teaches new recruits the technical skills needed for the job. Informal socialization teaches occupational cultural norms and values to new officers (Myers 2005; Van Maanen & Schein 1979). New officers are socialized through two distinct stages: academy training and institutional experience.

Academy training for new officers emphasizes formal socialization. However, informal socialization occurs during academy training in the form of storytelling. Cultural scripts are “contextual, informal, unofficial, shared and emergent” (Lois 1990) and as a result they are difficult to transmit to new members. Story telling effectively communicates cultural scripts because the stories are open to interpretation by newcomers (Brown et. al. 2005).

New officers in my sample were told over 100 stories during academy training. The stories taught new officers a “proper” view of inmates (the dehumanizing and empathetic scripts), and how to properly interact with inmates. Academy stories also relayed the protective script to new officers. The distrustful script, however, was largely absent in academy storytelling.

After academy training, most officers are informally socialized through direct teaching of cultural scripts. Experienced officers teach new officers appropriate means of interacting with inmates, administrators, and other officers. Prior to being taught cultural scripts new officers must be accepted by veteran staff. If a new officer is accepted he/she will be taught cultural scripts, if the officer is not accepted he/she will be ostracized and driven from the profession.

New officers gain acceptance through a variety of methods including the deviance dance, humor and hazing. The deviance dance involves new and veteran officers carefully examining each other's behavior. Both new and veteran officers simultaneously "read" each other to gauge if the other is accepting of deviant behavior. New and veteran officers attempt to minimize their own deviance while gauging the other's acceptance of deviance. The result is a series of awkward interactions until the new officer is accepted as trustworthy by veterans.

Veteran officers also use humor to determine a new officer's acceptability. New officer internalization of norms is judged based on response to officer humor (Scott 2007). Audience laughter at a joke is dependent on a culturally constructed, shared, worldview (Scott 2007). Veteran officers tell a potentially offensive joke, then judge the new officer's acceptability based on his/her response. Laughing at a potentially offensive joke signals the new officer has internalized basic norms and is ready for informal socialization.

Finally veteran officers "haze" new officers to gauge their acceptability. Hazing is defined as "initiation rituals by which newcomers to an organization are harassed and humiliated as a test or preparation for acceptance into the group" (Ostvik & Rudmin 2001:18). Veteran officers "haze" new officers to gauge their reactions. If the new officer complains about the treatment or refuses to accept the hazing as justified he/she will not be accepted. If the new officer accepts the hazing and participates without complaint, he/she will be accepted into officer culture.

All of my findings are based on an ethnographic methodology which contains inherent strengths and limitations. I now turn to a discussion of the strengths and limitations of the research which are greatly influenced by the methodology utilized.

Strengths of the Research

My research fills a considerable gap in the existing literature. Prison staff, especially correctional officers, are the most important resource for any correctional institution (Camp, Camp, & Fair 1996; Lambert, Barton, & Hogan 1999). Despite their importance to the functioning of the prison, correctional officers have been relatively neglected in previous research, and officer culture has been virtually ignored. Culture is important because a complete understanding of any social institution requires in-depth examination of culture.

Virtually all of the limited research on correctional officer culture has concluded culture is a result of the environment of the prison and not the people who become officers (Crawley & Crawley 2007; Crouch 1980b; Crouch & Marquart 1980; Duffee, Steinert, & Dvorin 1980; Kauffman 1988; Zimbardo 2007; Zimmer 1986). Kauffman examined the attitudes of correctional officer recruits and found a wide range of attitudes including a total rejection of the officer culture (Kauffman 1988). Individuals who become correctional officers are diverse and become similar only after experiencing the shared environment of prison (Kauffman 1988). In short, newcomers are socialized into the role of correctional officer. Despite agreement that newcomers are socialized into the role of correctional officer, little research has explored the socialization process.

My research fills both the lack of research on correctional officer culture in general, and the lack of research on the officer socialization process specifically. There

are virtually no prior correctional officer ethnographies. Ethnography creates an in-depth picture of the intangible elements of culture that are difficult for other methods to analyze (Neyland 2008). The ethnographic method provides knowledge about correctional officer culture that was not accessible through other research techniques.

While my research produces a more robust understanding of the socialization process than previous research, it has certain limitations.

Limitations of the Research

The primary limitation of the research is a lack of generalizability. Small sample size is a central component of the ethnographic approach. The benefit of a small sample size is an increase in the depth of detail provided to the researcher. I conducted only 40 semi-structured interviews. However, the interviews varied from 45 minutes to 2 hours and provided detailed accounts of correctional officer culture. The robustness of ethnographic research is a result of the small sample size.

In spite of the benefits of a small sample size there are also limitations. Although I observed and interacted with close to 300 total officers, I had close prolonged contact with less than 100, and interviewed only 40. This makes generalizing to the larger correctional officer population impossible. Due to my research design (working in four of the state's six adult institutions) I can generalize my findings to the entire PDOC. However, generalization beyond Prairie may not be possible.

The use of ethnography also leads to limitations regarding the volume and type of accessible cultural information. For example, building rapport with certain members of the officer culture undoubtedly precluded interaction with other members of the culture. In short, there are limits to the amount of information a single ethnographer is able to

access in a field setting. These limits influence the resulting picture of correctional officer culture.

As detailed in chapter 3, I took all appropriate steps to address the potential limitations of the ethnographic method. In spite of these precautions, a level of bias almost certainly remains in the final product. The bias is minimal, and is a necessary trade-off for the “thick description” ethnography provides.

The “thick description” of my results, leads to a number of policy recommendations for both Prairie and potentially other departments of correction.

Policy Implications

My research findings point to a number of policy recommendations for the Prairie Department of Corrections. The policy recommendations fall under two broad categories: officer retention and gender issues.

Retention.

Veteran correctional officers are reluctant to interact with new officers, which delays the socialization process of new officers. One of the reasons veterans give for their reluctance is a belief that new officers may not be employed for more than a few months. Nationally, approximately 17% of new officers will not be employed at the end of their first year (Clear et. Al. 2006). The turnover rate strains relations between veteran and new officers and influences the cultural socialization process. My findings offer a potential method for increasing officer retention, and consequently increasing the efficiency of the new officer socialization process.

Departments of correction should create more opportunities for departmental commitment. Newcomers who are fully accepted into officer culture are more likely to

remain employed than those who are not accepted. The reason for this is two-fold: veterans attempt to force unaccepted newcomers to leave the profession, and unaccepted newcomers are less committed to their fellow officers. Members of the correctional officer culture protect each other and the core tenets of their mutual culture. The desire to protect each other is based on a commitment to fellow members of officer culture and transcends the negatives associated with correctional work (poor pay, poor hours, lack of respect, perception of danger etc.).

Departments of correction cannot increase the likelihood that a specific newcomer will be accepted into officer culture (thereby increasing commitment to other officers). However, departments of correction can increase opportunities for departmental commitment. Participation in special units such as emergency response squads, or tactical operations teams, allows officers to increase departmental commitment. The increased commitment to the department of corrections may help offset the lack of commitment to fellow officers. Additionally, officers who participate in special units are likely to form sub-cultures centered on the specific occupational world of the special unit. An officer assigned to the special unit may gain membership to the occupational sub-culture of the emergency response team despite not being a fully accepted member of the correctional officer culture. A more likely outcome would be membership in the sub-culture followed by re-assessment of the officer's acceptability for the correctional officer culture. In either case, the end result is an increase in officer commitment and a higher rate of retention.

Increased officer retention may lead to fewer new officers and improved relations between veteran and new officers. Improved relations would lead to earlier acceptance of

new officers into officer culture and a more efficient socialization process. Although the current socialization process is inefficient for all new officers it is especially troublesome for new females. I now turn to gender specific policy recommendations.

Gender.

Female correctional officers face a variety of special challenges from both inmates and other officers. As a result, veterans of both genders are more reluctant to accept new female officers. This reluctance leads to a significant delay in the informal socialization of female officers. New female officers typically work for several weeks or possibly months before they are accepted and begin the process of informal socialization. Prior to informal socialization new females must navigate their occupational world with little guidance from cultural scripts.

The lack of informal socialization leads to high turnover among female correctional officers. Female officers may unknowingly violate cultural scripts therefore causing ostracization from the officer culture. Unknowing violation of cultural scripts validates the belief that females are not well suited for the occupation and leads to further delays in new female officer socialization.

Departments of correction should implement mentoring programs for new female officers. Specifically, a veteran female officer should be assigned to each new female, in the role of mentor. The mentoring relationship would increase the efficiency of informal socialization for new female officers.

Currently experienced female officers avoid new females due to fear of “compromise by association.” Most informal socialization within the PDOC occurs through overt teaching of cultural scripts and norms to new officers. The application of

cultural scripts to inmates is slightly different for female and male officers. The appropriate application of cultural scripts by female officers can only be taught by female officers. Therefore, assigning experienced female officers to mentor new females would expedite the process of teaching gender specific application of cultural norms. If new female officers learn gender specific application of cultural norms sooner they will be less likely to violate scripts and be ostracized.

Increasing the efficiency of informal socialization for female officers will likely increase the retention of female officers. The increase in retention of female officers will in turn lead to more efficiency in the informal socialization process for new females. Additionally, previous research is clear that female officers have a positive impact on correctional institutions (Alpert 1984; Cheeseman, Mullings, & Marquart 2001; Jenne & Kersting 1996). Therefore, increasing female officer retention will not only impact the officer culture but also the functioning of the institution.

The policy recommendations outlined above are based on one, exploratory research study. Further research is needed to confirm the validity of this study and the policy recommendations. I now turn to a brief examination of recommendations for future research.

Recommendations for Future Research

As noted above, the primary limitation of this research is a lack of generalizability. Future research should be conducted to address this shortcoming. Specifically two replication studies should be conducted: one in a state with an inmate population similar in size to Prairie, the second in a state with an inmate population greater than the national average.

A replication study in a state of similar size to Prairie would provide a gauge of accuracy for my research. If the culture of a second rural Midwestern state with a small inmate population is similar to Prairie it would validate my findings. My findings could then be generalized to other Midwestern states.

The second replication study should be conducted in a state with an inmate population greater than the national average of 27,154 inmates. There are currently 17 states with inmate populations greater than 27,154. A replication study should be completed in one of these states to gauge the variation in officer culture by inmate population.

States with larger inmate populations often have higher rates of violence, and overcrowding (Clear, Cole & Reisig 2006). These factors may alter officer culture, by impacting the relationship between officers and inmates, and officer and administrators. Additionally, the increased violence may increase the importance officers place on the protective script. A replication study in a large, violent prison system would allow comparison between cultures.

Conclusion

There are more prisons in the United States today than at any other time in history (Chaiken 2000; West & Sabol 2008). As a consequence, there are more people working in prison than ever before (Stephan 2008). Prison staff, especially correctional officers, are the most important resource for any correctional institution (Camp, Camp, & Fair 1996; Lambert, Barton, & Hogan 1999). Despite this, little research exists exploring correctional officer culture, and even less exploring the socialization process for new officers.

My research has filled in both of these gaps with qualitative data from one rural Midwestern state. However, this research is only a beginning to truly understanding the nature of correctional officers and their culture. In his work, Foucault mentions the need for inmates to be at least partially supervised by a specialized staff that “possesses the moral qualities and technical abilities of educators” (Foucault 1977: 270). Only with a specialized staff will the prison achieve its goals.

Unfortunately little attention has been paid to correctional staff, especially officers. In order to have successful correctional institutions we must first understand the individuals who implement penal practice. This research is a first attempt at reaching the goal of understanding correctional officer culture. A great deal more research is needed to achieve the *verstehen* (Weber 1949) necessary to implement effective correctional policy.

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Appendix A: Basic Interview Guide

How does working in the institution compare to the academy?

Do you think the academy did a pretty good job of preparing you?

What was the most useful aspect of the academy?

What do you think was the least useful part of training?

What if anything do you think they could do differently in training?

What did you think about the professionalism, that they talk about at the academy?

Did any officers comment to you about what the academy tells you?

How were you received by the experienced officers?

Were you nervous or afraid at first when entering the institution?

Do officers socialize together outside of work?

Do you think female officers are treated differently?

Do you think every officer is different in their approach to inmates?

What is the worst thing an officer can do in the eyes of other officers?

Do you talk about things when you get home at night, did you talk about it with anybody?

What do you think is the critical thing that a person needs to do this job?

How were the inmates, what did you think about the inmates?

Do you think the inmates will be rehabilitated?

What is the best part about the job?

What is the worst?

How would you compare police officers and corrections officers?

Experienced officers:

What advice would you give a new officer on how to fit in?

How did you earn the respect and acceptance of co-workers?

How do officers earn the respect of inmates or do t

Appendix B: List of Codes

- Admin vs. Officers (162) – discussion of the administration either positive or negative
- Alcohol (34) – references to alcohol use by officers
- Approach to Inmates (185) – how officers approach inmates (typically this is self report not observational)
- Background/Drift (81) – officer background before corrections and how they got into this profession
- Banter (192) – verbal back and forth between officers, and between officer and inmates, also discussion of the purposes for the banter
- Best Part (21) – interview question asking what the best part of the job is
- Boredom (38) – discussion about or demonstration of the job as boring
- Burnout (14) – self report information about the job wearing officers down, either admission or tales of other officers who have become “burned out”
- Change of the Officer (58) – self report both in the field and in interviews of personality/behavioral changes experienced by the officer as a result of the job
- Chimo (34) – discussion of inmates convicted of sex crimes against children/interaction with inmates convicted of sex crimes against children
- Compromised (129) – discussion officers who either bring in contraband for inmates or get involved in sexual relationships with inmates
- Correctional Philosophy (84) – officers’ self reported correctional philosophy, views of rehabilitation, and programming
- Crucial Characteristics (77) – the characteristics a person must have to be a good officer
- Danger of the Job(154) – discussion of the job as dangerous
- Dirty Work (97) – discussion of the aspects of the job that make it “dirty work” in accordance with Hughes’ definition
- Discretion (96) – any reference to or example of officer discretion including how the decisions are made
- Diversity (23) – any reference to other races, ethnicities or nationalities by officers

- Emotional Labor (70) – references to “putting on a professional face” and handling the emotions of the job
- Force Norms (80) – officer norms regarding the use of force
- Formal Approach to Inmates (4) – the approach to inmates formally advocated during training as part of the organizational culture
- Formal Role (12) – the formalized view of the job as advocated during training as part of the organizational culture
- Formal Socialization (17) – socialization into the formal officer culture, this all takes place in the academy setting
- Gender (117) – any reference to issues regarding gender either among officers, or between officers and inmates
- Group Bonding (33) – instances of officers in my training class developing esprit de corps
- Homosexuality (46) – any mention of homosexuality among inmates or among officers
- Hugger (8) – instances where an officer is overly kind to inmates, or discussion of such officers
- Humor (150) – examples of “officer humor” as well as discussion of officer humor
- Informal Discipline (28) – examples of how officers informally discipline each other when cultural norms are violated
- Informal Socialization (210) – breaking from the formal training to acculturate new hires into the informal officer culture
- Interaction with inmates (142) – any interaction between officers and inmates
- Interaction with outsiders (43) – any interaction between officers and anyone that is not an officer
- Language (99) – instances of the specialized jargon of officers, as well as how they describe their world
- Laziness (30) – instances of officers who do very little as well as discussion about these officers
- Maturity (22) – demonstration of the maturity level of officers (eg. farting, belching)

New staff Interactions (157) – interactions between experienced staff and new officers, and discussion about such interactions

Nursery (7) – references to the nursery program at NCCW and officers' view of the program

Officer cohesiveness (126) – indications of how closely knit officers are

Officer Deception (7) – instances of officers intentionally deceiving inmates

Officer Deviance (91) – any instance of officers breaking the formal rules of the organization, and discussion of these instances

Officer Fear (66) – discussion/instances of officers being afraid, nervous, or anxious

Officer Norms (123) – the norms of officers as evident by their behavior, and discussions

Officer Typology (16) – a breakdown of three different types of officers and how prevalent each type is

Outsider's view of the job (45) – the perception by officers of how non-offices view the job

Pain (15) – any reference to physical pain felt by the officers (mainly present during physical training)

Para-military (26) – references to the para-military structure of the organization

Pay/Overtime (10) – references to the officer pay or the norms regarding overtime

Perception of other Institutions (27) – officers views and beliefs regarding other institutions both in this state and prison systems in other states

Poker/Power trip (41) – officer who are overly aggressive toward inmates and instigate problems with them unnecessarily

Police vs. Corrections (24) – self report view of the differences and similarities between the two professions

Politics (14) – indications of the political leanings of officers

Pride in the job (14) – any reference to being proud to be an officer

Professionalism (60) – discussion and examples of professionalism in the job

Rapport with inmates (31) – discussion and examples of rapport between inmates and officers

Religion (17) – discussion of religion both among inmates and officers

Research Methods (80) – references to the methods used, including officer acceptance of my presence and questions about my research

Rumor Mill (22) – references to or examples of the spread of rumors among officers

Security (35) – references to or examples of the emphasis on security within the institutions

Self Report Gender (58) – references to gender from interviews only

Self report norms (86) – officer norms identified in interviews

Sexual harassment (43) – instances of sexual harassment among officers as well as discussion of such instances

Shift conflict (26) – references to conflict between or difference among the different shifts

Spillover (78) – references to or examples of either work issues effecting home life or home life effecting work among officers

Teaching methods (52) – educational techniques utilized during academy training

Us vs. Them (11) – references to an adversarial dichotomy between officers and inmates

Value of training (42) – discussion of the value of training that new officers receive

View of inmates (194) – view of inmates demonstrated through both stories about inmates and direct responses to interview questions

View of outsiders (30) – officer view of anyone who is not an officer

View of prison (7) – officer view of prison as an institution

View of the job (114) – officers view of the job in general

War story (123) – tales of correctional work that are used to acculturate new officers

Worst part (21) – self reported worst part of the job, from interviews

Appendix C: Officer Demographics

Corporal Agnessek - mid 30's white male, with 2 years of experience. Prior to entering corrections Agnessek worked as a certified nursing assistant. He entered corrections because he views the job as less stressful than his former occupation.

Training Specialist Akira - early 30's white male, with 14 years of experience.

Corporal Arbor – mid 30's Hispanic male, with 2 years of experience. Corporal Arbor had previous experience as a correctional officer in a different state and viewed corrections as a career.

Officer Atkins - mid 20's white male, in my academy class who had 1 year of previous experience with the PDOC. Atkins returned to the PDOC after a year working in a county jail. He has a BS in criminal justice and applied because his brother worked for the PDOC and convinced him it was an easy job.

Officer Barlow – early 20's white male, who completed academy training with me. Prior to becoming a correctional officer Barlow worked as a long haul truck driver. He entered corrections on the recommendation of two friends who are both officers at PSP.

Bartholomew - late 50's white male, with 30 years of experience. Bartholomew serves as the chief administrator for the STA.

Caseworker Borton - mid 50's white male, in my academy class. Borton worked as an officer for 7 years then left the PDOC and returned as a caseworker.

Officer Bouvier - 20 year old white female, in my academy class. Bouvier entered corrections because she is interested in criminal justice and the PDOC reimburses for college tuition.

Officer Bumble - early 20's white male, from my academy class.

Corporal Capti – early 50's white male, with 16 years experience. Capti has a BS in accounting and managed a grocery store before entering corrections.

Mental Health Specialist Carlson - early 50's white male.

Corporal Carpanza - late 30's white male, with 9 years of experience. Carpanza worked construction before entering corrections. He applied because a friend told him about the job and convinced him it was easy.

Officer Comicbo - mid 20's white male, with one year of experience. Officer Comicbo worked as a night stocker for Wal-Mart prior to entering corrections.

Corporal Dann - mid 50's white male, with 11 years of experience.

Corporal Dave – late 20's white male, with 2 years of experience. Dave worked in agriculture prior to entering corrections and continues to farm in addition to working as an officer.

Officer Doar - late 30's Asian male, with 4 years of experience.

Lieutenant Doctorn - late 40's white male, with 6 years of experience

Officer Douglas - late 20's white male, from my academy class. Douglas previously worked as a fire fighter and viewed corrections as temporary employment.

Officer Drede - 50 year old white female, with less than 1 year of experience.

Officer Drije – mid 20's white male, with 3 years of experience.

Officer Drima – a mid 30's white male, with less than 1 year of experience.

Officer Fergie – late 20's white female, with less than 1 year of experience. Fergie was terminated for being compromised prior to completion of her 6 month probationary period.

Officer Gloria - mid 20's white female, with 1 year of experience.

Corporal Gunter - late 40's Hispanic male, with 20 years of experience.

Lieutenant Gunderson - early 40's black male, with 15 years of experience.

Corporal Hartman - mid 20's white male, with 3 years of experience.

Corporal Hutz - late 20's white male, with two years of experience. Hutz was in the military prior to entering corrections. Shortly after I completed data collection Hutz left the PDOC to become a police officer in rural Prairie.

Officer Jones - mid 20's black male, with 1 year of experience.

Corporal Julius - late 30's white male, with 6 years of experience.

Caseworker Kent - late 20's white male, with 5 years of experience.

Officer Kodos - mid 20's white male, with 4 years of experience.

Corporal Lehelpe - mid 20's white male, with less than one year of experience.

Officer Liger - late 30's white female, with 2 years of experience.

Corporal Lionel - mid 20's white male, with 4 years of experience. Lionel worked several odd jobs including pizza delivery driver, butcher, and construction before applying to the PDOC. He applied to be a correctional officer and to work at Wal-Mart at the same time and chose the PDOC due to better insurance benefits. Shortly after I completed my research Lionel left to become a police officer in rural Prairie.

Officer Lance - late 20's white male, with 4 years of experience. Lance was actively seeking other employment so he could leave corrections during my research. When I last visited PSP one year after completion of data collection Lance was still working as an officer.

Officer Largo - 20 year old white female, with 1 year of experience. Largo views her employment as a correctional officer as a stepping stone to a career in law enforcement.

Officer Lewis - mid 20's white male, with less than one year of experience.

Training Specialist Lisa - early 40's white female, with 18 years of experience.

Officer Martin - early 20's white male, from my academy class. Martin was using corrections as temporary employment until he could be hired as a fire fighter. Shortly after I completed data collection Martin left the department to take a job as a fire fighter in rural Prairie.

Officer Mayord - late 30's black male, with less than one year of experience.

Corporal McClure - late 40's white male, with 9 years of experience.

Corporal Mirsam - an early 30's white male, with 4 years of experience. Mirsam worked for a transportation company prior to entering corrections. He said he took the job because he has two young children and his previous job required too much travel.

Corporal Neskin - late 20's white male, with less than 1 year of experience.

Corporal Nicker - early 60's white female, with 22 years of experience. Nicker worked in a secretarial position before entering corrections.

Officer Oldje - mid 20's white male, with less than 1 year of experience. Oldje said he viewed corrections as a stepping stone to a career in law enforcement.

Officer Owmel - mid 20's white female, with 1 year of experience. Owmel worked in a factory before entering corrections.

Officer Patche - early 20's white female, with 1 year of experience.

Corporal Powe - late 40's white male, with 11 years of experience.

Corporal Powers - late 30's white male, with 5 years of experience. Powers worked as a security guard for an armored car company prior to entering corrections.

Corporal Rivi - early 50's white male, with less than 1 year of experience.

Corporal Rup - early 20's white male, with 4 years of experience

Corporal Sheen - early 30's white male, with 4 years of experience.

Corporal Shepard - a late 50's white male with 4 years of experience. Shepard was in the military prior to entering correctons.

Corporal Sherr - late 30's white male, with 5 years of experience. Sherr worked for UPS prior to entering corrections.

Corporal Skinner - early 50's white male, with 5 years of experience.

Corporal Smithe - late 20's white male, with 4 years of experience.

Corporal Teeny - early 30's white male, with 4 years of experience. Teeny worked construction and for an insurance agency prior to entering corrections. He became an officer for the insurance but told me that he now loves the job and plans on retiring from the PDOC.

Officer Terwil - mid 20's white male, with 1 year of experience.

Corporal Terr - mid-40's white male, with 5 years of experience. Terr previously worked in agriculture and applied to the PDOC due to the insurance the department offers. He told me he never could have imagined himself working this type of job.

Corporal Ther - early 30's white male, with 5 years of experience

Corporal Violet - early 20's white female, with 1 year of experience. Violet worked as a "bobcat" tractor operator prior to entering corrections. She became a correctional officer because the hours enabled her to spend more time with her young daughter.

Officer Wendell - 19 year old white male, officer from my academy class. Wendell entered the academy immediately after graduating from high school.

Officer Wolf - early 30's white male, with 3 years of experience.

Corporal Wolfcastle - a mid 20's white male, with 3 years of experience. Wolfcastle works a second job during the daytime to help pay for considerable student loan debt. He also goes to the bar for several drinks virtually every night after work.