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Devolving the carceral state: Race, prisoner reentry, and the micro-politics of urban poverty management

Reuben Jonathan Miller
University of Michigan, USA

Abstract
This article presents findings from an ethnographic study of prisoner reentry programming in a large Midwestern city to better understand the strategies reentry organizations employ to 'rehabilitate' prisoners and the ways in which those strategies articulate with larger social policy processes. Prisoner reentry is a hybrid welfare state–criminal justice institution. As the rehabilitative strategy of choice in the current age, the ascendance and proliferation of reentry services throughout low income communities of color represents the long standing collusion between social welfare and criminal justice actors to manage marginalized populations and a formal reconfiguration of the state, altering its scope, reach and consequence in the lives of the urban poor. I detail the experiences of former prisoners participating in reentry services and discuss the implications of the ascendance of prisoner reentry for race relations, punishment, and social welfare policy in the United States.

Keywords
political sociology, prisoner reentry, rehabilitation, social welfare, urban poverty

Introduction

Citing redemption as reflective of the USA's core values and invoking the 'healing touch' of faith-based organizations, newly deemed the 'armies of compassion',

Corresponding author:
Reuben Jonathan Miller, University of Michigan, School of Social Work, 1080 South University Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48109, USA.
Email: mreuben@umich.edu

President George Walker Bush signed the Second Chance Act (SCA) into law on the morning of 9 April 2008. The President lauded the $165 million legislation for ensuring 'where the prisoner's spirit is willing, the community's resources [will be] available' (Bush, 2008). As a federal policy initiative appropriating funds for community-based prisoner reentry programming, the SCA's passage at once reinvigorated the debate over the place of rehabilitation in criminal justice administration, signaled the ascendance of prisoner reentry programming as the rehabilitative strategy of choice (Western, 2008), and renewed a sense of optimism that prisoners could indeed be rehabilitated (Green, 2013).

Critics have argued that the SCA was a largely symbolic gesture given its scant funding and large target population.[1] Its carefully crafted language, however, details an ambitious goal with important consequences for prisoner reentry programming specifically and US poverty policy more generally. Community-based organizations have long been in the business of prisoner rehabilitation. There are two novel features of the SCA and the series of state-level community corrections acts that preceded it[2] prescient for this analysis: (1) the SCA almost exclusively relies on the fragmented social services arm of the welfare state to administer rehabilitative programming during a period of welfare retrenchment and fiscal austerity; and (2) these programs are overwhelmingly administered within former prisoners'[3] home communities, extending the reach of the state into the lives of the poor while raising important questions about social containment, social exclusion, and the selective inclusion of poor people of color for criminal justice intervention.

Over two-thirds of all prisoners live at or below half of the US poverty line (Wacquant, 2009) and prisoners in most states come from the most populous, racially segregated, and disadvantaged communities (Bobo and Thompson, 2010; Sampson and Loeffler, 2010). Adding to these complications, most released prisoners are re-arrested in just under three years. The bulk of these are re-arrested while still on parole – a period of community supervision granted to almost all prisoners who have completed a significant portion of their prison sentence. Given the sheer number of prisoners who return home annually, the barriers prisoners face upon their return, and recidivism exceeding 50 percent nationally and 60 percent in some states, prisoner reentry is widely recognized as a social problem in need of effective intervention by criminologists and policy makers alike (Travis, 2009).

Jeremy Travis and other leading criminologists (2001: 1) have defined prisoner reentry as 'the process of leaving prison and returning to society'. Reentry is viewed as an event that almost all prisoners undergo. This definition is strategic, helping to focus the attention of policy makers on the outcomes of former prisoners in a way that is, on its surface, politically neutral. Ensuring 'successful' reentry, however, is a political project involving multiple stakeholders, each with vested interests in how former prisoners are understood, how reentry programs are subsequently implemented, and the outcomes of reentering prisoners who participate in such programs. With an eye toward the processes and practices of reentry, I depart from standard definitions and instead conceptualize it as an interactive process and a

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

As a consequence of the disproportionate concentration of criminal justice interventions within racially stratified, poor, rural and urban communities (Clear, 2006; Wacquant, 2010a), community based prisoner serving agencies and institutions manage more people, more poor people, and more poor people of color than the prison system itself. On the one hand, this arrangement contributes to the concentration of social disadvantage within already blighted community areas, constraining the mobility of the always-already raced bodies occupying these spaces. On the other, prisoner reentry programming is analogous to other social programs that emerged in the 'post-welfare era' that seek to intervene in the character, emotional stability and decision-making processes of the urban poor. This is accomplished through the employment of psychosocial skills groups, various cognitive interventions, and processes of socialization that occur within reentry sites. As such, prisoner reentry is best conceptualized as a variant of human capital investment, a poverty reduction and community development strategy that locates capital within the skill sets of people (Becker, 1994; Lochner, 2004; Western, 2008).

In this article I lay bare the stakes of this new form of prisoner rehabilitation for the urban poor participants of reentry programs and the ways in which scholars understand the contemporary operations of the carceral state. I present data from a three and a half year ethnographic study of prisoner reentry programming that took place in the Near West Side neighborhood of Chicago, IL.[4] I examine the strategies reentry organizations employ, the rationales service providers use to justify these strategies and the day-to-day interactions that take place within reentry organizations. I make the case that the ascendance and proliferation of prisoner reentry exhibits an enduring collusion between punishment and social welfare actors and demonstrates one way that the state has been reconfigured to manage populations at the margins (Beckett and Western, 2001; Wacquant, 2009, 2012).

Loïc Wacquant (2012: 237) admonishes scholars to 'reconnect social and penal policies and treat them as two variants of poverty policy' in order to 'grasp the new politics of marginality'. Extending this work, I present prisoner reentry as a variant of poverty policy. I advance 'Carceral Devolution' as an analytic tool to capture reentry related policies and practices and situate them within their broader

socio-political contexts. I define Carceral Devolution as a set of interrelated policies that transfer carceral authority – in this case the authority to rehabilitate and supervise prisoners – from federal and state-based institutions to local ones. These trends have been facilitated by a shift in criminal justice policy and practice occurring on geographic and conceptual levels. Geographically, rehabilitation has been outsourced and privatized, moving from within prison walls and into the therapeutic spaces, church basements, and community centers of the inner city. Conceptually, reentry service providers seek to 'change prisoners' lives', transforming them into 'productive citizens' – rational, self-sufficient actors who demonstrate a willingness to seek out pro-social relationships, work the most available and immediate jobs, and submit to a lifelong process of introspection, re-evaluation, and change. The ascendance of prisoner reentry, as the rehabilitative strategy of choice in the current age, is among the most visible features of Carceral Devolution, and therefore the focus of this article. I begin by locating reentry within its socio-historic and political contexts, and explicate my research design and methods. After presenting findings from my study, I discuss the implications of Carceral Devolution for scholarship on punishment and society, and offer it as an analytic bridge to better understand the role, force, and consequence of the carceral state in the lives of poor people, and especially poor people of color in the USA.

Race, punishment, and the half-life of prisoner rehabilitation

The emergence of community corrections and its contemporary variant, prisoner reentry programming, can be traced to the rehabilitative ideals of 19th-century prison reformers. Wacquant (2009) notes that the prison was initially designed to manage poverty and continues operating in this capacity. The Workhouse, the Poorhouse, and the establishment of the House of Corrections, the forerunners of the modern prison system, emerged alongside reforms of the British Poor Laws. Guided by a mandate to instill a work ethic within the 'undeserving poor', early prisons were largely populated by vagrants, drunkards, and disorderly peasants. Prison labor and moral training were central components of these early rehabilitative efforts (American Correctional Association, 1870; Morris and Rothman, 1997; Spierenburg, 1995).

Upon a prisoners' release to society, the state was expected to facilitate educational opportunities and above all employment for former prisoners through a loose network of probation officers, voluntary religious organizations, and what were known as Prisoner Aid Societies. Their ongoing work of 'moral regeneration' was viewed as not just the responsibility of the prison system, but of the various organs of civil society tasked with 'holding them up' once they were released (American Prison Association, 1870; Roosevelt, 1913). Parole officers, chaplains, and social service workers spent much of their time brokering employment relationships. In fact, employment was a formal condition of parole during the progressive era (Simon, 1993). This approach, which David Garland (2001) deems 'penal welfarism', was the chosen mode of crime control for nearly a century.

Several factors coalesced in the unseating of penal welfare. Tracing the trajectory of parole, Jonathan Simon (1993) links changes in rehabilitation to shifts in the political economy and culture occurring across three phases. During the initial phase parole was tied to the labor market. This tie would be strained and ultimately severed in the wake of deindustrialization. A decline in demand for unskilled laborers coupled with a growing national problem of substance abuse and addiction helped to usher in the second phase of rehabilitation where a new clinical rationale unseated the employment-based regime. The final phase emerged in the wake of almost complete industrial decline. In three short decades the US prison system underwent considerable and largely unpredicted demographic shifts. The US prison expanded precipitously when it was previously declining, increasing from just over 400,000 prisoners in 1970 to well over 2 million by the turn of the 20th century. At the same time the prison system 'blackened', demographically shifting from two-thirds White in 1970 to two-thirds non-White people of color, nearly half of which were Black men, by the year 2000 (Wacquant, 2001). Simon (1993) has suggested that the long standing exclusion of Black men from the labor market and deindustrialization led to the inability of this newly racialized prison population to secure work, rendering employment an untenable parole requirement.

Students of penal change note the importance of race in the decline of rehabilitation and the emergence of more punitive criminal justice policies (Alexander, 2011; Maurer, 2006), as the role of racial animus, more broadly, cannot be underestimated in any form of US public policy, particularly at the close of the 20th century (Schram et al. 2009; Soss, Fording and Schram, 2008). This is especially the case of punishment in the USA with its roots that can be traced to long standing practices of racial domination and exclusion. Criminality has been coupled with race and poverty in the public imaginary since at least the slave revolts, and scholars have shown that intuitions of punishment and social welfare have worked together to manage Black bodies in harsh and punitive ways over the course of several historic periods (Du Bois, 1899, 1998; Miller, 2013; Wacquant, 2001). Wacquant (2001) famously conceptualized the prison as an institution of 'caste control' rolled out to manage unskilled Black workers made 'redundant' by a deindustrialized political economy. Others view the rise of mass (or hyper) incarceration as part of a neoliberal turn, where the state has abandoned its role in the maintenance of the social and economic well-being of working class populations, and instead manages their marginality through criminal justice and welfare institutions (Beckett and Western, 2001; Schram and Silverman, 2012; Soss et al., 2011; Wacquant, 2001, 2009, 2012).

Race, geography, and the new rehabilitation

The historic linkage of blackness between dependence and criminality is central to mass imprisonment, and is, I argue, equally important to the rise of what Fergus McNeill and colleagues (McNeill and Beyens, 2013) have termed 'mass

supervision' - the precipitous increase in the number of people under correctional supervision. Black men have long been viewed as the most 'suitable targets' for criminal justice intervention, and punishment and welfare institutions have worked in tandem to manage Black criminality, dependence, and deviance together since at least the post bellum period (Alexander, 2011; Du Bois, 1998; Miller, 2013; Wacquant, 2001, 2009). For example, scholars have shown that the Freedman's Bureau, the first federally administered social welfare institution, acted on the one hand to expand freedmen's civil rights through the appointment of specialized courts, the registration of black voters, the opening of schools and and by helping freed slaves to meet their basic human needs (Fonner, 1988; Goldberg, 2008). Among its main functions, however, the Bureau mitigated labor disputes and helped negotiate labor contracts. Since free black men and women were expected to take the most immediate and available work, which often meant contract work on the plantations they were just emancipated from, the Bureau in part helped to suppress Black entrepreneurship and, as a consequence, in-part facilitated Southern peonage, often at the threat of the vagrancy conviction and a life of hard labor (Farmer-Kaiser, 2004). Subsequently, the number of Black men under correctional supervision more than tripled between slave emancipation and the dawn of the progressive era (Mancini, 1996).

Early commentators on the USA's prison system have noted the disproportionate representation of Black men nearly a century before criminologist turned their attention to mass imprisonment or phrases like disproportionate minority contact made it into the popular lexicon. These observations can be found buried within their most well-cited texts (See Beaumont and Tocqueville, 1833; DuBois, 1899), and were often explained away as a function of freedmen's propensity to commit crime (Beaumont and Tocqueville, 1833). In fact, the targeting of 'street crime' by local government officials in northern and southern states alike preceded the civil rights movement and occurred decades before the real spike in urban crime that occurred in the 1970s (Gottschalk, 2006; Muhammad, 2010). These racialized processes paved the way for Barry Goldwater's famous introduction of 'the growing menace' of Black crime and disorder at the 1964 Republican national convention, and seeded the law and order policies associated with the Nixon, Reagan, and Clinton administrations, connecting contemporary policies, such as mandatory minimum sentencing, welfare reform, the 'banishment' of Black men through social and institutional policy, and the collateral consequences associated with poverty and felony convictions, to a much longer history of race-based exclusion from social, political, and economic institutions, and the selection of Black men (and increasingly women) for criminal justice intervention.

On the welfare front, activists won important cases at the Supreme Court ensuring, among other things, the hard fought expansion of welfare benefits to Black families. The welfare case-load expanded by nearly 40 percent bringing renewed attention to the social condition of the Black family, and launching a cottage industry of urban poverty scholarship seeking to analyze the experiences of the 'underclass' (Katz, 2001; Quadagno, 1994). Policy makers sought to target the

values of the urban poor and shift their cultural practices toward the 'mainstream' of the USA (code for middle class and White). 'Treatments' targeting individual-level pathologies would emerge to address Black dependence and what was believed to be the underclass' penchant for 'non-traditional' family forms (Geva, 2011; Schram et al., 2009). Thus, the unseating of penal welfarism and the rehabilitative ideal occurred alongside the ascent of a renewed paternalism in the administration of public welfare and the emergence of a disciplinary social welfare regime (Miller, 2013; Schram et al., 2010).

A consensus among conservative public intellectuals and policy makers suggested that efforts to alleviate poverty and control crime through social service programming were unproductive and potentially harmful (Murray, 1984). Thus, Robert Martinson's influential article, 'What Works? Questions and answers about prison reform' in the 1974 edition of *National Affairs* was closely shadowed by a series of studies derisive of state-level intervention in the lives of the urban poor, while being supportive of an expanded penal state to manage Black criminality. These works implicated social welfare programs in the production of generational poverty (Murray, 1984), re-asserted the locus of criminality within individual and cultural pathologies (Wilson and Hernstein, 1985), favored strategies to deter crime, suggesting the emphasis on rehabilitation and social service support was costly and inefficient (Wilson, 1975), and instantiated long standing tropes linking intergenerational welfare dependence *and crime* to the deficiencies of the urban Black family (Kelley, 1997; Rector, 1994). Subsequently, welfare and crime control policies were designed in ways to contain crime and discourage dependence.

The inaction of these more punitive policies varied by state and region. States with more generous welfare payments had overall lower imprisonment rates, while the converse was true for less generous states and states where minorities made up greater proportions of their population (Beckett and Western, 2001). Recent works by Eason (2012), Lynch (2009), and Perkinson (2010) attest to this regional variation. They argue that rehabilitation never took root in the South. Southern states were instead a testing ground for contemporary punishment strategies. Schram et al. (2009) find similar trends on the welfare front. Conservative states, southern states, and states with higher proportions of racial minorities had stricter welfare eligibility guidelines and afforded fewer benefits for shorter periods of time. Finally, despite tough on crime rhetoric, significant changes in the practice of rehabilitation, including the allocation of program staff and funding for rehabilitative programs, did not decline until well into the 1990s (Lynch, 2000; McNeill et al., 2009; Phelps, 2011).

Michelle Phelps (2011) shows the national decline of rehabilitation services offered inside prisons was accompanied by a significant increase in prisoner reentry services. Rather than a focus on 'moral regeneration' through education, employment, and religious ritual, reentry programming is concerned with the practical skills associated with acquiring employment and the meaning-making capacities of former prisoners in hopes to address their 'criminal thinking'. The shift toward prisoner reentry as the dominant mode of rehabilitation in the current age began, in

practice, in 1991, with just 17 percent of prisoners having access to prisoner reentry programs. This increased to 24 percent in 1997 and by 2004, a full 31 percent of all prisoners participated in reentry programming in the USA. At the same time prisoners' participation in education programs typically associated with rehabilitation decreased from a high of 64 percent in 1991, to 45 percent in 1997 and 36 percent by 2004. It is far from inconsequential that this shift occurred alongside welfare reform. A tertiary examination of data from the National Center on Charitable Statistics shows that the number of registered community-based prisoner reentry organizations tripled in the decade between the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Act of 1996 (PRWOA) and the Second Chance Act of 2007.[5] The expansion of community-based prisoner reentry organizations, demonstrated graphically by Figure 1, unsurprisingly occurs in tandem with the rise of mass incarceration, and the equally historical expansion of the population under correctional control, as demonstrated in Figure 2.

Most prisoners are released into some form of community supervision (see Figure 3). The organizations tasked with meeting former prisoners' service needs are overwhelmingly concentrated within the neighborhoods prisoners come from. As a result, prisoners are arrested, returned to, and rehabilitated all within the disadvantaged neighborhoods they call home. The geographic distribution of former prisoners and prisoner reentry organizations makes this claim more apparent. There are currently more than 5 million former prisoners actively under some form of supervision within their home communities (see Figure 3). In states like Illinois, where over 45,000 prisoners are detained annually, there is an almost 1:1 ratio of inmates admitted and discharged, the vast majority of which return to just

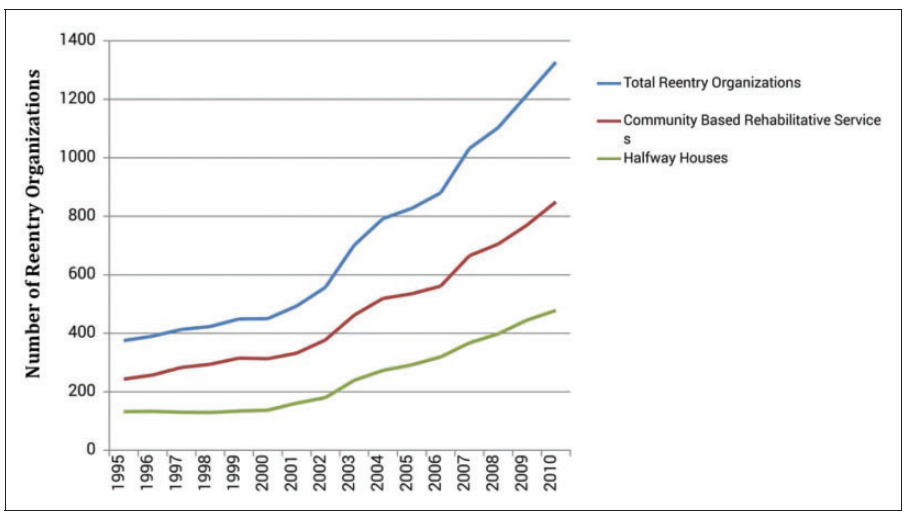

Figure 1. Number of reentry organizations, 1995–2010.
Source: PEW Center on Charitable Statistics, 2013.

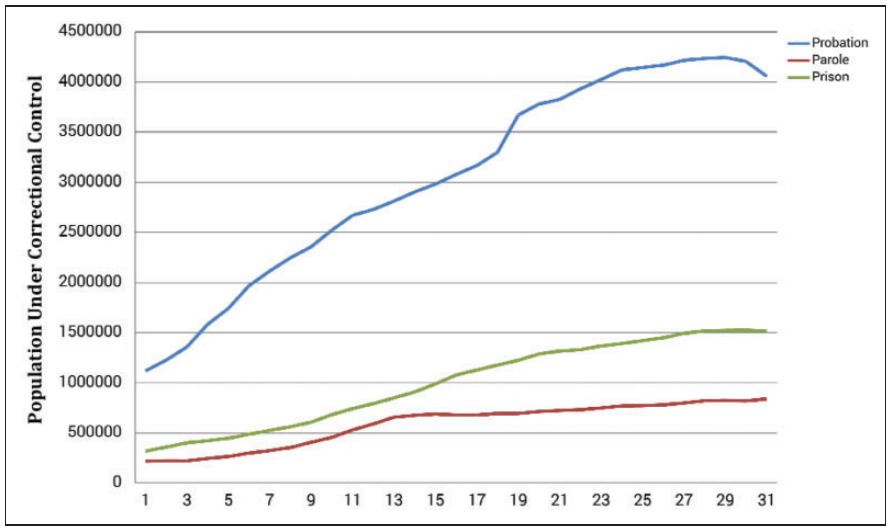

Figure 2. Total population under correctional supervision, 1980–2010.
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1980–2010.

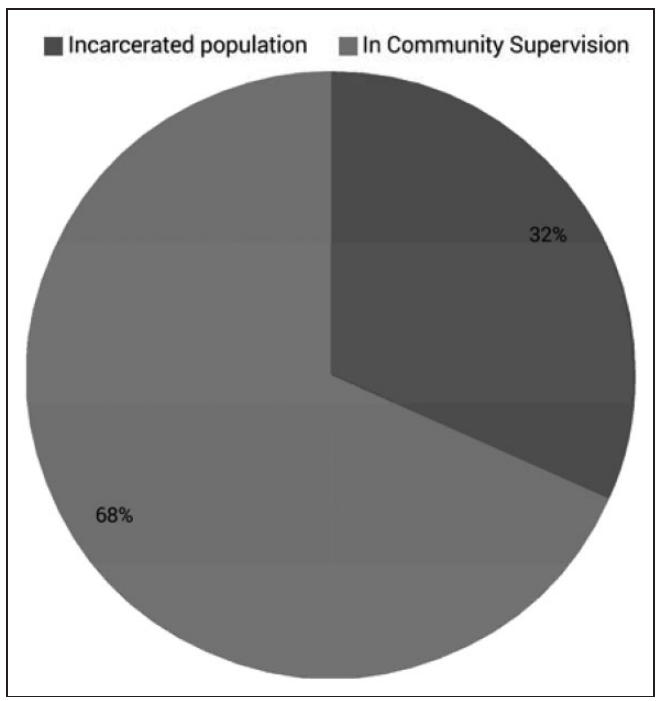

Figure 3. Share of total corrections population in community supervision, 2010.
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2010.

Table 1. Race, unemployment and poverty rates by Chicago Community Area

Chicago Community Area (CCA)	Race (total percent Black and Hispanic-Latino/ percent Black in bold)	Percent unemployed (age 16 and older)	Percent below the poverty line
Austin	93.95/**85.1**	22.1	26
E. Garfield Park	95.03/**90.9**	18.6	40.6
N. Lawndale	97.4/**91.43**	17.6	39.3
S. Lawndale	95.64/**13.08**	14.3	29.5
Humboldt Park	94.34/**40.89**	15	33.4
Englewood	98.43/**97.37**	21.3	44.0

Source: US Census Bureau, 2007–2011 and the City of Chicago Data Portal, 2013.

seven of 77 Chicago community areas (Peck and Theodore, 2008; Vigne et al., 2003). All seven are racially stratified, non-White communities with poverty, crime, and unemployment rates more than triple the national average. African Americans in five of these seven neighborhoods represent between 60 and 90 percent of their total populations. Table 1 shows the demographic composition of these areas, demonstrating the concentration of race (as percent non-White), unemployment, and poverty.

Prisoner reentry and the responsiblization of the urban poor

The overwhelming concentration of prisoners, prisoner reentry organizations, and the various forms of disadvantage that cluster in disadvantaged communities speaks to the relegation of poor people of color to ghettoized spaces. At the same time, changes in the strategies reentry organizations employ speak to the ways in which the targets of reentry services are understood by policy makers and program planners (Schneider and Ingram, 1993). Under the old rehabilitative paradigm, there was at least a rhetorical emphasis on individualized treatment planning and employment to reduce the risk of poverty, housing instability, and family disintegration. Such issues represent what criminologists have termed criminogenic needs. Addressing these needs was a central concern of the old rehabilitation model that sought the 'moral regeneration' of ex-offenders through employment and education.

Building on the work of Garland (2001) and O'Malley (1992), Mona Lynch (2000: 41–42) notes that the emergent strategies employed by crime control agencies in the wake of the tough on crime movement 'defer some responsibility for the job of handling the crime ''problem'' to private individuals and agencies' releasing the state from the burden of 'knowing, understanding and presumably shaping the criminal subject'. This shift in the responsibility of the state to serve the needs of former prisoners and the off-loading of its capacity to rehabilitate them onto poor communities of color corresponds with broader trends in social welfare that render

the urban poor accountable for their own social outcomes (Hannah-Moffat, 2005; Marutto and Hannah-Moffat, 2006; Wacquant, 2009).

This moral sensibility endures in the current age through reentry practices, but it does so in a modified form. Employment, for example, remains central to the rehabilitative project. It however does so as a valorizing agent, rather than as a means for prisoners to financially support themselves or their families. This makes sense following Simon's assertion that the shift away from employment-based rehabilitation occurred in part because the growing Black prison population was excluded from the labor market. Devah Pager (2007) finds that Black applicants who completed high school and did not have felony convictions were less likely to be called in for job interviews than their White counterparts who had felony convictions and did not complete high school. To further complicate matters, Pager and colleagues (Pager, 2007; Pager and Quillian, 2005; Pager et al., 2009) find that most employers, when surveyed, admitted that they would not consider hiring an ex-offender, and those that say they would, often do not. Thus, completing programming at one reentry organization or another simply cannot guarantee that a former prisoner will acquire or keep employment once it is ascertained.

Employment is outside of a given reentry organization's sphere of influence, especially during hard economic times. Reentry programs are designed to intervene in areas where they can have some impact, namely in the psychological disposition and as an extension, the 'employability' of the former prisoner. To do so, reentry programs provide training in the kinds of soft skills and social skills economists suggest aid in the acquisition and maintenance of employment (Lochner, 2004). This is a subtle but important shift away from the employment-based interventions Simon (1993) associated with progressive era rehabilitation. The psychological dispositions of former prisoners were always among the key targets of prisoner rehabilitation. However, the social and economic conditions within which prisoners reentered their respective communities were at least rhetorically considered in the old rehabilitative paradigm. As such, service providers could expect prisoners to participate in the labor market, and broker connections for prisoners with employers. Given fiscal constraints and the retrenchment of the state in the economic arena, psychological processes and outcomes, rather than prisoners' economic ones have become the primary site of intervention in criminal justice and social policy. Prisoner reentry is therefore a *geographic* and *dispositional* intervention, occurring at once inside former prisoners' home communities and at the same time inside former prisoners' heads.

The quiet but significant expansion of criminal justice institutions within low income communities of color coupled with the significant change in the content of rehabilitative programming supports historian Michael Katz's (2001: 1) assertion that welfare reform 'redefined not only welfare but all of America's vast welfare state'. Thus understanding the processes of prisoner reentry can not only inform how we conceptualize rehabilitation, punishment, and other carceral processes, but how we understand the structure, role, and operation of the state in the day to day lives of the poor as well.

Research design: Discovering Carceral Devolution

To better understand the rehabilitative strategies reentry organizations employ, I conducted a three and a half year ethnographic study of prisoner reentry programs in the city of Chicago. Using a combination of purposive and snowball sampling, I conducted 45 tape recorded in depth interviews with male former prisoners (25), frontline staff members of reentry programs (15), and administrators of prisoner reentry organizations (5). Thirty-three out of 45 research participants identified as African American, seven identified as White (four of which were administrators) and five identified as Hispanic/Latino. In addition, data were drawn from hundreds of hours of field observations, where I observed the interactions of roughly 120 men taking part in reentry services.

While some scholars suggest Chicago's unique cultural, political, and geographic landscape limits the transferability of findings to other urban contexts – see, for example, Small's (2007) important intervention – these factors make a compelling case for Chicago-based research on prisoner reentry. Chicago is home to the Midwest Coalition of Reentry Service Providers,[6] a consortium of 68 prisoner serving social service agencies throughout the city – 30 of which exclusively serve former prisoners. Chicago is the most populous and diverse city in a state long considered a leader in the US race to incarcerate, with African Americans representing more than 80 percent of all new drug convictions (Lurigio et al., 2010). Finally, the sponsor of the Second Chance Act is the congressional representative for the very neighborhoods which house a full two-thirds of all reentry programs participating in the coalition, and Chicago hosts some of the largest, well-funded, and oldest prisoner reentry organizations in the USA.

I was initially introduced to former prisoners by staff members at weekly 'house meetings' where residents discuss upcoming events and any grievances they may have with their reentry organization. I introduced my study and built a rolling sample of interviewees. Formal interviews with service providers took between 45 and 90 minutes to complete, while interviews with former prisoners lasted anywhere from 120 to 180 minutes. I took careful notes from which I derived memos at the end of each day. These memos were coded and grouped according to themes that emerged from the data and used to draft a series of manuscripts. A portion of this work is reported here.

All respondents were asked about their role in their respective reentry organization, their day-to-day experiences in reentry sites, and their interactions with former prisoners, social service providers, and relevant community-based human service agencies. The findings from the fieldwork reported here occurred at Emmaus Road; a 180 day faith-based residential prisoner reentry program. I conducted observations three to five days a week for periods of between four and six hours per day, participating in all aspects of programming as a volunteer. I attended weekly parenting, anger management, and 'healthy relationships' groups (social skills), a series of groups stressing financial literacy, sobriety, and 'independent living skills' (called life skills), substance abuse treatment, and work readiness training groups. I ate meals with residents in their dining halls, and

chatted with them while they smoked cigarettes, shared snacks, and sent text messages to their significant others.

While the data presented in this article are drawn from a small sample, a considerable strength of ethnography lies in its ability to exhibit the ways in which larger social phenomena, in this case social policy processes, are administered and experienced. Provided the researcher carefully distinguishes between speech acts (Lamont, 1992), observed behavior (Jerolmack and Khan, 2014), and the interpretive frameworks stakeholders employ (Young, 2010), ethnography is an ideal way to study the texture of social phenomena as it seeks to relay the practices of social actors in situ. In the following sections, I present findings from the field and discuss their implications.

Employment and employability

Reentry organizations do not seek to remove the barriers ex-offenders face in the labor, housing, and educational markets. They instead seek to enhance the soft skills and personal characteristics of former prisoners, transforming them into the kinds of people that will make informed, rational decisions when faced with a dilemma. I argue that reentry can be viewed as a 'people changing institution' that seeks to transform former prisoners into 'productive citizens' through programs that locate the inner life as the primary site of social policy intervention. Hasenfeld (1972) contrasts people changing institutions, or institutions that seek to treat, reform, or remake individuals, with people processing institutions, that change the status of actors that pass through them. Since reentry programs cannot remove the status imposed by their arrests and felony convictions, they cannot directly address the barriers (risks) former prisoners face during their reentry process. Given their limited capacity to take on the largely structural dilemmas former prisoners navigate, reentry organizations instead address the psychosocial dispositions (people changing) they believe that most contribute to labor market, educational, and relationship outcomes.

The significance of what I term Carceral Devolution is perhaps best demonstrated by the shift away from employment as a central tenant of rehabilitation, toward the employability of former prisoners, and the embrace of workforce development initiatives in the contemporary reentry scene. Workforce development emerged with the decline of state funding for vocational training in prisons and work release programs for prisoners. Occurring at the moment of industrial decline, workforce development is administered to inculcate within prisoners' 'practical' soft skills such as professionalism and conflict resolution, and to enhance an array of non-cognitive skills such as mental toughness, trustworthiness, and tenacity, increasing human capital as a strategy to reduce poverty and unemployment (Heckman, 1999; Heckman and Rubinstein, 2001). Rather than attempting to broker employment relationships, such initiatives seek to transform the unemployed criminal dependant into not only an employable and therefore productive member of society, but also a trustworthy, dependable, and tenacious one.

The nature of this rehabilitative endeavor was not lost on Bryant, the director of a workforce development initiative. We met in the lobby of his Near West Side office. Running late and over-booked, Bryant met with me in an open conference room in the basement of the west side regional headquarters of the City Social Service Center. Our meeting was brief but friendly, indeed jovial. Bryant described himself as motivated and passionate about being the fiscal agent for the consortium, providing financial support for many of the City's work related services for ex-offenders. Rattling off well-rehearsed recidivism and unemployment statistics, crime and poverty rates, Bryant explained to me what he believed to be the relationship between employment and dignity:

> The prison system does a person an injustice. Ex-offenders go in [to prison] with no education. They come out with no education. And you know about what kinds of neighborhoods they come from. What does that do to a man?

Having laid out a litany of structural dilemmas former prisoners face ranging from employers' unwillingness to hire them to the decay of public education, he went on to detail the variety of transitional employment services and workforce preparation programming that the City funds to address these issues. When I asked him about the goals of the City's workforce initiatives and the importance of former prisoners finding jobs, he explained:

> We're not into entitlements. You can give a man a job, but with no education, what does it mean? Our goal is to make them self-sufficient and more marketable ... [Some former prisoners will say] 'When I did the program, when I went out to find a job, I couldn't find a job.' I tell 'em, all we can do is get you dressed, teach you to tie a tie, write a resume, do an interview. At the end of the day you've got to go out there. At the end of the day, it's on you.

According to Bryant, these workforce initiatives provide services geared toward preparing former prisoners to enter the workforce (tying ties, writing resumes, getting you dressed, etc.). These services may even include the provision of temporary labor arrangements, labeled transitional jobs or subsidized employment, but these arrangements are seldom long-term, full-time, or benefits eligible. During our interview Bryant pointed out that his office provided over 1000 temporary jobs with streets and sanitation, and through associations with a large, private, philanthropic foundation, was able to provide an additional 6000 former prisoners with what is known as 'transitional' or subsidized employment through various city departments and social service organizations. These jobs last anywhere from 90 to 180 days, but once the transitional job period expires, or when funding for jobs subsidies runs out, former prisoners find themselves unemployed, jeopardizing their eligibility for essential social services, such as affordable housing that requires consistent, albeit modest income.

As our interview progressed, so too did Bryant's seeming irritation with the questions I raised. I asked him how his organization measured the success of their initiatives: 'We ensure they [reentry programs] are living up to contractual obligations, that they pay transitional jobs wages, that they give them [former prisoners] a stipend.' Taking a deep breath, Bryant continued: 'We look for participation. That they [former prisoners] complete the program. [We look for] certificates of completion.' He went on to explain that funding decisions were based on the number of ex-offenders who complete workforce development programming. Program completion is usually evidenced by the number of program completion certificates reentry organizations award ex-offenders. These evaluative measures, therefore, cannot capture the extent to which former prisoners land long-term employment. Instead, organizations are rewarded for the number of prisoners processed through workforce programming, and by extension, the organization's efforts to change former prisoners into employable people. Certificates of completion provide evidence that the organizations provided the transformative services they were contracted to provide. This in turn justifies continued funding and becomes a part of the selection criteria Bryant's office uses to fund new organizations. These certificates, therefore, have fiscal utility for reentry organizations, as well as the city administrators that use them to request funds and justify the money they were appropriated was spent. Whether or not they are useful for former prisoners in the acquisition of employment is subject to debate.

Jarrett, an administrator at a large, prisoner serving, community-based organization was less optimistic than Bryant about this process, openly complaining about the futility of workforce initiatives in a moment of candor: 'We're not keeping up our end of the bargain. My guys got 14 certificates and no job. They feel it's a waste of their time. That's a fair criticism.' I asked him how he dealt with this dilemma. Cutting me off, he responded, 'They do everything they're supposed to do. Jump through hoops. Stay clean. More hoops. What for? They want a job. What can I say?' In addition, many former prisoners expressed concerns about the efficacy of workforce development programming and its symbolic, rather than material value. For example, when I asked Richard, a former prisoner and resident of a large reentry program, about his certificates and their relation to employment, he stated cynically:

> Who you know [that would] take that shit. Which one [certificate]? [I'm supposed to say] Yeah, I'm in a drug home or whatever. I don't show that shit. You might could use it though when you go to another program. But that's it.

I followed up, 'Will they [other reentry programs] take your certificate? Will it count? So if you do job readiness or anger management, can you skip those programs at a new place [reentry program]?' Richard responded,

> No, they just say, 'That's good and all but that's just the beginning. You didn't do *this* program. You gotta finish this one.' That's why I told you. This some bullshit. Don't

> get me wrong. If you say, I came from Emmaus, or Transitions [another well known reentry program], it do help [get you into another program].

Other former prisoners were less pessimistic, but still stressed the symbolic, rather than material value of these certificates. Vinnie, a resident who returned to his organization after completing the program nearly 15 years ago kept his certificates in a neat blue folder tucked away with an assortment of other important papers. He shared with me that he planned to hand them to his parole officer at the end of his parole to 'show him [the parole officer] I've done everything I was supposed to'. When I asked if he thought the certificates could help him get a job, he said, 'No, but I have a job lined up already. I just need to show that I'm serious about this. That I'm doing what I need to do.'

Their differences aside, the former prisoners in my study acknowledged the symbolic capacity of workforce development while casting doubts on its utility. They specifically shared doubts about the program's ability to help them land employment. Richard outright stated workforce development was 'bullshit'. Certificates of completion provided the kind of symbolic capital needed to help former prisoners move from one reentry program to another, provided they earned their certificates at the 'right' organizations (Emmaus or Transitions). These certificates, however, did little good beyond that. Vinnie plans to give his certificates to his parole officer to show him he is serious about the program, but does not think they will help him land a job. Both he and Richard were suspicious of the certificates' use in that regard. These suspicions were confirmed by a recent study suggesting transitional jobs in Chicago (the lynchpin of workforce development initiatives) have little to no effect on the employment outcomes of program participants (Redcross et al., 2010). Despite this, workforce development has become the unemployment intervention of choice.

Workforce development is seen as a progressive endeavor implemented and managed by compassionate actors who have the best interests of ex-offenders in mind. The moral and ethical registers invoked by these strategies, however, with their focus on inculcating a work ethic and fostering self-sufficiency, speaks to the productive capacities of reentry work and the assumptions service providers make about their target populations. The historic linkage of blackness with criminality and dependence is substantiated by the practices of reentry coupled with the geographic location of these interventions within almost all Black neighborhoods. Thus the criminal dependant is viewed as an unwilling worker who does not need a job, per se, but a value re-orientation more generally, and a more developed work ethic more specifically. Work and labor relationships are not viewed as a means to meet the material needs of program participants, but, reminiscent of the old rehabilitative paradigm, as valorizing agents. Program completion, rather than securing work stands in as evidence of the success of the reentry program. As such, program stakeholders emphasized to me on many occasions during my fieldwork the importance of former prisoners completing the programmatic aspect of their reentry service before they land employment.

Reentry, redemption, and cognitive reframing

While over half of the organizations participating in the reentry coalition are faith based, none of them require their service populations to convert to, engage in, or practice elements of any faith to receive services. Despite the absence of a particular faith tradition, in the words of Stephen, Emmaus' executive director, 'Faith emanates from the foundations, [and] it seeps through the cracks in every wall.' Stephen was speaking to the environment at Emmaus, but the religious ethic of personal transformation and change broadly animates practices that take place in the contemporary reentry scene. Given the transformative aspirations of reentry programming, the practices of secular reentry organizations are no less guided by an ethic of redemption than the religious ones. During the course of my fieldwork, I noted that former prisoners were labeled 'successful' after a period of regular meeting attendance and rapid program completion. In addition, the value of personal reflection in the reentry process and the need for ex-offenders to 'look inside themselves' for answers to their problems were stated as the primary goals of service provision, without exception, by each stakeholder I spoke with over the course of my research.

Stakeholders suggest reentry services are foremost a 'program', instead of simply 'a place to stay'. From the public defenders who staff federal reentry courts and discuss their services as 'group therapy', to the homeless service providers who have named their ex-offender residential program 'Metamorphosis', reentry service providers and former prisoners themselves present prisoner reentry as a psychosocial intervention chiefly concerned with brokering a qualitative change in the rationalities, mentalities, and meaning-making processes of their clients. Reentry organizations do not primarily target the behaviors of clients, but the cognitive processes involved in decision making, and the interpretive frameworks that ex-offenders employ to make sense of their social situations. As such, these organizations seek out clientele with a degree of malleability, and above all, a desire (interpreted as the ability) to change.

When asked about the process of candidate selection for services at Emmaus Road, Nick, the resident intake specialist did not speak to categories of risk or Emmaus' ability to meet the expressed needs of the former prisoners they serve. He instead addressed the inner most desires of potential clients and the importance of personal transformation in the reentry process. Admitting that at least some of these criteria were motivated by the scarcity of resources, in this case available beds, Nick laid out the selection criteria of his organization during our interview:

> If I get a person who applies with a one year sentence and has served 60 days of his sentence, however, when I look back over his criminal record and he's been convicted 15 other times over the last 10 years, and given one to three year sentences where he's going to serve no more than nine months, then that tells me that this person more than likely is not looking for a program. He could be. But the odds is that he's not, that he's looking for a residence, that he's looking for room and board. You know, based on his history . . . So I have to make a choice there. I have to decide whether or not he's sincere or he's just looking for a place to parole to.

While the number of times someone has been arrested and the duration of their incarceration are considered risk categories by most criminologists, Nick suggests that these patterns do not attest to whether or not a potential resident will engage in risky behavior. They instead provide evidence of whether or not the potential resident is 'looking for a program'.

Put differently, Nick is not looking for low-risk prisoners in the usual sense. He later shared with me that he actively seeks residents who have had a range of sentencing histories. His primary selection criteria rest solely in the extent to which the former prisoner is sincere in his commitment to personal change. I followed up by asking Nick what he meant by sincerity, and how he knew a candidate for services is a good fit for the program. Nick replied:

> If I get a person that did some job skills courses, [takes a deep breath], no confusion, no conflict about why he's in the institution, and his letter, his words, depict what he wants out of life, you know, I'll be more than likely to give him an opportunity than that person who has been down 15 times and been into 10 other detox programs and recovery homes and ain't never been successful.
>
> His packet as well as his personal words on his letter tells me what he really wants – that this man may have had enough. That this man wants an opportunity at life. [Long pause] He has to want change.

For Nick (and by extension Emmaus Road), candidates (1) need to be engaged in prior reentry services (job skills training); (2) have to take responsibility for their actions ('no confusion, no conflict about why he is in the institution'); (3) must be looking for psychosocial intervention ('a program'); and (4) must, above all, be willing to change their lives ('He has to want change'). A sincere willingness to change one's life (personal transformation) is therefore both the selection criterion and the goal of reentry programming. To this end, many frontline service providers positioned themselves as interventionists who engage belief systems, rather than the particularities of some risk category, or even engrained patterns of behavior. The distinction is important and reveals the primary target of reentry services according to the stakeholders involved.

When asked about the goals of services, Steny, a former prisoner turned paraprofessional reentry and addictions treatment specialist had this to say:

> The main thing we try to get done with individuals is to get individuals to change the way they talk to themselves . . . Whether we're talking about how you see things or whatever, because it's not what you think it is. It's only what you tell you. That creates all the disturbances. That causes you to act out. Handle a gun. Pick up drugs. Whatever. That's the most difficult, because I'm up against deep rooted beliefs.

In a similar vein, when asked whether the barriers that ex-offenders face impacted their reentry outcomes in salient ways, Lawrence, a former prisoner and housing

specialist put it differently: 'There will always be barriers. What we do is take away excuses. You've got everything you need here. So what's the problem? You got to ask yourself, when are you gonna change? When do you want to change?' Lawrence continued,

> Look man. I gotta deal with me every day. I did that. I been to prison three times. I did that man. I gotta get up every day and deal with that shit. I gotta deal with me. So, you gotta deal with you.

Coupled with the selection criteria that Nick highlights, we can see that stakeholders often view their primary role as one of active engagement with and the reshaping of former prisoners' cognitive processes. Service providers suggest this is not an easy task, but that it requires an adroit command of psychological and behavioral tools, along with a deep familiarity with the problems of addiction, incarceration, and poverty. For example, Jimmy, a frontline service provider put it this way: 'Taking someone back in his beliefs is a very frightening thing, because fear is the motivating factor behind the behavior . . . Just starting the process of change, that's the most difficult challenge I encounter.' Reentry stakeholders present their work as a process of reshaping the ways in which ex-offenders perceive themselves and others, the ways in which they cognitively process events that take place in their lives, and the decisions they make as a result. Service providers thus target former prisoners' interpretive repertoire, which they suggest shapes their decisions to participate in criminal behaviors, rather than the ecology in which these decisions are made, such as prisoners' housing instability or their detachment from the labor market. To the extent that stakeholders' claims relay the goals and justifications of reentry programming or align with their practices, reentry programs are above all else in the business of brokering change, or, as stakeholders unabashedly claim, 'transforming lives'.

The thought-life and subsequent actions of the ex-offender is presented as the driving force behind recidivism, unemployment, crime, violence, and all other measures of concentrated disadvantage they encounter. In fact, the service providers I interviewed stressed the importance of cognitive reframing and personal transformation in their work while outright rejecting notions of risk management as an appropriate focus for reentry programming. From Lawrence, who stated his program provided food, clothing, and shelter to 'take away excuses' and allow the real transformative work of prisoner reentry programming to take place, a work he described as 'dealing with you', to Jimmy, who locates emotion in this case fear, and ex-offenders' meaning-making strategies as the motivating factor driving prisoners' social outcomes, reentry service providers rejected notions of risk as the most appropriate focus of intervention. Returning now to my interview with Steny, we can see the importance of cognitive reframing and emotional management in the contemporary reentry scene:

> There are individuals that honestly believe it's about behavior and not lifestyle. But behavior is tied to lifestyle. And when you look at their lifestyle, [you see] confusion, chaos, fools, and the police. So you know how that's going to end up. So changing that mindset is where you usually encounter problems.

Para-professionals suggested that cognitive interventions (changing 'mindsets') produce personal transformations (changes in lifestyle). Personal transformations in turn result in the former prisoner successfully mitigating risk (crime related behaviors). Thus, risk management, or in this case the avoidance of risky behavior, is seen as (1) a decision made by former prisoners who have transformed their lives, and (2) as a by-product of the more important, transformative work that occurs in reentry sites at the level of cognition.

Revisiting Steny's original treatise on self-talk, former prisoners must first change the way they view their social situations (how they 'see things') and then change what they 'say to themselves' about their circumstances (what they see). After all, 'It's not what you think it is. It's only what you tell you that creates the problems.'

Reentry interventions are employed to enhance former prisoners' abilities to make conscientious decisions to avoid risk or, as Steny put it, to 'act out'. Consequently, structural realities and institutional phenomena such as high rates of incarceration, community violence, and unemployment among inner city Black and Latino men are presented as individual-level processes in need of psychosocial intervention.

Personal transformation as an aspirational category

The logics that animate reentry services are perhaps best demonstrated by stakeholders' interpretations of the 12-step addictions recovery model of Narcotics Anonymous (NA). In NA the 'addicts' are engaged in an ongoing process of personal transformation in which they learn to manage their 'allergy of the body' and 'disease of the mind' by avoiding 'triggers' to use substances and reframe negative patterns of thought associated with substance use 'one day at a time'. The addict is in a constant and lifelong pursuit of recovery.

In the reentry scene, even counselors who actively reject the 12-step model due to its insistence that substance users adhere to long-term, rigid, cultural categories (the addict) often chide former prisoners for having 'big testimonies' but 'know they ain't working on nothing'. Former prisoners are expected to 'work on' some deficient aspect of their personal life at all times. Therefore personal transformation is not an achievable status – that is, the former prisoner is never fully transformed – but an aspirational category that successful former prisoners inhabit. Successful embodiment of this category is evidenced by their willingness to submit to being a work in progress.

This is a lifelong process, which in some ways may be suggested by the label 'ex-offender' itself. Shadd Maruna (2001) notes that ex-offender is a retrospective category that cannot be assigned with any real confidence until after a former prisoner

dies. As such, one simply cannot know whether or not someone will ever become an 'ex-offender'. Reentry organizations, while not acknowledging this, engage in a logic in which former prisoners 'prove' their submission to a program of personal transformation by (1) completing programs designed to broker within them an ethic of transformation; and (2) sharing in treatment groups the kinds of struggles on which they are working. Thus, a changed life is one of constant (re) evaluation, (re) discovery, and above all consistent progress toward the moving target of personal transformation. Unwillingness to transform is disciplined by service providers who facilitate reentry programs, and by former prisoners participating in these groups themselves.

During an anger management session at Emmaus Road, Manny, a newly admitted resident openly complained of the many researchers, students, and religious volunteers he encountered that asked him questions about his personal life. Manny expressed frustration with what he interpreted as an expectation to relay his story to visiting strangers. Fielding his complaint, Jennifer, an intern from the Psychoanalytic Institute facilitating the group responded, 'That's completely understandable. I suppose it can feel like you're in a zoo.' Opening the topic for group discussion, she asked, 'Do any of you feel that way from time to time?'

Cortez, drenched in sweat, a towel draping over his large balding head, had walked in late but right before the five-minute cut off period when facilitators lock the door. He looked around, whispered a few words to Gary, a group participant sitting next to him, snickering together. Sighing through a long deep breath. With his high pitched, thick, East-coast accent uncharacteristically muted, Cortez sat forward in his chair, looking directly at Manny:

> I feel like you've got to deal with that wherever you go. On your job. At work or whateva. Shit, on these streets. People is constantly watching you. That's what you signed up for man. We did what we did. So I say, 'Fuck it. Take a look.'

Snorting through a smirk, but taking on the challenge, Manny replied: 'What am I supposed to say. I'm saying, it's fucked up here. We got bed bugs and shit. I can't do shit I want to do. You want me to say that shit?' Cortez, noticeably annoyed, his accent more pronounced: 'You got to do you, pimp. I'm saying. Do you. You know. But that's what you signed up for.' Gary, who was watching the exchange chimes in:

> I don't mean to interrupt you, but for what they do for us ... We don't pay for shit. If they need me to talk to some kids about my shit, I'll do that. Like I said, my life is an open book. This place helped me. That's what I'm here for. Take a good look. Shit, I don't have to be here.

Manny, now noticeably frustrated replied:

> I'm saying bro, I don't need people looking at me like I'm all fucked up. Like I'm supposed to be like, yeah this place is fucking great. I'm fucked up, now I'm good.

> This place got fucking bed bugs, bro. You want to hear about that shit? But I do need this place tho, bro. I mean. I ain't got no place. But why people always like, 'You don't have to be here?' I mean, I need help, but I not fucked up, bro.

Gary, sitting across from Manny interrupts: 'We all fucked up! [He pauses, at first looking straight ahead at no one in particular but now, turning his gaze to Manny] We all fucked up.' Manny insists:

> Naw, bro. I wasn't gone no long time, bro. Only one year. No offense, bro, but you been gone a long time. I mean, bro, I respect that. I ain't been gone no 20 years. I ain't have no long bit, bro. I not fucked up, bro. I don't has that problem. I not fucked up.

At this point Leonard, who normally sits quietly through anger management sessions, chimes in saying, 'I understand everything you saying, man. But the thing is, man, we all fucked up. How many times you go down.' Manny replied, 'Three times, bro. Just three times.' Leonard breaks in, 'Three times is a long time. Who am I to say that this man don't know what the fuck he talking 'bout. Shit, man, we all need these groups.' Pulling off his sunglasses and revealing the exposed whites of his partially blinded left eye, he continued:

> We all fucked up. But some of us need to pull our head out our ass to see when the shit come down. We need all this shit man. All these groups. I'll be honest with you. I didn't think I needed that shit. But I do. And if I can't share, I don't need to be here.

This interaction went on for more than 20 of the 50-minute anger management session, with other participants taking turns discussing the importance of sharing their experiences, how they were all 'fucked up', how they all needed the organization, and how they all needed to change their lives. These assertions and the practices associated with them locate the inner life as the primary site of intervention in prisoner reentry programming, promotes personal transformation as the primary goal of reentry services, and justifies, for former prisoners, the need to transform.

In treatment groups, residents discuss the consequences of poor decision making and their failure to break with the 'people, places, and things' that got them engaged in a 'downward spiral' of 'jails, death, and institutions'. The thought-life and subsequent actions of former prisoners is presented by reentry stakeholders and the ex-offenders themselves as the driving force behind the risk categories that policy makers suggest reentry organizations should ameliorate. This is despite resistance. Manny states in no uncertain terms that he does not share the needs of his fellow program participants ('I wasn't gone no long time, bro. I don't has that problem') and argues that he is not in need of personal transformation ('I not fucked up'). He is cajoled by fellow program participants that he is not only just like everyone else in the group ('We all fucked up!'), but is not a good fit for the program if he is not willing to submit to surveillance and a program of personal change ('Get your head out of your ass!').

Given the location, target population and practices of reentry, the ex-offender can be viewed as a stigmatized cultural category constructed in the public imagination as having social skills deficits in need of enhancement, a penchant for dependence, and a need for personal transformation. To successfully transition from prison home, ex-offenders have to above all else 'deal' with themselves by submitting to a lifelong endeavor of reevaluation and change.

Conclusions: Devolving the carceral state

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1995) discussed the carceral network as a system of confinement, punishment and discipline that begins within and extends beyond the prison. The carceral is therefore deeply embedded within the structures of the social world. Put differently, in Foucault's analytic the logics and practices that regulate social life inside prisons have made their way into most other social institutions. To this effect Foucault (1995: 298) writes: 'We have seen that, in penal justice, the prison transformed the punitive procedure into a penitentiary technique; the carceral archipelago transported this technique from the penal institution to the entire social body.' We can view this as a process of decentralization, where the power to punish has been diffused throughout the social body, and created new ways of being in the social world.

Michael Katz (2001), Daniel Patrick Moynihan (1995), and other scholars of the welfare state (Schram et al., 2009; Soss et al., 2008, 2011) have discussed a similar process of decentralization occurring in social welfare policy. They suggest that welfare reform represents a decentralization of the social safety net, and the devolution – or the 'causing to descend' of social welfare policy, effectively moving the authority to administer welfare from the federal to state and local governments. *Carceral Devolution* is best understood as a reformist shift in criminal justice and social welfare policy and practice where the state's capacities to rehabilitate prisoners have been offloaded onto community-based actors and organizations. As a reformist strategy occurring in the shadow of mass incarceration, rather than a revolutionary program of social change, it has been relatively easy to overlook. Table 2 shows the distinction between the old rehabilitative paradigm and rehabilitation post-Carceral Devolution. Under the old paradigm, rehabilitation was largely conducted inside prisons, at least rhetorically focused on the employment of the ex-offender, and utilized individual treatment planning to address former prisoners' needs. Rehabilitation post-Carceral Devolution no longer emphasizes the employment of former prisoners, but their employability, uses group work to address prisoners' psychosocial needs, and reentry programs to administer a re-conceptualized form of rehabilitation discussed throughout this article inside former prisoners' home communities.

Carceral Devolution builds on long standing tropes that have historically guided social policy directed toward 'unwilling' Black workers, and broader shifts in the political economy and culture. The implications of Carceral Devolution for

Table 2. Rehabilitation comparison table: Pre- and post-Carceral Devolution

Rehabilitation pre-Carceral Devolution	Rehabilitation post-Carceral Devolution
Largely conducted inside prisons through rehabilitative services	Largely conducted inside prisoners' communities through prisoner reentry organizations
Largely administered by social workers, probation officers, and clergy	Largely administered by para-professionals
Emphasis on employment	Emphasis on employability
Emphasis on education and vocational training	Emphasis on 'life skills', 'social skills', and work readiness training
Individualized treatment plans	Emphasis on treatment groups

marginalized populations and the ways in which we understand the structure and role of the state are vast and important. Through the activation of human service agencies in criminal justice administration, the lines between punishment and welfare institutions have become blurred. The relocation of rehabilitation into low income communities of color demonstrates the off loading of the state's responsibility to care for and supervise offenders onto community actors and organizations during a period of austerity and retrenchment in other areas of social welfare policy. At the same time, reentry strategies intervene within the cognitive processes and non-cognitive capacities of former prisoners, engaging and reframing their emotions, perceptions, and character traits. This should not be surprising given the moral registers that prison reformers invoked in the establishment of rehabilitation, the lofty, quasi-spiritual overtures politicians have used to justify reentry programming, and the historic engagement of faith-based organizations in the provision of social welfare services and criminal justice administration. Ex-offenders and the disadvantaged communities they come from are therefore made responsible for their own social outcomes.

Since reentry initiatives do not remove criminal stigma, or address practices of legal exclusion that prevent former prisoners from full participation in civic, social and economic life, prisoner reentry can be viewed as a 'people changing institution' that attempts to alter, through ritual processes, the behaviors and characters of ex-offenders without altering their status within the general population (see Hasenfeld, 1972). This is accomplished through moral re-training, where former prisoners learn to manage the triple stigma of racially coded deviance (through geography and inmate selection), criminal history, and poverty by reframing their understanding of their social circumstances, managing their emotions, and maximizing their choices to make good decisions. 'Successful' ex-offenders willingly complete programming and submit to a lifelong process of personal change. They are rewarded with certificates of program completion, case management services, and in some cases, even employment in prisoner reentry programs. Stories of individual success

and failure, evidenced by ex-offenders completion of reentry programs and their submission to personal transformation, legitimate the strategies these organizations employ and the honorable/dishonorable statuses extended to their target populations. As such, the ascension of prisoner reentry as the rehabilitative strategy of choice shows one way that the state has modified its relationship to the urban poor, offloading its responsibility to succor the social, civic, and economic participation of poor people of color, while at the same time more deeply embedding itself within their everyday lives.

This article is in no way written to undermine the value of evidence-based, psychosocial interventions in addressing the needs of former prisoners, or other poor people more broadly. The extraordinary successes of many reentry organizations,[7] three decades of findings from social policy research (Miller, 1989; Petersilia, 2009; Wheeler and Patterson, 2008), and assertions from former prisoners attesting to the importance of reentry programming suggest otherwise. This aim of this article is to highlight an important shift in the rehabilitative terrain and what the ascendance of these kinds of interventions can tell us about the lived experiences of former prisoners and the operations of the state in their lives. Carceral Devolution provides a framework to locate these shifts and map their consequences onto the social body. It signals at once the re-emergence and modification of the rehabilitation paradigm, and a doubling down on the transformative expectations of punishment and social welfare.

Carceral Devolution has additional formal and informal mechanisms including: (1) the activation of third parties to reward and punish former prisoners through employment, housing, and social service policy; (2) the expansion of community corrections, neighborhood watches, and gated communities to protect and contain social actors within designated geographic spaces; (3) the therapeutic logics that have come to animate emerging criminal justice initiatives; and (4) the targeting of marginalized and dishonored groups for criminal justice and social welfare intervention (Beckett and Herbert, 2010; Desmond and Valdez, 2013; Pager, 2007; Simon, 1993, 2007; Stuart, 2013; Wacquant, 2009). While it is important to acknowledge its regulatory features and the extent to which criminal justice and welfare state institutions constrain social actors, this new rehabilitation paradigm is not just a matter of social control, but of a recasting of the role, force, and consequence of the state. It has produced novel ways of being in the social world, contributing to how the former prisoner, as a criminalized, racialized, and otherwise dishonored cultural category is understood by researchers, the public, and policy makers, while also contributing to how former prisoners understand themselves.

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Notes

1. Sociologist Loïc Wacquant (2010b) notes that the SCA provides roughly $20.00 per month per returning prisoner or, as he puts it, the cost of one sandwich per ex-offender per week.
2. By 2008, 38 states had already adopted their own brand of a 'community corrections act' that directed or appropriated funds for community-based prisoner rehabilitation programs.
3. 'Former prisoner' and ex-offender are used interchangeably throughout this article.
4. The Near West Side of Chicago has a notorious reputation of blight, disrepair, and what sociologist have termed concentrated disadvantage. The neighborhoods housing the organizations in my study have been the subject of two documentary projects, award winning books on the urban poor, and countless editorials. See, for example, *There are No Children Here: A Story of Two Boys* (Kotlowitz, 1991), and the editorial, 'What's it like to be in hell' penned by Alan Walinsky (1987) after a brief visit.
5. There were 390 prisoner serving halfway houses and other organizations providing rehabilitative services in 1996. By 2007 that number increased to 1032. These figures do not include organizations that did not register with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). It is not clear whether or not these organizations were already in existence and simply registered for the first time. What is clear is that the number of registered community based prisoner reentry organizations dramatically increased while rehabilitative programs inside prisons considerably decreased.
6. Pseudonyms are used for all persons and organizations.
7. Including Emmaus road, which boasts a 50 percent reduction in the recidivism rate of program graduates when compared with prisoners who do not receive reentry services.

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Reuben Jonathan Miller is an Assistant Professor of Social Work at the University of Michigan. He is an ethnographer whose research and writing focuses on the ways in which poor people experience crime control and social welfare policy, the health and well-being of former prisoners, and processes of racialization.