"IT'S A NEO-LIBERAL WORLD, WE'RE ALL JUST LIVING IN IT": THE EFFECTS

OF CAPITALIST IDEOLOGY ON EX-OFFENDERS AND THE ORGANIZATIONS

THAT WORK WITH THEM

by

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This project is about the pervasiveness of neo-liberal ideology as it influences the conception and delivery of services in the field of re-entry. Re-entry refers to the release from prison as it is experienced by convicted criminals. Ex-offenders face specific challenges due to prisonization including procuring housing, education and employment in addition to compromised health, social acceptance and family issues The manner in which we, as a society, decide to address the problem of re-entry requires significant ethical and political considerations. I discuss the ways in which re-entry organizations, and most specifically a small non-profit in Minnesota, align their administrative structures, financial priorities and programs according to a neo-liberal paradigm.

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INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE NEO-LIBERAL STAGE

FOR RE-ENTRY PROGRAMMING

This project is about the pervasiveness of neo-liberal ideology as it influences the conception and delivery of services in the field of re-entry. Re-entry refers to the release from prison as it is experienced by convicted criminals. Ex-offenders face specific challenges due to prisonization including procuring housing, education and employment in addition to compromised health, social acceptance and family issues (Goffman 1961; Schmid and Jones 1991; Petersilia 2003; Travis 2005; Western 2006; Visher 2007). The manner, in which we, as a society, decide to address the problem of re-entry, requires significant ethical and political considerations. I discuss the ways in which re-entry organizations, and most specifically, a small non-profit in Minnesota, align their administrative structures, financial priorities and programs according to a neo-liberal paradigm.

Neo-liberalism Defined and Described

The political ideology which prioritizes the efficiency of the economy over all other social needs is referred to as neo-liberalism (Harvey 2005). Neo-liberal policymakers claim that social issues are best resolved through the 'natural' functions of capitalism. Harvey (2005) defines it in this way, "Neo-liberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade"(2). More simply, neo-liberalism is also known as the "small-government"

movement. To quote a popular representative of neo-liberal policy, former President

Ronald Reagan, "Government isn't the solution to our problems, government is the

problem."

Between the 1930s and the 1960s, before the rise of neo-liberalism, Keynesian

economic policies were most dominant. However, Keynesian policies, which advocated

for a strong state infrastructure, could provide a social safety net, and would also

"dampen business cycles and ensure reasonably full employment," were no longer in

vogue in the United States and in the United Kingdom by the late 1970s (Harvey 2005:

10). Neo-liberalism emerged as a dominant political-economic force as a reaction to high

unemployment and inflation that developed in the early 1970s. Inspired by the work of

neo-liberal economists Milton Friedman and Friedrich von Hayek, Margaret Thatcher[1],

the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, pushed for an overhaul of the social welfare

system beginning in 1979 (Harvey 2005). Similarly, following the guidance of US

Federal Reserve Bank chairman, Paul Volcker, President Ronald Reagan began to

deregulate industries, provide high tax breaks for the wealthy and dismantle the

Keynesian state infrastructure (Harvey 2005). Neo-liberal policies, also known as

supply-side economics were supported by free-market ideologists who insisted that

capitalism, unfettered by taxation and government intervention, would produce so much

wealth, that tax revenue would actually increase (Campbell 2001:168).

Supply-side economics was not without detractors (Krugman 1994; Campbell

2001). While President George W. Bush cut the taxes on the wealthiest Americans in the

2000s, his Chief Economist on his Council of Economic Advisers, Andrew Samwick

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[1] Thatcher was quoted in Woman's Own Magazine:"Who is society? There is no such thing! There are individual men and women and, there are families and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first." (Keays 1987)

(2007) criticized the administration for this policy, arguing that tax cuts do not produce higher tax revenue. Nonetheless, neo-liberal ideology remains a major part of social economic policy in the US. According to Campbell (2001), neo-liberalism's meteoric rise in popularity with the public can be explained by its simplicity. Supply-side economic policies are straightforward in their message: cut taxes, dismantle the government, and restore individual freedoms and responsibility. Harvey (2005) suggests that while 'freedom' is a problematic concept in light of neo-liberalism (21), the message of freedom and tax cuts strikes a chord with the public (Campbell 2001). Campbell (2001) states, "Supply-side economics had a tremendous [political] advantage over the alternatives because neither policy recommendations nor its account of how tax cuts would resolve the stagflation problem were complicated: just cut taxes and everything else would automatically fall into place[2]" (168).

As I will discuss in the next section, neo-liberal policies are intimately tied to correctional and social service policy. The government's transition from Keynesian to neo-liberal economic policy mirrored a shift in post-release management policies for ex-offenders. Given the current hegemony of neo-liberal policy, we now see re-entry through the lens of 'personal responsibility' where parole and probation officers work to provide surveillance as agents of law enforcement. According to Wacquant (2009:145) and Lynch (1998), parole and probation officers were not originally agents of law enforcement; rather they were extensions of the social welfare state and their roles were

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[2] Margaret Thatcher quote from *The Path to Power* (1995): "We intended policy in the 1980s to be directed towards fundamentally different goals from those of most of the post-war era. We believed that since jobs (in a free society) did not depend on government but upon satisfying customers, there was no point in setting targets for 'full' employment. Instead, government should create the right framework of sound money, low taxes, light regulation and flexible markets (including labour markets) to allow prosperity and employment to grow."

not dissimilar to social work. In contrast to parole officers today, supervisory agents like parole and probation officers decades ago assisted the client in meeting his or her needs as it was supplied by the state or other charitable resources. In other words, with smaller caseloads, parole and probation officers once were the state's personalized, non-punitive response to re-entry.[3] As I will discuss in Chapter II, a concerted effort directed at offender re-entry as a general public concern was not formally suggested until the early 2000s under the Bush administration.

To better understand the US current approach to re-entry, I will utilize Wacquant's (2009) four dimensions of neo-liberal social policies to explain the theoretical context for evaluating the work of non-profit re-entry agencies. Specifically, Wacquant (2009) argues that neo-liberal policymaking vouches for, "(1) economic deregulation, (2) welfare state devolution, retraction, and recomposition, (3) the cultural trope of individual responsibility, and (4) an expansive, intrusive and proactive penal apparatus" (307).

Neo-liberal Parameters for Social Policy

"Economic Deregulation: that is, reregulation aimed at promoting the "market" or market-like mechanisms as the optimal device…for organizing the gamut of human activities, including the private provision of core putative grounds of efficiency (implying deliberate disregard for distributive issues of justice and equality)" (Wacquant 2009:307).

One of my goals for this dissertation will be to describe the delivery of human services for ex-offenders. Central to that concern is a discussion of how neo-liberal social policy metes out these services through non-profit organizations. The objective of

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[3] I cannot vouch for the realities of parole work for any individual's work on the ground either historically or contemporarily. I am only describing the differences in social welfare policy as it mirrors general economic policies. See McClork and Crank (1996) for more information on this topic.

free-market capitalism, as it is discussed by neo-liberal thinkers, is to privatize all organizations, whether in the form of a non-profit or for-profit organization. In general, neo-liberalism insists that government should play a limited role in the delivery of human services. In a 2011 debate among Republican candidates for the US presidency, former Republican Governor of Minnesota, Tim Pawlenty characterized the possibility of privatization as the "Google Test." According to Pawlenty, "If you can find a service or good available on Google or the Internet, then the federal government probably doesn't need to be doing it" (Feldmann 2011*).*

Neo-liberal thinkers seek to reduce government through financial divestment of social services. Non-profits and other privately run organizations would take responsibility for providing publicly-funded goods. Under this model, government agencies purchase the social services provided by non-profits and for-profit organizations at the lowest cost possible (Soss, Fording and Schram 2011) and social services would no longer be understood as necessary public goods, but rather commodities to be bought and sold using the logic of supply and demand. As in the marketplace, the most successful products and services are the most cost-effective. The organizations that best satisfy that requirement are the most likely to stay in business. From a neo-liberal vantage point, it is this logic that largely determines the type of products that re-entry services should offer as well as advertise (Keevers, Treleavan and Sykes 2008; Wacquant 2009; Soss et al 2011).

Thompkins, Curtis and Wendel (2010) coined the services devoted to a prisoner's reintegration into society as "'The Prisoner Re-entry Industry.' These are the systems charged with overseeing the release of prisoners (to post-prison supervision, dubbed

reentry)—and with policing the behavior of the former prisoner during periods of quasi-incarceration, while supposedly at the same time helping to prepare them for reintegration back into their community" (428). There are hundreds of organizations across the United States that focus their resources on re-entry. Due to the variety of organizations and the complexity of reentry associated with geography, and with funding and expertise, there is no widely agreed upon description of a re-entry organization. Re-entry programs are diverse in scope, application and philosophy. Re-entry programs assist ex-offenders with issues like drug rehabilitation, housing and employment services, family counseling, cognitive behavior therapy and transportation. In addition, re-entry programs administer and deliver services at the city, county, state and federal levels. Table 1 highlights three programs of note which exemplify the wide range of characteristics.

Making re-entry all the more challenging for both organizations and ex-offenders is "***Welfare state devolution, retraction and recomposition****. This process is designed to facilitate the expansion and support the intensification of commodification, and submit reticent individuals to the discipline of a [state contract]." [Recipients of contracts are not treated as] "citizens, but as clients or subjects (stipulating their behavioral obligations as conditions for continued public assistance)" (Wacquant 2009:307). Wacquant (2009) describes this phenomenon largely in relation to *individuals* who seek out public assistance, but his analysis needs to be expanded to the *organizations* that assist these individuals as well.

Table 1. List of Re-entry Agencies

Program	Location	Strength of Program	Services Provided
Project RIO (ReIntegration of Offenders) (Project RIO 2012)	Texas	Of the roughly 72,000 adult offenders released annually from Texas prisons, 62,000 receive services from RIO.	State prisoners are tested for employment aptitude according to certain careers. They are then trained in job readiness and life skills. This training also emphasizes job interviewing skills.
The Delancey Street Foundation (Delancey Street 2012)	San Francisco, California	"Delancey participants have built and remodeled over 1,500 low-income housing units and trained over 800 individuals in the construction trade and the foundation funds itself through its businesses."	This organization incorporates work, residence and substance abuse rehabilitation into one integrated program for 500 people in a "compound of stylish stores, town houses, a Town Hall, a restaurant, and a park.
Sponsors Inc. (Sponsors Inc. 2012)	Lane County, Oregon	Participants "turn in 50% of their earnings to assist in their transition out of the program." Sponsors report that 60-70% of all their clients successfully complete their 60-day program. Unlike many reentry organizations, Sponsors reach out to sex offenders	Sponsors Inc. provides "case management for each ex-offender, transitional housing, assistance in obtaining employment and permanent housing on completion of the program, and assistance in obtaining identification, and whatever clothing and tools are required for employment."

Neo-liberal policymakers strive to make the delivery of social services as cheap as possible by ensuring that organizations conform to contractual agreements. Neo-liberals hope to achieve that goal by implementing sophisticated auditing measures to monitor agencies that serve those seeking assistance, and at the same time decrease the amount of money available (Soss et al 2011).

Critics of neo-liberalism refer to this authoritarian role of government as the right hand of the neo-liberal state or neo-paternalism. Despite the neo-liberal rhetoric of more freedom, in a neo-liberal society, the poor and the agencies that serve them must follow stringent requirements in order to qualify for funding (Soss et al 2011).

Scholars note that emerging neo-liberal policies employ performance management systems for social service providers and also form work discipline strategies for welfare recipients (Soss, Fording and Shram 2009; Soss et al 2011). Segal (2006) writes, "Neo-liberals tend to support a brand of welfare reform that increases government activity in that the state must supervise the lives of people on welfare to make them functioning citizens" (324). More specifically for service agencies, Soss et al (2011) suggest, "In welfare-to-work programs, performance systems now serve as the core technology for monitoring operations and imposing accountability. They guide decisions about when to renew or terminate contracts with local providers; they provide state officials with a yardstick and a prod for the achievement of program goals" (204).

Implicated in this discussion about neo-liberalism are questions about who deserves funding. As Wacquant (2009) suggested, recipients of public services are considered clients, not citizens who inherently deserve public goods. This is especially true for convicted criminals. For instance, in many states, a major symbol of citizenship,

the right to vote, is indefinitely compromised after a felony conviction (Alexander, M. 2010:139). Within neo-liberal ideology, full citizenship is dependent upon individual responsibility. As I will discuss in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, re-entry social policy largely revolves around programs which emphasize individual responsibility over collective responsibility. Neo-liberalism suggests that individuals must earn their rights to public services rather than expect to be cared for as members of society.

Consequently, Wacquant (2009) describes the pervasiveness of, **"*The cultural trope of individual responsibility,*** which invades all spheres of life to provide a "vocabulary of motive" for the construction of the self (on the model of entrepreneur), the spread of markets, and legitimation for the widened completion it subtends, the counterpart of which is the evasion of corporate liability and the proclamation of state irresponsibility (or sharply reduced accountability in matters social and economic" (Wacquant 2009:307).

Under neo-liberalism, the claim is made that government should not be responsible for the provision of public assistance (Harvey 2005). In a neo-liberal society, individuals are free to both succeed and fail. If one does fail, it is a testament to the shortcoming of that individual. If one succeeds; it demonstrates that individual's effort and hard work (Soss et al 2009). This concept, also known as meritocracy, is criticized by sociologists as myopic, as it fails to account for the multiplicity of social factors that affects some groups and individuals more than others (McNamee and Miller 2004). Before I continue with my discussion of neo-liberalism, it might be useful to illustrate the *social* variables involved in re-entry. The following description of re-entry will also provide some necessary context for my project in general.

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Re-entry is a Social Problem

First of all, re-entry in the US is a social problem because our rate of incarceration is high relative to other developed countries. The mass exodus from the prison system is directly related to the high rate of US incarceration. For every 100,000 people in the US, 738 people are currently incarcerated. According to Hartney (2006) of the National Council on Crime and Deliquency, "the incarceration rate in the US is four times the world average." The average incarceration rate for Japan, Germany, United Kingdom, France, Italy and Canada is 96 (3). Given the vast numbers of diverse individuals needing reentry services, concerns facing ex-offender safely fall into the category of a "public issue" (Mills 1959).

Reintegrating into society is a difficult process. Ex-offenders must obtain employment and housing, restore healthy relationships with family and friends, and often recover from substance abuse issues. These tasks, especially employment become all the more difficult with a criminal record. People of color in the US are disproportionately affected by incarceration. "African-Americans are over six times as likely to be incarcerated as whites; Latinos over twice as likely" (Harrison and Beck 2006). Devah Pager (2003) conducted a study in which she sent trained participants to apply for the same jobs with nearly identical qualifications. The only difference between the participants was their criminal records and race. She found that men with clean records were two to three times more likely to get a call back than men with a criminal record. Even more alarming was the fact that white ex-offenders had the same likelihood of being called back as black men with a clean record. This is daunting, considering the fact that one in three black men are likely to be imprisoned sometime in their lifetime in the

US (Bonczar 2003; Reisig et al 2007). Additionally, even for the least stigmatized and most qualified applicants, a "felony record can temporarily disqualify employment in licensed or professional occupations, skilled trades, or in the public sector" (Uggen 2000; Bushway et al 2007:340).

A safe place to live after leaving prison is critical for the prevention of recidivism. The challenges of finding a home are straightforward. Most ex-offenders leave prison without enough money for a cheap motel room, much less for a deposit and first month's rent on an apartment. Ex-offenders leaving state prisons may receive between $25 to $200 dollars as "gate money," but as many as one-third of all state correctional institutions do not provide any money at all (Travis 2005:223). Unless ex-offenders make prior arrangements with family members, it is not uncommon for ex-offenders to spend their first night on the street (Nelson, Deess and Allen 1999; Petersilia 2003; Travis 2005). According to a variety studies across several states, "10 to 25 percent of released prisoners will be homeless within a year following their release" (Travis 2005: 240).

A criminal record also makes apartment screening more precarious. Landlords typically require all tenants to disclose information regarding their employment, housing and criminal history. Many landlords will not rent to people with felony records (Travis and Waul 2003:23). Even transitional homes and homeless shelters screen for criminal records. People with a record of armed robberies and physical assaults are often refused at places that are otherwise the only places that help people in need (La Vigne. Visher and Castro 2004).

Incarceration and re-entry wreak havoc on families and their communities. Donald Braman (2007) provides an anthropological account of the effects of

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incarceration on families in Washington D.C. Braman frames the problem in light of both the material and social consequences faced by families. First of all, families lose the wages of a family member when that family member goes to prison, even if those wages are minimal. "Over two-thirds of all convicts were gainfully employed prior to arrest" (Mumola 2000). When ex-offenders come back, they are less likely to find work with their criminal record. With or without a criminal record, incarcerated individuals cannot help with household chores like child-care, home repairs, and cooking. These responsibilities put even more financial stress on a family. A lone parent or guardian must now be responsible for all household tasks as well as making all the money. Families get further behind financially when they must decide between staying at home with children or leaving home for paid work (Braman 2007:153-158).

If an ex-offender is able to maintain a positive relationship with their family during incarceration, they are more likely to succeed once they are released (Petersilia 2003). Petersilia (2003) cites work from the Vera Institute which found that "family members helped to locate work and encouraged abstinence from drugs and compliance with treatment" (42). In general, families have the opportunity to provide emotional and financial support to the ex-offender as well as a place to live. Unfortunately, many families are conflicted with violence, substance abuse and economic shortcomings—making family relationships more difficult and decreasing the likelihood of providing this support (Petersilia 2003:41).

Substance abuse further complicates the re-entry process. Allen Beck (2000) conducted a 1999 survey of self-reported substance abuse among reentering state prisoners. Beck found that 34 percent of prisoners were on drugs and 36 percent were

using alcohol at the time of their offense. 59 percent of prisoners had used drugs one month prior to their offense and 25 percent of prisoners admitted they were dependent on alcohol. Beck (2000) also states that roughly 20 percent of all substance abusers participated in a treatment program while in prison. Limited financial resources for in-prison treatment programs send many ex-offenders back into society without any rehabilitation. These issues increase the odds that ex-offenders will seek out drugs as well as commit more crimes to pay for their drugs. Meanwhile, more drug users increase the demand for drugs—which adds to the public cost of "the war on drugs" (Petersilia 2003).

There are other problems that many ex-offenders must overcome. Mental illness, diseases like HIV/AIDs, lack of education, anti-social behavior and the underdevelopment of cognitive skills often impede the success of an ex-offender. In 1997, prisoners released from prison represented roughly a quarter of all people living with HIV/AIDs in the US (Travis 2005:194). According to the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC), this rate was less in 2001, but incarcerated individuals were still three times more likely to have AIDS than the general population (2002). In the case of mental illness, the NCCHC estimates that state prison inmates suffer from the following illnesses at these rates: "Schizophrenia/psychosis (2.3 to 3.9 percent), major depression (13.1 percent to 18.6 percent), bipolar (manic) disorder (2.1 to 4.3 percent), anxiety (22.0 to 30.1 percent) and anti-social personality disorder (26.0 to 44.5 percent). In general, every time an ex-offender is unable to get the proper medication, get appropriate training or effective therapy, the damage goes beyond the

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individual (Sampson and Laub 1993; Petersilia 2003; Visher, La Vigne and Travis 2003; Brown and Campbell 2005; Travis 2005).

Given the multiplicity of social factors experienced by a person leaving prison, we can state that re-entry is not just an individual problem. Nonetheless, as I demonstrate throughout this dissertation, neo-liberal social policy frames the complex re-entry process as an individual issue.

Employment is an important factor for recidivism prevention for ex-offenders (Tripodi, Kim and Bender 2010:706). From a neo-liberal perspective, one's moral worth is defined by one's employment status (Lafer 2002; Soss et al 2009: 4). Individuals must work for their financial security; it is not entitled as a citizen of the US[4] (Soss et al 2009:5; Waquant 2009:307). Consequently, there is a strong push by policymakers in general to include employment-based rehabilitation strategies for ex-offenders (Lafer 2002).

Perhaps the moralistic implications described above can be best explained by the unique marriage between neo-conservatism and neo-liberal ideology. Neo-conservatism is the socio-political ideology which "seeks order" through government intervention, whether it is through moral crusades against same-sex marriage or militaristic interventions overseas (Harvey 2005:82). On the other hand, neo-liberalism supports less government interventionism, specifically in the capitalist marketplace (Harvey 2005; Wacquant 2009). Based on these definitions, one might conclude that neo-conservatism and neo-liberalism are irreconcilable. Harvey (2005) suggests that neo-liberal thinkers utilize the neo-conservative value system in order to fill the void left by government

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[4] Thatcher states, "There's no such thing as entitlement, unless someone has first met an obligation." (Keays 1987)

assistance. For example, if a person loses his/her job, instead of receiving unemployment checks from the government, it is his/her moral obligation to work harder to find a new job or he/she should have done a better job of maintaining a substantial savings account.

Neo-liberalism seeks to keep government out of social welfare policy, but at the same time neo-liberal policymakers are moralistic with regard to how the poor should behave (Soss et al 2009:4). The institutionalization of moralistic policies as they relate to marriage, family, drugs, or religion is an attempt by neo-liberalism to prevent any social problems that might interrupt the efficiency of the marketplace or create a need for bigger government[5] (Harvey 2005). From a neo-liberal perspective, a strong moral system is free, but government financial assistance is expensive (Harvey 2005).

Individual responsibility is also a key component of neo-classical criminology. Informed by rational choice theory, neo-classical criminology suggests that crime prevention is most effective when strong punishments are used as a deterrent. In other words, rational individuals weigh the consequences of punishment before committing a crime (Curran and Renzetti 2001). To that end, in order to restore the "chaos of individual interests" (Harvey 2005:82) neo-liberalism imposes "***an expansive, intrusive and proactive penal apparatus*** which penetrates the nether regions of social and physical space to contain the disorders and disarray generated by diffusing social insecurity and deepening inequality, to unfurl disciplinary supervision over the precarious fractions of

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[5] Thatcher (1997) quote from the Speech to the First International Conservative Congress: "The unconditional supply of social benefits to those who were thought incapable of coping undermined the incentive to work and undercut the family unit. It promoted habits of idleness and delinquency. It permitted single-parenthood to become a financially sustainable, alternative way of life. By undermining the self-respect of so many of the most vulnerable members of society -- the respectable poor struggling for decency against the odds -- the dependency culture weakened society as a whole."

the postindustrial proletariat, and to bolster the evaporating legitimacy of elected

officials" (Wacquant 2009:307).

The very same people who reduce and outsource the delivery of human services

in the name of small government are many of the same people who have pushed for,

"Tough on Crime" policies (Krieger 2011). Despite the fact that the rate of crime has

been decreasing the last 30 years, incarceration populations ballooned from 329,821

people in 1980 to 1.2 million in 1999 and now to over 2.5 million people in 2010

(Schmitt et al 2010). And 60 percent of today's incarcerated offenders are non-violent

(Schmitt et al 2010). If neo-liberals really want to save money, mass incarceration is a

bad idea. It costs an average of $25,000 dollars to incarcerate an individual in the US

every year (Schmitt et al 2010). And yet the "Tough on Crime" social policy is preferred

to public welfare for the poor from a neo-liberal perspective[6] (Wacquant 2009).

It is within the context of neo-liberalism that we can best understand the

organizational and programming issues faced by re-entry agencies like Amicus, a non-

profit organization in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In response to mass incarceration,

policymakers of all stripes have attempted to organize a social-support network that link

non-profits, governments and businesses together to ease the challenging re-entry

process. It is my goal to further contextualize the impact of neo-liberalism on both

correctional and re-entry social policies.

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[6] Thatcher (1995) from *Path to Power:"* Law and order is a social service. I suspect that there would be
more support and less criticism than today's political leaders imagine for a large shift of resources from
Social Security benefits to law and order - as long as rhetoric about getting tough on crime was matched by
practice."

The Scope of this Study

Neo-liberalism affects institutions like public schools, welfare, health care and corrections (McGregor 2001; Morgen 2001; Fisher 2007; Horton 2007; Hursh 2007; Roberts 2007; Keevers et al 2008; Sloan 2008; Soss et al 2009; Wacquant 2009; Silk, Bush and Andrews 2010; Wacquant 2010; Yates and Lakes 2010; Soss et al 2011;). I will add to this literature by examing how Amicus, a non-profit re-entry agency, restructures its organization in response to neo-liberalism and also discuss the type of research that it must pursue to meet the demands of neo-liberal policymaking. I will also examine the type of programming preferred within a neo-liberal paradigm and how Amicus' One-to-One visitation program with inmates paradoxically accommodates and challenges that paradigm. It is my goal to answer this question:

How does Neo-liberalism shape the mission, the organizational structure, and the work of re-entry and correctional agencies?

Methods

My data collection primarily occurred at a re-entry non-profit called Amicus. I was originally drawn to Amicus because it stood at the intersection of so many social problems. It is an organization that both directly and indirectly dealt with issues of incarceration, race, gender, social class and social policy. Amicus is a small non-profit with an office in downtown Minneapolis. This agency provides services to both male and female convicted criminals and juvenile delinquents, inside and outside of prison, through a variety of programs including resume building, housing and employment searches, soft skill development, visitation and support groups for both adults and teenage girls. Compared to other non-profits in the re-entry field, Amicus is old. Its oldest program, One-to-One, which facilitates prison visits between inmates and volunteer

community members was founded in 1967. It wasn't until 1988 that Amicus founded Reconnect, a program that provides guidance in housing and employment from Amicus' office. The impetus for the development of Reconnect was the line of ex-offenders who would show up at Amicus' office seeking assistance.

The additional costs associated with Reconnect spurred Amicus to seek-out additional funds. To paraphrase Louise, the president of Amicus, "While we were happy to do this work, we thought we may as well get funding if we were providing services." Consequently, after decades of relying on private donations, Amicus began accepting government grants for their work in 1991. Prior to staffing Reconnect, Amicus was composed of a small handful of staff members who coordinated the One-to-One program, primarily funded through Amicus' foundation. By 2009, close to 60 percent of its 1.3 million dollar revenue was from government contracts. Amicus currently employs 24 staff members, has four AmeriCorps Vista volunteers and always has a steady stream of volunteers and interns to assist with its day-to-day operation. I will describe Amicus and some of its programming in more detail throughout the dissertation.

Inspired by institutional ethnography as discussed by Dorothy Smith (2005), I originally set out to understand how the daily activities of Amicus staff members are affected by structural forces within and beyond the organization. To that end, I conducted interviews with Amicus staff members and I participated in meetings between Amicus administrators, board members and other community re-entry organizations.

However, In the course of my data collection process, I began to be pulled in several directions. The variety of organizational challenges faced by Amicus, including issues of race, class and gender both inside and outside the organization, the continual

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search for new sources of funding, and the development of partnerships with other organizations in the correctional and re-entry non-profit and government sectors were interdependent and interrelated. For example, as I began to focus on Amicus' variety of program interventions with ex-offenders, like housing and employment counseling, I was also compelled to address issues as diverse as non-profit competition, correctional social policy, choice and philosophy for service delivery, research methods used by Amicus and Amicus' administrative structure. While I am somewhat disappointed I did not embrace one of these specific areas in more depth, I began to realize that my findings were tied together by something bigger than any one of these particular issues. I did not immediately put a finger on the source of Amicus' problems, but through secondary research, but I eventually realized that it was neo-liberal policymaking that subtly and pervasively guided or limited everything that Amicus set out to accomplish. From that point on, understanding and contextualizing this broader political-economic force for both re-entry and correctional work would become my primary analytical objective. With the help of secondary research, Amicus would primarily serve as an example of the influence of neo-liberalism in correctional policymaking, rather than the sole source of data. For that reason, it is my goal to explain how neo-liberalism affects Amicus in multiple ways, and for my findings to serve as a case study for re-entry social policy in general.

I addressed this research objective through a variety of means. In the fall of 2009 and into the winter and spring of 2010, I gathered observation data at a number of key locations. First, I was invited to attend and also participate in the monthly senior leadership meetings at Amicus, which consisted of usually 6-8 people including the

president of Amicus, and the senior coordinators of research, evaluation, communication, development and programming. I always felt welcomed at these meetings and I was encouraged to share anything I was observing in my time there. I always qualified my findings as preliminary, but early on I began to discuss some of the contradictions I felt Amicus experienced as it related to the competition between and also cooperation with other non-profits and government agencies. This usually sparked a brief, yet interesting discussion among the senior leadership team. I didn't feel my contributions to the conversations at Amicus crossed any ethical boundaries. I felt better knowing that I could be open about my research interests rather than hiding behind the cloak of research. It is possible I may have altered the direction of Amicus through my revelations. However, these initial revelations were related to my observation of the broader re-entry field, not the specific work of Amicus. And in general, Amicus' senior leadership team was much more focused on the day-to-day tasks rather than including my abstract ideas about the field of re-entry directly into their work. To paraphrase Louise, the president of Amicus, "I think about the [nature of re-entry organizational policy] all the time but I don't always apply it to my daily tasks." In other words, my discussion of these issues wasn't completely new to Amicus staff, and secondly, there was already a distance between theoretical knowledge and practical application for even the president of Amicus before my arrival.

Disclosing my research interests to Amicus staff provided me with invitations to events outside of Amicus' office. Most notably, as it relates to this project, I was able to attend a Minnesota corrections conference and an Amicus board meeting. I was even

formally introduced to the Amicus board as a research fellow[7]. My goal was to visit as many of their events as possible during my time there. I was not an active participant in the group discussions, but I did informally talk to people before and after the meetings. At each of these events, I conspicuously took copious notes on notebook paper that I was later able to convert to Word files. With permission from the Amicus' administrative staff, I voice recorded the conversations at these events.

Some of my most significant findings occurred during these events. I was encouraged to talk to anyone and everyone. In general, while it is possible some individuals at Amicus felt ambivalent or worse toward my presence at Amicus, I was never treated in an unfriendly way. I was encouraged by the President and other administrative staff to show up at Amicus' office in downtown Minneapolis whenever I wanted and to mill about as I desired.

I conducted fifteen in-depth interviews with both administrative and line staff including AmeriCorp Vista volunteers, the president, the senior vice president, the research officer, the communications director, the evaluation coordinator, the training coordinator, the development officer, and the volunteer and mentoring program manager. While I believe the information obtained from these initial interviews is integral to my overall knowledge of Amicus, it was not germane to my consideration of neo-liberalism as a shaping and limiting force with regard to re-entry programming.

In the fall of 2010 and the winter of 2011, I became much more interested in the philosophy behind Amicus' One-to-One program and how it was related to neo-liberalism. Amicus' One-to-One program, which will be fully discussed in chapter 3, is a

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[7] This title of 'research fellow' carried with it absolutely no contractual obligations for my research or for any payment. It was only a symbolic gesture to help explain my presence at Amicus.

volunteer visitation program with people inside of prison. Amicus calls volunteers for this program, friends. To measure the effects of neo-liberalism on this type of program, I decided to ask about the incongruence between the type of evidence-based research requested of Amicus by granting institutions, and the type of research available to them as it related to the One-to-One program. More specifically, the friendships supported by the Amicus One-to-One program were open-ended, difficult to operationalize in terms of measurable variables and in many ways, the friendships created between non-incarcerated volunteers and inmates were considered an end in themselves. In contrast, Amicus felt pressure from granting organizations to accommodate programming that had more objective outcomes in mind; specifically, in the form of mentorships. Mentorships were to be installed as a supplement to, rather than a replacement for friendships, yet this new program presented Amicus with the challenge to redefine its mission and goals. Framing this incongruence between Amicus and its granting partners were unspoken, yet omnipresent definitional questions about the divergent purposes for friendships and mentorships, not only for incarcerated individuals but for all people in general. Consequently, I felt obliged to discuss this question with four administrative staff members intimately tied to both the operations and the philosophical underpinnings of the One-to-One program. Specifically, I interviewed the president, the senior vice president, the volunteer and mentor program manager and the research coordinator during my second time in the field. My strategy was to individually ask these administrators to define friend and then explain how their understanding of friend tied to their One-to-One program. Then I asked them to explain the difference between a friendship and a mentorship and how that difference may or may not have affected the way the One-to-

One program is conducted. In addition to addressing the real differences of implementation for their mentoring and friendship program, I asked the administrators to discuss the philosophical differences for these programs.

Using these methods, and an in-depth secondary research analysis, I discovered several themes that implicate neo-liberalism with re-entry organizations and correctional social policy in general. The following provides an overview of these themes by chapter.

Chapter Outline

Chapter II Fitting In: The Issues Faced by Non-Profits in the Field of Re-entry

At the core of neo-liberal thought is a focus on the primacy of the marketplace and a distrust of large government bureaucracies that provide public assistance. As a result, government social-service organizations are expected to follow a neo-liberal business model. One initiative that emerges from this approach is the devolution of a centralized, government, social-service agency into many smaller non-profit and for-profit organizations that vie for government funding (Smith and Lipsky 1993). According to this philosophy, only the most efficient social service agencies should survive and remain funded (Soss et al 2011). Critical theory scholars have documented the negative effects of this approach on social-services agencies, namely: the inability to effectively serve large numbers of clients, the creaming of clientele, competition between agencies that formerly cooperated with one another, and, consequently, a lack of integration between organizations, and a greater emphasis on administrative duties as opposed to delivery of services (Smith and Lipsky 1993; Wacquant 2009; Soss et al 2011). Because re-entry as a social policy emerged in the first decade of the 21st century, well after neo-liberalism took hold as a pivotal ideological paradigm, there is little to no legacy of an

integrated approach to re-entry (Guo 2004). Supports for re-entry are a hodgepodge of

housing, employment, transportation and therapeutic services (Wacquant 2009). In

Chapter II, I will provide an institutional analysis of the broader 're-entry field' and I will

discuss the role of non-profits for human social-service delivery in general.

The second part of Chapter II is micro-sociological in scope as I explain how the

neo-liberal business model manifests in a small non-profit organization. Amicus'

programming continues to evolve as the organization gains and loses funding. To

procure additional funding, Amicus has begun to put additional resources into its

administrative departments. To fill administrative needs, Amicus actively utilizes

AmeriCorps Vista volunteers.   I suggest that the use of unpaid or inexpensive labor in

the form of volunteers like AmeriCorps Vistas fits neatly within the goals of neo-

liberalism.

Chapter III Rehab for One and Rehab for All: Neo-liberal Programming Priorities and

Collectivist Alternatives

Every society defines and responds to deviance in unique ways. Social-

construction theorists examine the ways in which punishment and rehabilitation are

reflections of the prevailing ideological paradigms in society (Campbell 2001). Even

though prison existed prior to and outside of neo-liberal social policies, prisons fit neatly

within the paradigm of neo-liberalism. Prisons punish individuals and seek to manage

and make docile a large reserve army of cheap labor (Foucault 1977; Wacquant

2009:307). Consequently, status quo forms of 'rehabilitation' follow a neo-liberal

paradigm, specifically with the use of cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) and job training

programs. Alternatives to these programs exist but are in short supply including theatre

programs, liberal arts education and other forms of progressive programming choices which seek to make offenders conscious of their collective experiences as oppressed individuals. Despite the fact that progressive programs successfully prevent recidivism equal to or better than status quo programming choices, their direct challenge to institutionalized power structures threatens their funding and their implementation in general.

Chapter IV Total Institutions, Friends and Mentors

Prisons greatly diminish incarcerated individuals' sense of self (Goffman 1961). An inmate's post-prison success is hampered by the lingering effects of extreme loneliness, an inability to make decisions for oneself, an inability to develop genuine relationships with fellow inmates and an inability to keep up with societal changes that take place outside of prison (Goffman 1961). I will discuss Goffman's (1961) perspective on the Total Institution and discuss how Amicus' One-to-One visitation program addresses prison's negative effects as described above.

Amicus staff members do not explicitly quote Erving Goffman (1961), but they do evoke imagery found in his writings as they discuss their motivation for developing relationships between volunteers and inmates. As neo-liberal ideology becomes more pervasive in policy making, Amicus is beginning to reframe their programming goals to better meet the goals of neo-liberalism. Entering into the Amicus programming repertoire are *mentorships*. While the terms mentor and friend are sometimes used interchangeably at Amicus, the traditional Amicus model is specifically and formally rooted in *horizontal* power relationships found in friendships. Amicus continues to develop these friendships, but at the request of the Department of Corrections (DoC), they are beginning to develop

a new mentorship model with different kinds of expectations. In this final, substantive

chapter, I explain the ways the friendship model defies the philosophies of total

institutions and the ways in which mentorships (vertical power relationships) are

expressions of neo-liberal social policy.

Chapter V. Conclusion: Getting to know Neo-Liberalism through Re-entry and

Correctional Policy

Finally, I will conclude by discussing the broader implications of neo-liberal

policymaking. I revisit my findings from each substantive chapter and I link them with

issues not directly related to re-entry. Through this final analysis, I suggest that neo-

liberal social policy is hegemonic[8] in nature. In the end, I suggest that neo-liberalism,

like the capitalism it promotes, is riddled with contradictions.

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[8] Hegemonic is a term used by Antonio Gramsci (1971) to describe the all-encompassing cultural
dominance of a capitalism.

CHAPTER II

FITTING-IN IN THE RE-ENTRY MARKETPLACE

History of Re-entry Service Delivery

At no other time in human history have so many people been incarcerated and have so many people been released from incarceration than the last two decades of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century in the US (Travis 2005). Close to 2.5 million people are currently housed in a state, federal or private prison and close to 700 thousand individuals are leaving prison each year (US BJS 2012). Numbers like these are unprecedented in US history: "Between 1920 and 1970, the per capita rate of incarceration in America remained stable at about 110 state and federal prisoners per 100,000 residents. (Travis 2005:21). The current rate is 783 per 100,000 residents. Additionally, inmates are disproportionately uneducated, and are dealing with more substance abuse and mental health issues in comparison to the non-incarcerated population (Petersilia 2003; Travis 2005). Given the numbers for this vulnerable population, it is safe to call this mass exodus from prison a "public issue" for which a social remedy is necessary (Mills 1951).

To that end, "The Reentry Policy Council (RPC) was established [by the federal government] in 2001 to assist state government officials grappling with the increasing number of people leaving prisons and jails to return to the communities they left behind." Included on this council were politicians and experts in the field of criminology. In 2005, these policymakers published the "*Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council*, [which] reflects the results of their work: policy statements and recommendations to promote the safe and successful return of individuals from prison or jail to the community."

Coinciding with this age of incarceration is a shift in American governance from a more centralized human services sector to outsourcing human services to non-profits[9]. According to several scholars of non-profit governance (Gilbert 1983; Gronbjerg 2001; Young and Salamon 2002; Guo 2006), the current reliance on non-profits for human services is largely the result of dynamic government intervention policies that have been evolving since the Great Depression (Guo 2004:6). According to Guo (2004), beginning with the New Deal, the US government enacted increasingly interventionist welfare policies, reaching a high point in the 1960s. In the era of a big and centralized federal government of the 1960's, not only were a growing proportion of basic needs of people met by the government in the form of social security, Medicaid and Medicare, there was also increased public investment in non-profit services which "went beyond immediate public assistance to a broad population" (2004:6). It was at this time, according to Felty and Jones (1998), that government funding replaced private donations as the primary source of revenue for non-profits. Yet this additional funding to non-profits was in addition to, and not in lieu of, a well-funded government social safety net (Moulton and Anheier 2001; Guo 2004:6).

Guo (2004) continues her historical assessment of US human service delivery to the 1980s including new human service policies enacted by Ronald Reagan. Reagan sought to limit the role of a centralized government not only in terms of intervention, but also as to the amount of money available to non-profits for service delivery. Nonetheless, by 1989, "Over 50 percent of federal social service expenditures [was] now devoted to

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[9] As discussed in the introduction, neo-liberalism as a political-economic philosophy not only seeks to downsize social service agencies, it is also largely responsible for the mass incarceration that also began in the early 1980s. Punishment for failure to participate in the mainstream economy is central to neoliberalism according to Wacquant (2009), consequently more people are sent to prison at the same time government services are being cut.

non-profit organizations; virtually none went to such sources in 1960" (Smith and Lipsky 1989-1990:627). Traditional welfare state policies and services that were common in the middle of the 20th Century were now filled by non-profits. Some services now provided by non-profits include housing, health care, and financial assistance. This point is argued by Moulton and Anheier (2001), "the American version of the welfare state consists of a public sector that makes policy, generates tax revenue, and hires private non-profit and for-profit agencies to manage and deliver goods and services" (3). Likewise, Smith and Lipsky (1989-1990) state, "most nonprofit service organizations depend on government for over half of their revenues; for many small agencies, government support comprises their entire budget. In contrast to the traditional relationship of two independent sectors, the new relationship between government and nonprofits amounts to one of mutual dependence that is financial as well as technical; increasingly, the lines between public and private are blurred" (625).[10]

Smith and Lipsky (1993) continue, "Government and nonprofit agencies have been cooperating to produce services for a long time, but the relationship is in flux, primarily because the *norm* of looking to nonprofits to provide human services, and the substantial dependence of government on the sector, are relatively new" (5). The norm of reaching out to non-profits for human services in 2012 is much more widely accepted and taken for granted. *The Report of the Reentry Policy Council* (2005), which was

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[10] According to a Congressional Research Report in 2009, 41 percent of revenue for human service non-profits came from direct payment, while government revenue accounted for 36 percent and sixteen percent of revenue came from private donations in 2005. However, by 2008, individual giving to human service organizations fell by 16 percent and to grant making organizations by 22 percent (Sherlock and Gravelle 2009). "The greatest decline in giving during the recent economic downturn has been for human welfare organizations. Human welfare organizations as a sector are likely to experience increased needs for their services during a downturn. While giving declined in inflation-adjusted terms between 2007 and 2008 by 6 percent, the decline in human services was 16 percent. (Sherlock and Gravelle 2009: 30).

developed in order to address the issues associated with re-entry makes no real mention of utilizing the services of government. Instead, the Report provides suggestions for developing relationships between non-profit service organizations. Non-profit organizations had become and are now the intended frontline service providers for people leaving prisons.

As a result, re-entry services today typically include partnerships between non-profits, private firms and different levels of government. This collaboration could best be characterized as a patchwork of social services (Moulton and Anheier 2001) and resonates with Wacquant's (2009) criticism, that "The sharing of budgetary responsibilities and attributions among the various levels of government (federal, state, county and municipal) is a source of constant dissension and distortion" (45). As a consequence, there is confusion both for people seeking services and the organizations themselves about what services are being delivered by which organizations.

The support that non-profit agencies receive from government granting agencies do not ensure a non-profit's survival. Besel (2001) found in his work that government funding is often given for non-profits as start-up money until non-profits can become sustainable through their own funding sources. According to Besel (2001), in the 1960s,

> Funds were granted to community-based mental health organizations with the eventual goal of sustainability by local and/or state funding. Yet many of these mental health agencies were forced to close operation. Ultimately, many of the surviving organizations had to develop private sector growth strategies that made their services less accessible to low-income clients (41).

Minneapolis *Star Tribune* journalists Neal St. Anthony and Patrick Kennedy report that "Minnesota's non-profits are in survival mode" (2011). They suggest that, "Cost-cutting, consolidation and redesigned missions have become the strategies of choice for the nonprofit sector." They also report that "across the state, the number of nonprofit employers fell 2.7 percent in 2010, to 3,630, according to the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, which tracks trends in the sector." (St. Anthony and Kennedy 2011). Frank Forsberg, United Way's senior vice president of change and innovation, suggests to other agencies: "Our request to nonprofit boards and executives is: 'You must begin rethinking your business model and what changes might you begin to make to be relevant, stable and healthy in this new environment" (St. Anthony and Kennedy 2011).

It is my goal for this chapter to examine the contradictions implicit in the complex delivery of re-entry services. To that end, I hope to contextualize the competitive nature of organizations within the re-entry industry by highlighting Amicus, a small non-profit organization in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Amicus, like other non-profits of its size and scope, must adapt to the competitive re-entry marketplace in order to remain viable with the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DoC) and granting agencies in general. I briefly discuss Amicus' competitive strategies in order to highlight how re-entry organizations are affected by neo-liberal social policy. To begin, I will provide a descriptive account of the marketization of re-entry and correctional agencies at a statewide correctional conference.

State Corrections and Re-entry Conference

The utilization of outside agencies for corrections and re-entry was on display at the statewide correctional conference held in the fall of 2009. Amicus was one of fifty-eight exhibitors, six of which were state-run correctional institutions. Each of these agencies compete for government funding from state and federal governments and for the opportunity to serve the ever-growing supply of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals.

Not unlike job or college fairs, these exhibitors lined up in rows in a large conference room with glazed concrete floors illuminated by big, bright fluorescent lamps overhead. Tall, white cinder block walls sealed in three sides of the space and the fourth "wall" was a tall blue curtain. Offered to both the exhibitors and the buyers of services was a long table of coffee, bagels and doughnuts.

Each exhibitor rested its goods on a blue-skirted table. Among the different exhibitors present were private, non-profit drug rehab services—some for youth and others for adult offenders; non-profit boot camps and transitional housing services; suppliers of urinary tests and ankle bracelets; job training services as well as state-run youth detention centers. Also vying for business were companies which employ inmates to produce everything from leather gloves to office furniture. Finally, not to be upstaged were public and for-profit colleges that eagerly advertised their criminal justice programs to the many aspiring correctional and probation officers browsing the aisles. In addition to the literature, each exhibit offered some kind of souvenir. Some souvenirs were more traditional such as pens, notepads, coffee mugs and paper weights. More playful examples included Frisbees, plastic footballs and squishy, bright-yellow foam stars.

These souvenirs apparently demonstrated their quality of services (or at least their marketing budget) provided by these different non-profits and businesses.

My conference contact from Amicus, Kathleen, stapled Werther's Originals to folders which outlined the agency's services. The primary service to be marketed by Amicus on this day was Employment Advantage. Employment Advantage is a program that helps incarcerated inmates develop a resume, job interview skills, and helps them understand the skill sets they can best offer to potential employers. According to Kathleen, and others familiar with soft skill development (Fan, Wei, and Zhang 2005), many people entering the workforce gain confidence in their abilities when they realize employers are primarily looking for people who can follow directions, who show up on time every day, and who come to work sober. After years of experience with employment training, Kathleen is confident in her abilities and she believes in the effectiveness of the program. Of course when you talk to other people from other exhibits, they're confident in their programming as well.

Perhaps the most surprising and aggressive exhibitor at the conference was a state juvenile detention center. Given the expanding rates of incarceration for youths (MN DoC 2007), I found it difficult to understand why it was necessary for an established, state-run correctional organization to devote its resources to marketing. I stopped by their booth with Kathleen and I began perusing their literature. They had several brochures that neatly described each of their programs for teenage boys. Kathleen small-talked with some staff members there and then introduced me using her signature smile.

"This is Nathan Erickson and he is a PhD student from Oregon," said Kathleen.

The eyes of the well-dressed, middle-aged representative of the juvenile facility brightened and she approached me enthusiastically, "Really! What are you studying?"

I gave her my regular spiel about re-entry and organizations and she responded even more enthusiastically.

"Oh! You must meet with our warden and associate warden. They are big proponents of evidence-based research and they are very approachable. They would love to talk with you about our institution. Did you get our literature?" She handed me some business cards and some brochures.

"Give us a call or e-mail. We would love to meet with you and give you a tour of the facility. We are really doing interesting work and we have really good data which backs us up!"[11] I definitely felt like they were anxious to get their information out to anyone, even a PhD student with no particular benefit to offer them.

It turns out that this state juvenile detention facility is worried about its funding. Recently, their sister facility in a different part of the state was shut down. They took on many of the youths who were residing there, but many others were outsourced to private, non-profit juvenile facilities. To address the urgency of the remaining institution's potentially dire situation, the facility even brought in a panel of youths from their facility to show how effective they were at helping young people. These troubled youth (all males) talked about growing up in bad neighborhoods and about their ineffective parents to an audience in a hotel conference room. They also described strategies they would use

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[11] I actually did take a tour of the Juvenile Detention facility. It was very interesting, but the tour itself didn't offer much data for this particular chapter.

when they returned to their old negative settings, to avoid the "thinking errors"[12] that got

them "into this mess in the first place." The boys were inspiring and I appreciated their

testimonials even if they were a bit sentimental. Two of the four young men were set on

becoming doctors and the other two were going to focus on careers in music. Realistic

goals or not, the small conference room audience ate them up. Earnest clapping and

random "wows" filled the air. If the purpose of the youths' appearance was to validate

the existence of this state run correctional facility, they did their job.

One question I had during this conference was: "To whom are these agencies

selling their products, funding organizations responsible for the livelihood of incarcerated

and formally incarcerated individuals? But the procurement of grants is more

complicated than handing out stuffed footballs alongside informative brochures. While

this is an anecdotal observation, the eye-catching marketing of correctional organizations

seems to be an important strategy for organizational survival within a competitive, neo-

liberal service-delivery infrastructure.

Another role for a conference of this nature is networking, not only between

funding agents and non-profits, but *between* non-profits as well. Eileen pointed out

people she knew from other organizations who might serve both as useful collaborators

and potential competitors. Ultimately I left the conference with the feeling that the

organizational environment for corrections and re-entry is more commercialized than I

expected and rather unfocused. This ambiguity and complexity of the organizational

infrastructure is a problem for the different agencies involved, but it is potentially more

confusing for the vulnerable people who need the services.

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[12] I will discuss cognitive behavior therapy in Chapter III. 'Thinking Errors' is typical terminology for that therapeutic approach.

Theoretical Implications for Non-profit Service Delivery

As was briefly discussed earlier, the first decade of the 2000s saw a major boost to re-entry program funding. Policymakers could no longer avoid the reality that several hundred thousand people per year were leaving prison unprepared for the outside world. In 2001, lawmakers, academics, criminal justice practitioners and others came together in Washington to form the Re-entry Policy Council. By 2004, the Council produced a densely organized strategic handbook called the *Report of the Re-entry Policy Council* (2005). This handbook was created in order to provide guidance for the multiplicity of drug treatment centers, half-way houses, community workforce agencies, education centers and any other organizations and practitioners that assist ex-offenders at the state level. Mostly it offered suggestions about how to create partnerships between organizations and it discussed the variety of services needed by ex-offenders.

The mass exodus from the prison system is directly related to mass incarceration in the US which, according to Wacquant (2009) is also a byproduct of neo-liberalism[13]. Under neo-liberalism, approaches to re-entry initiatives include outsourcing and privatization (Soss et al 2009; Wacquant 2009). And due to the scale of re-entry, funding has recently increased for appropriate human services including housing, employment, health care and education needs (Report of the Re-entry Policy Council 2005).

According to Travis (2009), the public investment of federal funds to re-entry continue, "With the inclusion of $25 million to fund the Second Chance Act in the omnibus budget currently before Congress [2009], we can say that we have entered a new era. Furthermore, the decision by the Obama administration to request $75 million for re-entry programs in the 2010 budget signals the support of President Obama for a national

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[13] See Chapter I for a broader discussion of neo-liberalism and its implications.

re-entry strategy" (Travis 2009:3). Under the Second Chance Act, grants would be offered to organizations that address the needs of ex-offenders including housing and employment. Travis (2009) goes on to suggest the following: "As welcome as federal funding might be, we should recognize that the amount of federal funding does not track the scale of the re-entry phenomenon. One rough calculation makes the point: if federal funds were evenly distributed across the cohort of individuals leaving state and federal prisons – spending no money on jail re-entry, or on families and communities of those incarcerated – we would spend about $100 per returning prisoner. The point is obvious: if the federal government wishes to make a significant change in the experience of people leaving prison, much more money will be needed" (3-4).The amount of funding is dependent upon the whims of politicians and the public within a particular budget cycle and geographic region (Campbell 2001). When there is money available for re-entry services, it is not filtered through one centralized government agency, but rather through hundreds of different non-profit organizations (Soss et al 2009).

To integrate the multitude of organizations, The *Report of the Re-entry Policy Council* (2005) attempted to outline possible relationships between social service agencies. Yet, the *Report* (2005) admits, services "are a patchwork of programs, services, and funding structures, and, as in the case of criminal justice, the word "system" may very much be a misnomer for each" (20). The *Report* (2005) also states, "there will be at least some reluctance to exploring the possibility of working together around prisoner re-entry among some organizations whose role is critical to a prisoner's safe and successful return to the community" (21). Admittedly, the policy report offers some guidance for the different issues that ex-offenders face, and there are recommendations

for practitioners, but even this pro-active policy guide fails to provide concrete
approaches to forming important partnerships between organizations.

More specifically, the federal government distributes financial support through
block grants. Agencies like the Department of Justice give federal money to state
Departments of Corrections and Departments of Safety. From that point on, individual
states have some discretion as to how that money will be distributed. In Minnesota, for
example, the DoC sends out requests for proposals as it pertains to their particular
agenda. Some of these proposals are more specific, addressing things like housing needs,
and some are more general offering support for things like re-entry in general. At this
point, social service re-entry agencies compete with one another to obtain these funds.
To receive funds, agencies conform their programming to the requirements of the grant
and they must demonstrate that they have the capacity to deliver services and account for
the funds used.

Neo-liberal philosophies purport that re-entry services should be out of the hands
of a centralized government. Soss et al (2009) explain outsourcing services in this way,
"Emphasizing values such as efficiency, customer service, and performance competition,
reformers have worked to "reinvent government" as a diffuse network of governing
relationships, rooted in market principles. Increasingly, poverty governance is structured
by contractual relations, decentralized to facilitate entrepreneurial innovation, and
evaluated on market terms as opposed to democratic values" (18). As a result, those
offering re-entry services cannot assume they are going to be funded from one year to the
next. The Second Chance Act, for instance, represents renewed financial commitment to
re-entry issues after somewhat of a dry spell in the late 2000s.

There is much public debate about the proper roles of government, non-profits and for-profit organizations as it relates to all public services. According to neo-liberal policymakers, non-profit and for-profit organizations are considered to be significantly more flexible, efficient and inexpensive compared to government agencies (Wacquant 2009). Others contest this flexibility and efficiency, and in general question the capacity of non-profit organizations to address the needs of ex-offenders while they are in competition with one another (Keevers et al 2008; Wacquant 2009).

The public/private service divide is not a new topic for organizational sociologists. According to Barnekov and Raffel (1990), the extent to which the privatization of certain goods and services (a priority for small government ideology) might be relevant is dependent on industry type. They examined prior empirical research which compared the cost-effectiveness of private versus public vendors in selected cities across the US. They concluded:

> The shift from public to private provision of a service is no panacea for public managers seeking greater productivity…private provision of services may well result in economy (saving money), but the achievement of productivity (enhanced efficiency and effectiveness) is problematic. The best opportunity for improving productivity using privatization occurs when the service is easily measured and monitored, but productivity effects are more ambiguous when the situation is complex, as in such fields as human services and education (Barnekov and Raffel 150).

Privatization, according to DeVault (2008) follows what she describes as the "New Economy" business model. The New Economy business model requires

individuals and organizations to compete with one another for business. 'Naturally,' the best organization will set itself apart in terms of cost-effectiveness. Unfortunately, in the human service fields, vulnerable clientele play a significant role in the overall 'efficiency' of the organization. For example, Jurik (2008) provides an empirical example of a Microenterprise Development Program (MDP) for low-income entrepreneurs in a case study at a local microenterprise organization. The concept behind such a program was to provide both business education classes as well as loans to poor individuals. However, "Funders expect MDP's to provide services to large numbers of clients, show business successes, and keep loan loss rates and operating costs to a minimum" (63). Initiators of these programs assumed that organizations were working with a stable and reliable population. Unfortunately, this was not the case: "Clients experienced difficulties comprehending the course materials"; "clients did not have access to dependable transportation"; "many had chronic health problems," and "many had no homes" (68-69). Funders offered capital with the assumption these low-income entrepreneurs could turn a profit for them, but that turned out to be unrealistic.

Social service agencies, especially re-entry organizations, often work with no less vulnerable and unprepared people than the recipients of the micro-loans in the example above. The lives of ex-offenders are very complex. Ex-offenders must deal with the stigma of their criminal records as they search for housing and employment (Uggen 2000; Pager 2003; Travis and Waul 2003:23; Bushway et al 2007:340), consequently, it is not unusual for ex-offenders to begin their transition to society as homeless people (Nelson et al 1999; Petersilia 2003; Travis 2005). Ex-offenders are more likely to have a serious substance abuse history than non-offenders (Beck 2000) and they are much more

likely to experience both physical and mental illnesses (Sampson and Laub 1993; Petersilia 2003; Visher et al 2003; Brown and Campbell 2005; Travis 2005). In addition, ex-offenders are more likely to have complicated relationships with family members and old friends (Petersilia 2003). Given the number of issues that any one ex-offender might have to deal with, it is difficult to isolate the underlying problem(s) that originally led to one's involvement in crime (Petersilia 2003).

Ex-offenders represent some of the most vulnerable people in society. Neo-liberalism searches for market-based solutions to problems, but according to Barnekov and Raffel (1990), complex situations like re-entry may not be well-suited to evaluation based on 'market-based' efficiency. Barnekov and Raffel (1990) cite Gurin who "sees the need for government to provide services for those who are most expensive to serve, particularly those with chronic, critical problems" (144). The need for government to serve this population is largely due to "the tendency of private providers to service only the easy and profitable customers, while the difficult and unprofitable are neglected—a process called 'creaming'" (Barnekov and Raffel 1990: 138).

From a programming perspective, others claim that non-profits, in contrast to for-profits, are strategically the most prepared to address the most complex social issues. Based on Perrow's (1986) seminal work on complex organizations, non-profits might be the most appropriate organizational approach for the re-entry process. Perrow (1986) states, "Organizational structure varies with the type of work done. A fundamental fact about organizations is that they do work; they transform raw materials into acceptable outputs" (155). In the case of re-entry, the transformation process intends to turn ex-offenders into non-offending, responsible citizens. According to Perrow (1986), all

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transformation processes must account for both complexity and coupling. Complexity can be defined as the *number of variables* that affect the outcome of the technological process. For example, the number of issues faced by any ex-offender including substance abuse, family issues and employment. Coupling represents the relationship *between each variable*. In other words, one's sobriety affects one's ability to be a responsible worker and vice versa. Consequently, a non-profit re-entry organization must undertake a very complex and loosely coupled transformation process. Perrow (1986) states, "social service agencies that involve "transformation" processes [of people], rather than additive or assembly processes, often must be complexly interactive" (148). Human beings, especially ex-offenders, live complicated lives, have ulterior motives, do not always follow rules, and may or may not have the resources to accomplish a task. Flexible non-profits might be in a position to navigate this complexity.

In many ways, Amicus is as a flexible and innovative organization. Amicus' Reconnect staff and volunteers (office workers who assist ex-offenders in finding work[14], the writing of resumes, and finding housing--among many other things) are trained to personalize the delivery of social services according to the specific needs of ex-offenders. Reconnect staff and volunteers in no way resemble the stereotypical, cynical street-level bureaucrat (Watkins-Hayes 2009). During my time there, the two young, idealistic, community college interns on staff seldom, if ever, displayed any signs of frustration toward their clients. Not only were they patient, they were trained to be as genuine and personable as they felt comfortable[15]. In general, Amicus Reconnect staff did not deliver

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[14] Amicus was not a job brokering agency. In other words they didn't have 'jobs' to offer, rather they were knowledgeable of sympathetic employers and work opportunities in general.

[15] Without crossing important ethical and safety boundaries.

one-size-fit all services, but rather learned enough about the client in order to customize the services delivered.

Successful re-entry organizations are responsible for many interrelated components of the process, but the ways to accomplish those tasks are infinite in number. Perrow (1986) recommends the decentralization of social service agencies so that people can "devise indigenous substitutions and alternative paths" according to the task at hand (150). He goes on in his discussion of complex and loosely coupled environments:

> More discretion must be given to lower-level personnel; more interaction is required at the same level; there must be more emphasis on experience, "feel" or professionalization. If so, it is difficult to have clear lines of authority, a high degree of division of labor, rules and procedures for everything, exact specification of duties and responsibilities, and so on. There is more craft, or art, or esoteric skills (in the case of professionals) involved. The custodial mental hospital can be routinized; the treatment-oriented one cannot. (142)

Given these recommendations and the complex reality of the re-entry process, one would logically assume that community-based non-profits would be excellent candidates to carry out re-entry work. In some ways they might be, but due to the size and complexity of the problem, is re-entry better suited for a government operation? Or as Barnekov and Raffel (1990) suggest, "If the task is so complex that a myriad of constraints and specifics are necessary in the contract, it may be better suited to… a bureaucracy" (142).

Barnekov and Raffel (1990) avoid making deterministic claims about the suitability of private versus public firms for human services, but based on their review of

the available studies, it might be unrealistic to assume that outsourcing re-entry services

is most efficient and effective in all cases. They found that competitive contracting for

services such as busing and waste management saved money, but found that any money

saved in human services resulted in a reduction in service (Barnekov and Raffel 1990).

As the public versus private approach relates to re-entry and human services, it is

possible, although not guaranteed, that a small non-profit is in a better position than a

large government institution, to be responsive and innovative to meet the needs of

individuals. In the case of Amicus, one ex-offender told me that he really appreciated

the people at Amicus and the services they provided, but he had to go to different non-

profits for different things. For instance, Amicus generally had two to three computers

available but they were often being used. Consequently, this particular ex-offender would

generally go to a different non-profit for computer access and would have to go to

another non-profit for legal advice. For people who depend on bus tokens from Amicus

(when they are available at the beginning of the month), going to different non-profits all

around the metro area is costly[16].

To what extent can a set of disconnected non-profits deal with the hundreds of

thousands ex-offenders leaving prison each year? How are non-profits intended to focus

on service delivery when they must spend so much time competing for grants? In an

effort to lessen the size of government through outsourcing to non-profit organizations,

the re-entry market becomes more bureaucratic as service delivery gets dispersed across

the non-profit sector (Wacquant 2009:109).

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[16] While the challenges of ex-offenders lives are compelling, my observations are based on a few anecdotal conversations with these individuals at the Amicus office. For additional secondary research see Visher et al (2003) and Visher et al (2004) for more contexts.

If we were to synthesize the findings of Perrow, Barnekov and Raffel, we might conclude that we need local, well-funded, government agencies that have the flexibility to make quick decisions and are allowed to use creative problem-solving. This of course would require a paradigm shift in several ways: (1) A genuine trust on the part of neo-liberal policymakers toward service providers that public funds would be used wisely by street-level bureaucrats, (2) hiring highly qualified and expensive[17] personnel regardless of the sector who are both ethically and intellectually responsive to the needs of their clientele, (3) a public mandate stating the poor and the ex-offender are as deserving of public goods as the well-to-do. We are a long way from that kind of change.

While the theoretical argument has been made, the question remains: how are non-profits affected by our current neo-liberal paradigm? Federal and state grants for non-profits are becoming more common for re-entry services, but how does that funding source change the programming of the non-profits? Serving the re-entry population is now a competitive industry. As federal and state grants increase in number, so do the number of non-profits vying for them. . In order to win grants, non-profits focus their energies on complicated research designs, and organizational restructuring (Keevers et al 2008). It is with this idea in mind that I begin to consider the ways Amicus strategically organizes itself to optimize funding in the neo-liberal political environment.

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[17] By expensive, I mean that service delivery workers are paid competitive salaries and wages comparable to similar professional jobs.

Empirical Implications for Amicus

In 2009, Amicus lost a public grant from the state DoC that was worth a quarter million dollars[18]. Amicus had to cut a major program called Brothers and parts of smaller programs and had to lay-off a long time employee. Brothers was originally created by Amicus in 1995. It was a group-focused mentoring program specifically geared for incarcerated black males. On a weekly basis, men both inside and outside of prison would come together to discuss the myriad challenges they were facing. Amicus staff members would facilitate the conversations. According to the staff members at Amicus, prison wardens and staff found this program to be crucial for improved behavior within the prison. According to a senior staff member at Amicus, "the men who used Brothers had better hygiene, they would act more polite and their pro-social behaviors would rub off onto other inmates."

To maintain its funding, Amicus relied upon favorable testimonials from both prison staff and its participants. Originally, Amicus did not obtain prison behavior records of its participants and they did not engage in the even more difficult task of evaluating their recidivism rates in comparison with the general prison population. In other words, rigorous evaluative measures were not employed. However, Brothers was well-liked by administrative and line staff within the state DoC. According to Amicus, inmates involved in the Brothers program improved the overall safety within the prison system—which is potentially worth tens of thousands of dollars. Given their favorable position with members of the DoC, Amicus did not feel compelled to spend its resources on outcome-based measures.

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[18] Amicus first accepted public grant money in 1991-much to the chagrin of its founders. Roughly 60 percent of Amicus funding is based on government grants.

When the call for grant proposals for group-based programming arrived in early 2009, Amicus was not aware other non-profits were also applying for the same grant for group-based programming. While Brothers was originally Amicus' program, the funding for this program was available to any non-profit that showed itself most worthy. When the recipient of the DoC's funds was announced, Amicus' name was not called.

Losing funding was a shock to the Amicus administrators. Given their incumbent status as facilitators for the Brothers program, Amicus was interested in uncovering the reasons behind their grant failure. An opportunity arose to learn more about this lost grant when, Terry, the Re-entry Service Director for the Department of Corrections graciously accepted an invitation to come to an Amicus' board retreat in the fall of 2009. I was present for this board meeting where Terry walked into what seemed like a den of wolves. More than twenty of Amicus' most loyal board members and administrative and line staff waited to hear the reasons for losing a major source of funding. He sat on a couch right next to Amicus' president as the board and leadership team probed for answers. Recognizing the potentially hostile territory, he attempted to lighten the mood of the room by stating, "I will consider this a success if I don't leave with scars!"

Despite this humorous gesture, he maintained an official stance, stating that there were three very good proposals from which to choose. He discussed the emerging interest by other non-profits in the re-entry field stating, "the Re-entry Transition Coalition is now somewhere between 200 and 300-member organizations in the state of Minnesota which offers a more vibrant discourse."

Responding to this as a diversion tactic, Amicus' president Louise responded, "We know Terry, we founded the Transition Coalition."

Terry went on to state that the emerging interest in re-entry from policymakers, foundations and non-profits alike had resulted in higher standards. "Evidence-based practices are the most powerful trend going on in the corrections system. It's all you hear these days. You need research that informs policymakers that projects are successful."

Jay, a senior staff member at Amicus chimed in on this as well, "People are starting to come around to the idea that we [corrections] can help people, but we need to prove it."

Terry added, "The legislature is tuned into 'meeting goals.' I was recently told by a legislative official, 'you make the goals, or we will make them for you!' We know if you treat someone as a human being they do better, but…"

Louise interrupted sarcastically, "Is that evidence-based?"

"Hell no, but we have to demonstrate it.[19]"

Louise then recalled a recent meeting with an influential state congressman where she asked him about the forecast for re-entry funds. The congressman told her, "It depends on the Governor. Right now [2009] there is less money for the DoC, which means money is either spent on [hiring] correctional officers or re-entry and treatment. Where are my votes going to go? Well, to the well-being of the correctional officer. When there is very little money available, I have no choice but to vote for the safety of the correctional officer over a criminal."

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[19] On a side note, a week later, I met with someone behind the scenes who was intimately familiar with both Amicus' work and the grant proposal process. Without any prompting, this person confirmed that Amicus lost the grant due to its lack of evaluative measures within the grant application. This source claimed that many within the Department of Corrections recognized the work of Amicus, but the DoC must respond to the broader political environment, which starts with a fiscally conservative governor.

By the end of the meeting Amicus staff and board members verbally expressed their appreciation for Terry's willingness to meet with them. Amicus employees and board members acknowledged the difficult choices the DoC had to make in its decisions to fund one organization over another. When I talked with Jay later, he made the point that the grant winner probably deserved it and would do a good job with the group mentoring program. He also made the point that the winning non-profit was largely an African-American based organization, while Amicus was primarily a white non-profit— even though African-American staff members of Amicus founded and facilitated Brothers meetings. Perhaps it was a positive sign that the DoC was acknowledging the role of race in re-entry programming.

With the loss of the Brothers funding, in addition to the loss of another public grant, Amicus had to lay off three longtime employees and its remaining employees had to take an 11 percent pay cut in 2009. In 2011, with a new grant from the Department of Safety, Amicus has added several staff members and has expanded their one-to-one friendship/mentoring program.

In the end, Amicus is still a major player in the re-entry field. Nonetheless, government funding for a variety of non-profit programs is fickle. Program funding is dependent upon an agency's ability to maintain ties with funding organizations (Besel 2001; Saurez 2010), and the ability to produce measurable, evidence-based outcomes (Soss et al 2011). Much of a non-profit's effort, even for an established entity like Amicus, must be devoted to non-service delivery work. This will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

Neo-liberalism and Non-profit Research

Neo-liberal policymakers seek to maximize returns on public investment for the service delivered. Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine the cost-effectiveness of any one program in a sea of non-profit programs. According to Amicus' 2009 donor report, Amicus "works with over 100 agencies in the public, private and non-profit sectors and that number expands every year." Yet, Amicus must demonstrate that it is an instrumental dimension within the patchwork of re-entry services. Soss et al (2009) explain this perspective in this way:

> Neo-liberal ideology, which is market oriented, seeks tangible, quantifiable returns on investments for tax-payers. The democratic citizen, positioned as one who must act collectively with others to gain preferred policy outcomes, has been redefined to mimic the individualistic market roles of consumer, worker, and paying customer. Citizens, in this guise, are "taxpayers" who have a contractual right to expect efficient institutional actions that produce a good return on their investment (18).

In order to stay funded, an organization must *demonstrate* its useful role within the industry. Most useful within a free-market ideology, is a cost-benefit measurement tool which demonstrates through specific outcomes that an organization is carrying out its agreed upon contract (Soss et al 2009). But if the *demonstration* of productivity is the most important component for funding, a shrewd agency will target a demographic of clientele that will yield the most profitable returns. To demonstrate its effectiveness with ex-offenders, a re-entry organization should attempt to work with the best-adjusted individuals to receive funding. But serving such individuals is not the point of social

service agencies (Besel 2001). Social service agencies often work with the most vulnerable clientele--people who represent the least profitable returns possible on investment (Salamon 1992). In a competitive marketplace, the social service agency which understands that its *demonstration* of effectiveness is more important for funding than reaching the most vulnerable individuals, will restructure its organization to better insure funding. The result is that benchmarks, rewards and penalties guide the mission of a social service agency, not the needs of the client (Jurik 2008; Soss et al 2009; Wacquant 2009; Schram et al 2011). Appropriate programming techniques are determined by competitive funding, not the needs or complexity of the clientele. Local social service agencies must increasingly shape their programming to accommodate the desired outcomes of neo-liberal policymakers. In other words, performance must be clearly defined and measureable, regardless of the complexity of the problem. Besel (2001) claims,

> Even the most sophisticated attempts to assess program outcomes fail to reveal the impact of service interventions on participants' well-being. Non-profit administrators may be inclined to view such efforts with skepticism. Indeed, agency directors may consider organizational survival to be the only truly "measurable outcome." Nonetheless, in the contemporary environment, social work administrators must engage in some form of program evaluation (48).

Non-profit social service agencies like Amicus may offer localized, personal services that allow for indigenous and creative solutions to individual cases, however individualized and professionalized is hard to measure, standardize and effectively demonstrate. For instance, if we seek to measure recidivism rates, the ultimate measure

of progress for ex-offenders, who deserves credit when programming includes dozens of organizations? In addition, how might a growing economy or a shift in resources for a completely different sector, education, for example play a role in recidivism rates? And yet, in order to receive funding, social service agencies must have a clearly defined programming plan with specific inputs, straightforward technologies[20] and measureable outputs.

Performance measures, accountability and strict auditing are not exclusive to re-entry and welfare agencies. Health care systems, schools, prisons and other organizations find themselves restructuring in order to meet the demands of funding agencies (DeVault 2008:290; Feller 2008; Gray and McDonald 2006; Griffith and Andre-Bechely 2008; Hursh 2005; Hursh 2008;Roberts 2007; Schram et al 2010; Shore 2008; Silk et al 2010; Sloan 2008). Ironically, while there is a desire to *shrink* the government by letting the market determine the most efficient and effective human service delivery organization, in this scenario, government actually plays a more invasive and paternal role in determining the most highly-valued program due to their insistence on evidence-based measures. As it relates to their field, Gray and Mcdonald (2006) state, "The adoption of evidence-based practice can be understood as a continuation of long-standing attempts to deal with the ubiquity of ambiguity and uncertainty in social work" (12). They continue, "Social work is an incredibly complex series of activities undertaken in diverse, unstable, constantly changing social 'spaces'. Empirically derived attempts to understand those spaces will always be impartial, incomplete, and will only be able to attend to those processes amenable to the lens provided" (Gray and Mcdonald 2006: 14-15). While it is no doubt

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[20] Technology, as it is defined by organizational sociologists are the 'tools' used to transform inputs to outputs.

useful to use empirical data to improve the effectiveness of programs, it is problematic when neo-liberal policymaking seeks to operationalize complex evaluative processes for the sake of austerity. Non-profit survival and its efficient use of funds become more important than the services delivered in a neo-liberal political atmosphere.

Unfortunately for neo-liberal thinkers, government cannot oversee social service agencies the same way it can oversee the inner workings of the prison. If the function a prison carries out is custody and control of inmates, the success of that function can be easily measured by the number of people who escape and who remain in custody. Measuring the complicated lives of ex-offenders and consequently tying their success or failure to a non-profit organization is a major challenge. This is not to say non-profit organizations do not have a positive or negative effect on ex-offenders, but demanding specific measures from non-profits fails to take into account the number of social issues that might also affect the fates of ex-offenders.

In order for non-profits to receive funding, program performance must be clearly defined and measureable, regardless of the complexity of the problem. Consequently, instead of a non-profit working on behalf of the community, the organization must structure its programming and research according to the requirements of grants (Gray and Mcdonald 2006). The logic of evidenced-based benchmarks mirrors the logic of the capitalist marketplace. For instance, while recidivism is a complex issue, riddled with countless variables each of which helps determine the likelihood of any one person's ability to stay out of prison, Louise, the president of Amicus admits their work is tied to their ability to demonstrate that they prevent recidivism on some level[21]. For a small

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[21] In reference to Amicus' One-to-One program, profiled in Chapter 3, Louise suggested in the interview that they were now in the recidivism business as much as the fostering of friendships.

organization in a sea of re-entry concerns, this is difficult to measure. Yet, in the capitalist marketplace, the quality of an organization is determined by its profitability and cost-effectiveness. According to Soss et al (2009), similar measures are a supposed boon to non-profit organizations:

> In celebratory portrayals, performance systems free local actors to innovate as creative entrepreneurs and then, later, give them the feedback they need to improve. In reality, however, performance pressures impose a strong form of market discipline. The focusing effects of outcome benchmarks, the pressures of competition, the prospects of incurring rewards or penalties, and the awareness that one is being closely monitored do more than just make agents accountable; they reconstitute agency itself (4).

The neo-liberal perspective purports that the most efficient, productive approach to any organizational infrastructure results from competition between organizations and clearly defined market-based accountability measurements. As a result of neo-liberal prominence in policy making, market-oriented ideologies increasingly guide the mission and approaches of many publicly-funded agencies. According to DeVault (2008), the ideology of fiscal discipline manifests in privatization and accountability: "Neo-liberal economic ideology emphasizes the efficiency of the market. This idea underpins global [and local] policies of structural adjustment, privatization, and 'new managerialism' in the public sector…On the basis of appealing rhetorics and technologies of efficiency and accountability—who wouldn't want 'more bang for the buck'?—principles of the market are coming to organize (and shrink) collective provisions for social welfare" (12-13).

In a non-profit marketplace, the organization that best demonstrates its usefulness is at a competitive advantage. Ironically, neo-liberal policymaker's dislike for government spending only increases the amount of pressure applied to non-profit organizations by small-government politicians. In addition to non-profit re-entry agencies, health care systems, schools, social service agencies, prisons and others, find themselves restructuring their programming toward more easily measurable processes to better demonstrate accountability to funders and taxpayers[22] (Gray and Mcdonald 2006; Roberts 2007; Keevers et al 2008; Soss et al 2011).

It would be unlikely for any form of government to financially support a public program without some indication there is a positive return on its investment. In contrast to the metrics proposed by neo-liberal thinkers, it is also difficult to assume client testimonials or self-administered surveys by non-profit agencies are unbiased and sufficient demonstrations of organizational effectiveness. Consequently, there is reasonable pessimism felt both by non-profit organizations who are leery of evidence-based research, and also small government thinkers who want receipts for all services administered.

One of the more important studies of accountability which guides my own philosophy was conducted by Ann Chih Lin. Lin (2000) studied rehabilitation programs at five different prisons across the US. She found that "'what works' is the wrong question" (Lin 2000:15). The programs offered at the prisons in her study were relatively similar on paper. More important according to her study were the ways implementation of these programs adequately addressed both the values and the needs of the prison (Lin

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[22] For instance, the educational policy "No Child Left Behind" reinforces government oversight while threatening to remove funding (Griffith and Andre-Bechely 2008:49):

2000:33). She found that programs were most successful when all levels of prison staff were in agreement about the mission of the institution. Lin's work was an organizational analysis, not an evidence-based study of programming. In other words, it might be in our best interest to have researchers like Lin study the effectiveness of re-entry organizations.

Organizational analyses would suggest different kinds of challenges for re-entry programming and research. Lin's work was conducted in total institutions. Keeping track of program participants and their activities in a controlled setting is significantly different than following separate individuals outside of prison as they bounce between social service agencies. Nonetheless, this inability to account for the broad array of services delivered by non-profits may suggest that it may be easier to maintain some degree of organizational accountability if there were fewer agencies—but with more resources available at each. Fewer agencies, whether they are non-profit or government in orientation, would allow organizational researchers to examine the process of service delivery in a manner similar to Lin's work. Positive accreditation could entail the ways in which the values and the needs of the organization are a reflection of the institution's mission. Emphasis could be placed on professionalism and cooperation between staff and clients, rather than on cost-effectiveness alone. In an ideal world, re-entry agencies of this nature would be small enough to embrace change but would also have the infrastructure to provide resources to ex-offenders in an integrated and streamlined manner.

Research at Amicus

Adam Zeile is largely responsible for the data collection process at Amicus. Zeile was an innovative worker who has changed job titles several times over the years, but has

not quite shed the duties for each of his previous positions. Zeile is a history major who accrued on-the-job IT training and in recent years he's been responsible for collecting and interpreting evaluation data for Amicus. Most recently he collected as much data as possible for offenders who use the One-to-One program at Amicus and compared recidivism data for people not utilizing the One-to-One program. At first glance, data of this nature is useful as a demonstration of Amicus' reach, but it doesn't take long to see some sampling issues.

First, the population in Amicus' One-to-One program is relatively small. In 2009, there were 177 individuals using the program compared to 10,000 state inmates. For those who stay in contact with Amicus, Zeile collects evaluation forms from both volunteers and ex-offenders in the One-to-One program. He also seeks to work with the state DoC in order to compare and contrast the recidivism data for Amicus and non-Amicus participants. However, tracking people outside of prison is quite difficult. By the time he gets information on any one person, the information might be outdated (in other words, recidivism might occur, but outside the data collection time frame). So, Amicus' sample population for people outside of prison is incomplete and does not accurately portray One-to-One's effectiveness in a comprehensive way. To achieve a proper cost-benefit evaluative measurement, programs are to strive for utilitarian outcomes demonstrated through the application of specific technologies. Sophisticated research measures might demonstrate One-to-One's effectiveness at preventing recidivism, but that type of research is currently beyond the capacity of Amicus.

Amicus served close to 5,000 individuals in 2009 through its Reconnect program in its downtown office. As stated earlier, Reconnect is available to any ex-offender who

needs help with resume-building, education, job and housing information and also communication support through voice mail and e-mail. Yet this service is largely informational and intended to help ex-offenders find services. This program is undoubtedly valuable, but how do you measure the recidivism reduction for a program intended to connect individuals with dozens of other service providers?

Broad-based, utilitarian, cost-effective evaluation measures are not the forte of small non-profit organizations. They are the forte of large bureaucratic organizations, whether they are for-profit, non-profit or government-based. A large bureaucratic organization has the appropriate infrastructure for complex data collection procedures and may have a large enough research population necessary for significant findings. Based on his empirical study, which investigated the factors which lead to the demise of non-profits in US metropolitan areas, Twombley (2003), confirms the role of organizational size for the survival of a non-profit: "Indeed, small non-profits (which include those with annual assets of less than $35,000) are at least 20 times more likely to die than large human service non-profits (which have assets in excess of $750,000)[23]." These arguments suggest a broader problem raised by Keevers et al (2008):

> "Longer term social justice goals are often very difficult to formulate with an economically driven framework that seeks to quantify measurable results through performance indicators and hence purchase specific identifiable outputs. Such mechanisms thereby constrain the autonomous space within which local

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[23] Under this definition of size, Amicus would be considered a "large non-profit." But their assets pale in comparison to national organizations like United Way—an organization that is pushing for a evidence-based evaluation agenda. "The largest 34 social service agencies in the Star Tribune's Nonprofit 100 survey saw revenue rise by an average 13 percent in 2010, most street-level agencies did not" (St. Anthony and Kennedy 2011).   Amicus would be in the latter, street-level category.

community organizations can work in a manner congruent with social justice principles to achieve the aims of their organization" (470).

Neo-liberalism and Volunteers

At first glance, there would seem to be nothing unusual about a non-profit using volunteer labor to accomplish its organizational objectives. Charities are often characterized by the altruistic nature of their participants and donors. Charities rely on people who want to make a difference in the world. Paying volunteers for altruistic endeavors would essentially undermine the meaning and sense of selflessness associated with doing 'good deeds.' In this section, I compare and contrast the difference between supervisory agents like probation and parole officers and Amicus One-to-One volunteers.[24] I do not claim their work is identical, but I do suggest that a "free" One-to-One volunteer fills a function similar to an expensive parole officer.

At Amicus, One-to-One volunteers testify on behalf of altruism as it relates to their work. In Amicus' public relations materials, including short documentary films, written publications and web pages, volunteers discuss how much more they receive than they invest in return for their selfless acts of friendship. Past and present "friends" discuss the positive impact of committing themselves to a several-month-long application, training and matching process, before then going behind prison walls once a month to become a friend with someone who has had a very troubled life.

One-to-One friends serve a number of functions. They help individuals with emotional and psychological issues through listening and friendly conversations. Many volunteers help individuals after they leave prison. They might connect ex-offenders with an employment opportunity, drive them around town for job interviews and give

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[24] See Chapter IV for an extended description of the One-to-One program.

them tips for the interviews. Friends help ex-offenders find housing, appropriate clothing

for work, or help them get needed substance abuse treatment. The number of things that

one might do for an Amicus friend is endless. In addition, the volunteer status of friends

allows incarcerated individuals to build a level of trust with their One-to-One volunteer

that would not exist with government workers, so maybe it is best that volunteers are not

paid, as it allows for an organic, egalitarian relationship to develop.

While I cannot speak to the altruistic actions of any one particular supervisory

agent, like a parole or probation officer, I do know that hour-long, heart-to-heart

conversations are not part of their job descriptions.[25] The growth rate of both

incarceration and release of offenders for the last thirty years has increased the workload

for parole officers. In general, according to Glaze and Bonzcar (2006), five of the seven

million adults under correctional control are on probation and parole. Originally intended

for rehabilitation and reform, probation and parole are now used as an alternative to

incarceration (DeMichele 2007; Paparozzi and DeMichele 2008). Most interaction

between a parole or probation officer and his or her client lasts an average of five to

fifteen minutes (DeMichele 2007). According to the American Parole and Probation

Association, an appropriate case load would be 30 high priority[26] and 120 for low priority

cases. Currently, parole officers have an average of 70 high priority cases and probation

officers, usually working with lower risk cases, have an average of 130 cases (Re-entry

Policy Council). Some counties have parole officer case loads as high as 120 cases

(DeMichele 2007). In 1970, a parole officer had an average of 40 cases (Re-entry policy

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[25] Wacquant (2009) describes how parole officers were mostly students of social work in the 1960s but are now a part of the criminal justice educational infrastructure (145).

[26] Priority is related to the level of risk posed by the offender.

Council 2004). Even if it was appropriate and effective for a parole officer to really get to know their clients, it has become unrealistic due to the size of their workloads.

Still, neo-liberal policy makers push to disinvest from the public infrastructure, even for parole and probation officers. This disinvestment overextends supervisory agents as they are required to take on bigger caseloads with no additional income added to their salaries. As a result, supervisory agents might be less effective from both the general public's perspective as well as from the offender's perspective (Claxton, Sinclair and Hanson 2002). We may then assume that government workers are failing to do their jobs, or it's a broken system (DeMichele 2007). In other words, the lack of funding for supervisory agents manifests in even less funding, which creates even less effective agents—and the cycle of divestment continues (Wacquant 2009).

Neo-liberals seek to limit government spending in any way possible. From their perspective, the cost of labor should be kept at a minimum. Volunteers are a cheaper alternative to government employees. Currently, One-to-One volunteers are not expected to fill the same role as parole or probation officers, but with Amicus' development of a mentorship program, their roles as volunteers may be changing in that direction.[27]

Amicus currently only serves individuals motivated enough to request a friend. It is difficult to deny the value of providing a friend to a person who wants one—after all prisoners who request a friend still need help. Amicus has data which demonstrates they make a difference for people who get a friend, as compared with people who request a friend, but don't get one due to the lack of available volunteers. However, the number of offenders who request a friend represents a small minority of the general state prison population. In other words, while Amicus serves an important role in the lives of

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[27] This point is discussed in detail in Chapter IV

proactive individuals, something still needs to be done for less proactive individuals. The latter are the responsibility of parole officers—at least for those individuals who leave prison on parole. Amicus cannot fill the void left by overworked parole officers who must focus on the most vulnerable and high risk cases. They also cannot fill the void for all the people who are without institutionalized support systems following prison. To really address the needs of offenders leaving prison, a major investment in public resources should be devoted to professionals with smaller caseloads specifically trained to address the needs of ex-offenders.

Volunteers at the Administrative Level

Administrators lead every organization. At Amicus this includes the president, senior vice president, director of communications, director of research and director of evaluation, as well as four other people devoted to the financial and developmental operations. Similar to most organizations, administrative staff plan, organize and guide the organization according to its mission. In addition, administrative staff is intimately involved in the development and implementation of programming. Based on my observations at Amicus, this translates into administrative work above and beyond time and money budgeted for their contracts. However, administrative staff members are not the only people who do administrative work. Volunteers at the administrative level in the form of AmeriCorps Vistas play a central role within the organization.

AmeriCorps Vistas are volunteers, but with different roles, backgrounds and objectives than those involved in One-to-One. AmeriCorps is a publicly funded initiative that recruits individuals to serve in the community, specifically in non-profit organizations. In return, Vistas receive a monthly living stipend and the possibility of

educational reimbursement. Vistas serve a one or two-year stint, helping develop the capacity of organizations like Amicus. In most cases, Vistas are not allowed to deliver services in the form of 'line work', but rather are placed at administrative levels. At Amicus, a Vista developed curriculum for their teenage-girl support programs, another assisted the development office in the procurement of funds, three conducted research projects for programs and one also assisted the communications department with public relations efforts. Vistas at Amicus would be the envy of many non-profit organizations. Vistas do sophisticated administrative work normally reserved for much more expensive staff. During my time in the field, every Vista at Amicus had a bachelor's degree and many had significant life and work experiences germane to the work of Amicus[28].

The contributions of AmeriCorps Vistas deserve credit beyond what I offer above, but essentially I include the description of Vistas to illustrate another manifestation of neo-liberalism. Vistas do work normally reserved for administrators and thus, in a neo-liberal world, even administrative work is outsourced. Amicus does not pay for their AmeriCorp Vistas, yet without them, it would be difficult to develop Amicus' programming capacity. Vistas are talented, college-educated staff who work for less than $2000 dollars a month and yet they are asked to do work that typically warrants pay far beyond their meager stipends.

According to AmeriCorps, Vistas are not intended to play a permanent role at any one organization. Amicus follows this rule closely. Vistas are given specific projects to work on for a year or two and then they move on with their careers or their education. Amicus does not become dependent on a single Vista for any one project, but they do

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[28] For instance, one Vista filmed a documentary on gang life in her neighborhood and another woman spent time in the Ukraine working with refugees.

become dependent on Vistas in general for future projects. In other words, Amicus circumvents the temporal requirements of AmeriCorps by placing new Vistas on new assignments. This is not due to insufficient planning on the part of Amicus, rather it is implicit with the demands of market-based program delivery. In a neo-liberal society, in order to compete with other organizations and procure additional grants, it is essential that every organization continually create innovative programming, and also demonstrate its worth in a fast-paced, competitive and dynamic society.

Programming Imperatives

As Perrow (1986) described earlier, organizations transform inputs into outputs. In the world of human transformation, that process is typically referred to as programming. In order to remain economically viable in a capitalist society, organizations must innovate and adjust to a rapidly changing world. From a neo-liberal perspective or not, funders of organizations should reasonably expect their organization to "deliver the goods" in a reasonably effective way or they will no longer support them. And small non-profit organizations, like Amicus, are in position to adapt quickly to the environment in which they are providing services. But at what point does innovative programming turn into a universally accepted and globally applied approach to deal with issues related to re-entry? When as a society can we say: We have discovered the best solution to the problem and there is no longer a need to experiment with additional innovative programs?" Not only are problems continually changing, but the bidding process for grants requires non-profits to outdo one another. Harvey (2005) writes,

"The neoliberal theory of technological change relies upon the coercive powers of competition to drive the search for new products, new methods, and new organizational

forms. This drive becomes so deeply embedded in entrepreneurial commonsense, however, that it becomes a fetish belief: that there is a technological fix for each and every problem. To the degree that that takes hold, not only within corporations but also with the state apparatus, it produces powerful independent trends of technological change that can become destabilizing, if not counter-productive" (68-69).

A non-profit has a small sphere of influence—even if it becomes a leader in its field; it is unlikely that its programming will become applied on a broad scale due to the hodgepodge nature of non-profits[29]. Instead, the development of innovative programming is mostly motivated to procure additional grants. Funders are continually looking for new programs that will 'finally' solve re-entry problems at the lowest cost possible without addressing the deep structural issues of poverty, unemployment and racism. In other words, re-entry programs can make a major difference in the lives of some individuals, but they will not be the final remedy unless there is a broad and collective effort by society at large which addresses the deeper problems that affect society in the most significant ways.

Under the current neo-liberal paradigm of outsourcing services to smaller organizations, there is no point in the future where we will have 'solved' the re-entry problem using any generalizable method. In fact, if we were interested in solving re-entry problems, we would take what we already know about the structural effects of issues like inequality for example (Reich 2010), and we would invest in government interventions that address inequality directly and broadly. Neo-liberal social policy seeks to individualize problems at the organizational level. From a neo-liberal perspective, a

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[29] I will assert later that when something does become standardized, it becomes standardized according to a neo-liberal policy perspective.

lack of organizational effectiveness is essentially the fault of the organizations itself (Soss et al 2009). Neo-liberal social policy also relies on the notion that social change is dependent on a small handful of individuals or organizations that can solve problems through heroic efforts. Finally, under a neo-liberal perspective, we lose sight of the difference in missions between non-profit, government and for-profit organizations.

Social service agencies are intrinsically trying to prevent, limit, or end the social ills that are problematic in society. In a perfect world, they are trying to shrink the demand for services. For-profit organizations seek to expand the demand for their products. Yet, non-profit social service delivery is funded through a competitive marketplace that mimics capitalist industry which rewards technological advancement. To repeat a section of the quote by Harvey (2005) above, "This drive becomes so deeply embedded in entrepreneurial commonsense, however, that it becomes a fetish belief (68)." In other words, the purpose of social services under neo-liberalism is not about eliminating social problems; rather it is about rewarding entrepreneurialism without end. This is a major conflict of interest.

Competition between Organizations

Due to the limited number of funds set aside for a variety of re-entry services, non-profit organizations compete with another for survival (Keevers et al 2008; Wacquant 2009; Soss et al 2011). Competition motivates organizations to avoid complacency in their programming and the avoidance of complacency is essential for an organization in a dynamic society (Eikenberry and Kluver 2004). Competition also results in organizations 'creaming' clientele in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of

their agency (Lipsky and Smith 1989-1990; Soss et al 2011). This, in turn, prevents the delivery of services to the most vulnerable and needy individuals.

Competition also prevents organizations from working together to meet the needs of their clients. Even when organizations might share hints for effective service delivery, organizations essentially remain silos because they are competing with each other for the same grants. Keevers et al (2008) discuss the work of Galbally (2004) who suggests the "contract of services and competitive tendering have encouraged atomized and individualized services, emphasized through-puts and hindered a sense of belonging and control for community members accessing community groups" (464). Keevers et al (2008) continue by suggesting, "contracts and competitive tendering introduce uniform accountability for small and large organizations alike. Small organizations are then forced to allocate a disproportionate amount of their organizational resources to management functions. This diversion reduces the resources available for service delivery. In this way, the increasing weight of accountabilities, legislative requirements and the insecurity of short-term funding place pressure on small organizations" (465)

When organizations do collaborate, it is difficult to integrate their complementary services because ex-offender clientele often bounce randomly between service providers. The US system of re-entry is by design a patchwork of services (Reentry Policy Council 2005). As a result, there is no formal, integrative process, or centralized computer system between service organizations that monitors the progress or issues of any one particular client. Navigating the varied services provided by non-profits is possible, but ex-offenders are limited by their own personal problems and also by their inability to procure essential resources (i.e. transportation and housing), the latter of which enable

success on the outside (Petersilia 2003). There is no one-stop source for all the needs of ex-offenders and resources are generally underfunded (Salamon 1995).

Conclusion

Amicus must adapt to a complex, competitive re-entry industry by implementing changes in its research models, its administrative structure, its delivery of services and the marketing of its goods. In addition, Amicus seeks to expand its social capital by developing relationships with funding organizations and the DoC. To these ends, Amicus neatly walks the public-private tight rope discussed by Smith and Lipsky (1989-1990)— that is, Amicus is an extension of the state, yet it must follow the principles of capitalism. Following the initial logic of Perrow (1986), it seems as if a complicated issue like providing services to ex-offenders in the process of re-entry is well-suited to the non-profit sector. However, the very strengths implicit in the flexible, innovative approach of a small organization are undermined by neo-liberalism. Neo-liberals exhort the freedom of the market, yet for the sake of austerity, require rigid standards, which at some level compromise the delivery of services and ultimately forfeit the mission of both non-profits and social services.

Some of the problems associated with the neo-liberal approach to outsourcing services to non-profits are related to economy of scale. A well-supported, large organization will have a more integrated infrastructure with more resources available at a lesser cost than a collection of non-profits (Besel 2001; Keevers et al 2008). However, as I discussed the work of Perrow (1986) earlier, an organization that is large might be ineffective when there are nuanced and complex needs to be addressed. Nonetheless, the grant-writing process inherently favors large organizations, even large non-profits (St.

Anthony and Kennedy 2011). In the funding race, organizations with the capacity for advanced research models will beat out organizations that do not have the same organizational capacity (Twombley 2003; Keevers 2008 et al).

Neo-liberal social policy is less interested in meeting the needs of the poorest members of society then promoting free-market principles to non-profit organizations. And when human services are outsourced to non-profits in the name of efficiency, innovation and cost-effectiveness, the blame for ineffective programming is also outsourced. Under state-centered economic policies, government cannot hide behind its ineffectiveness. Neo-liberal policymakers, in the name of 'limited government' can exclude themselves from responsibility even though they are responsible for setting in motion this new form of human service delivery for ex-offenders.

CHAPTER III

REHAB FOR ONE AND REHAB FOR ALL: NEO-LIBERAL PRIORITIES AND

COLLECTIVIST ALTERNATIVES

I've discussed the ways in which Amicus aligns its research, marketing, and the organizational structure with a neo-liberal, business model paradigm. This ideological paradigm also affects the type of programming utilized by Amicus, as well as that used by the larger correctional industry. Fortunately for Amicus, its flexibility and its shrewd cultivation of social capital has allowed the agency to maintain its funding and also its viability with the DoC. As a result, most of Amicus' programming has been kept alive by funding gatekeepers within correctional institutions.

Granting an endorsement of one program over another is dependent on the degree to which a program embodies the goals of gatekeepers like policymakers and prison wardens. I suggest that the neo-liberal paradigm largely dictates what programs gatekeepers think are most relevant to inmates. In this chapter, I discuss two sides of the programming issue: how current programming is informed by both an individualistic, neo-liberal perspective, and how there also exist other approaches that fall under what I will call a more collectivist paradigm.

 I do not intend to provide an exhaustive account of every prison and post-prison rehabilitation program; instead, I illustrate a few examples which will serve as ideal types. More specifically, I suggest that cognitive behavior therapy, job training and technical skill development programs largely serve the aims of neo-liberalism. At the heart of these program philosophies is the suggestion that prison and unemployment are

largely personal problems, even though there is sufficient evidence that problems of ex-offenders go beyond the individual (Travis 2005; Pager 2003; Western 2006).

As a contrast to neo-liberal approaches, I discuss collectivist rehabilitation and reform approaches. These are often effective, but at the same time reject the neo-liberal paradigm. For examples of this approach, I look at theatre programming and a liberal arts education. Evaluating the work of other scholars in these areas, I contend these programs support individuals' re-entry by helping them to recognize how their lives and actions impact their families and communities, and how the problems they've faced their whole lives are bigger and more complicated than their personal troubles.

In general, I ask why more collectivist approaches are not a staple of correctional and re-entry programming. I conclude that neo-liberal social policies are undermined and threatened when inmates recognize social injustices directed at them and gain clarity about their collective interests.

Social Construction of Deviance and Corrections

Deviance is a social construction and varies according to societal and cultural contexts (Becker 1963). In a capitalist society, deviance is defined as negatively affecting the efficiency of the marketplace (Quinney 1974). For instance, those receiving government 'handouts' are responsible for creating 'unnecessary taxes' and consequently draining society's resources. Financial self-reliance is considered normative, being poor is considered deviant (Quinney 1974, Wacquant 2009).

The criminal justice system, as it is understood by critical criminologists, enables the capitalist class to make anti-social and unproductive individuals more amenable and docile workers (Foucault 1977; Wacquant 2009). While it is true that people go to prison

for committing crimes against society, from a radical criminology perspective, the definition of crime emerges from the expectations of the economic social structure, in this case, capitalism (Quinney 1974). For example, oil spills are ultimately more devastating to the environment and humanity than one's use of marijuana. But a drug offender will serve more time and will lose a greater portion of their freedom and money earning capacities than stakeholders of a negligent oil company. In this example, because an oil company is tightly integrated within the capitalist infrastructure for both consumption and job creation, the criminal justice system does not incapacitate the irresponsible individuals or the corporation. In an advanced capitalist society, 'non-productive' members of society bear the punitive brunt of the criminal justice system (Chambliss and Seidman 1971). Unlike oil companies, the poorest members of society are unable to adequately defend themselves in court and they inhibit the smooth functioning of capitalism (Chambliss 1975). As it was discussed in the introduction, neo-liberal social policy imposes what Wacquant (2000) calls "***an expansive, intrusive and proactive penal apparatus*** which penetrates the nether regions of social and physical space…to unfurl disciplinary supervision over the precarious fractions of the postindustrial proletariat" (307).

According to Foucault (1977), the criminal justice system's mandate for punishment is secondary to the desire to control, in compliance with the capitalist infrastructure, and 'correct' individuals.. 'Corrections' is the current term used to describe the prison system in the United States. The corrections system is an institutional response to crime, and more specifically, individuals who have committed crimes. The word 'corrections' implies that those incarcerated within prisons are in the process of

being 'corrected.' According to Foucault (1977) this form of institutional response to crime is both a relatively new paradigm and a manifestation of the Enlightenment period of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The burgeoning natural and social sciences of this period pathologized and categorized behaviors and specific types of people. To normalize and make the proletariat docile members of society, new procedures for correct training were instituted in a number of formal institutions (Foucault 1977 Part III, Chapter 2). To that end, punishment transitioned to 'correct training' procedures. Correct training and discipline, according to Foucault, is not for the benefit for the individual, but rather for the benefit of institutions that might use those individuals in productive ways. Foucault writes,

> Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies. Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience). In short, it dissociates power from the body; on the one hand, it turns it into an 'aptitude', a 'capacity', which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection (1977: 138)

This interplay of power between institutions and the individuals within them has a significant role in the way we see corrections today. Given the significance and challenge of re-entry, we must address the questions: for whose benefit are people being "corrected"? and, to what type of behavior must an individual be "corrected"? These questions may or may not be explicitly asked by individual corrections administrators, but the status quo training provided to ex-offenders generally fits within a neo-liberal

paradigm. The following sections will address the extent to which cognitive behavior therapy and job training programs are designed to produce 'docile' bodies in order to prevent people from challenging the status quo of a capitalist society. (Miller and Rose 2008: 214; Soss, et al 2009). The final two sections of this chapter will describe theatre and liberal arts programs that explicitly challenge the status quo approach to corrections.

Individualizing Social Problems: The Case of Cognitive Behavior Therapy

A corrections administrator asked me early in my pilot research, "What do you get when you put a high-risk offender through self-esteem therapy?"

"I don't know. What?"

"A high-risk offender with high self-esteem. They [offenders] say to themselves 'Wow, I am really good at breaking into homes. I'm good at what I do.' Offenders do not think less of themselves because they commit crimes. There is no correlation between one's self-esteem and the extent to which they commit crimes. What we need to focus on is how people react to negative stimuli and criminogenic needs."

From the perspective of many re-entry researchers and the corrections administrator quoted above, prisoner rehabilitation should address criminogenic needs which include pro-criminal attitudes, criminal acquaintances, substance abuse, problem solving, hostility and anger, housing and employment issues, and anti-social personality issues. These researchers demonstrate that the issues above can be treated with tangible, direct policy responses. Programming which focuses on self-esteem, anxiety, feelings of alienation, psychological discomfort, group cohesion or neighborhood improvement is superfluous because these psychological issues are considered to be more or less unrelated to criminal behavior and are difficult to administer (Bonta 2002).

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Perhaps the most popular approach for addressing many criminogenic needs is Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT). This approach "attempts to accomplish two aims: first, to cognitively restructure the distorted or erroneous cognition of an individual; second, to assist the person to learn new adaptive cognitive skills" (Cullen and Gendreau 2000:146). Latessa (2004), a major proponent of CBT, outlines its four interrelated principles: "(1) Thinking affects behavior, (2) antisocial, distorted, unproductive irrational thinking causes antisocial and unproductive behavior, (3) thinking can be influenced, (4) we can change how we feel and behave by changing what we think."

CBT is explicitly normative in the sense it addresses 'thinking errors.' Thinking errors are the ways in which people misinterpret the situations in which they might find themselves and, in turn, make anti-social actions. CBT's application goes beyond application in the correctional infrastructure. For instance, a teacher could look out at her classroom and see blank stares. These blank stares could mean any number of things, but it is the narrative in the teacher's head that is relevant. This narrative may be the result of past trauma unrelated to the situation at hand. She might be erroneously asking herself: 'Are students staring into space out of confusion, boredom and resentment? Am I a worthless teacher?' It is her reaction to these thinking errors that becomes significant. If she is overcome with negative emotions, she might begin to create a self-fulfilling prophecy and in fact, become boring, unresponsive and in general, less effective in the classroom[30].

A cognitive behavior therapist might help an offender create healthy narratives when confronting threatening stimuli and also help an offender practice new thinking strategies. Thinking errors are often defense mechanisms and responses to stimuli

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[30] For more examples see Royal College of Psychiatrists (2012)

experienced from previous, traumatic life experiences. Victims of domestic violence, neglect or financial insecurity may erroneously respond to future stimuli by 'putting up walls,' 'stuffing emotions' or by taking drugs to deal with intense emotions (Cullen and Gendreau 2000). By revisiting troubling situations in the past, a therapist can ask what was going through an individual's mind during a prior intense situation, help them reinterpret the negative stimuli they were experiencing and then create a new story line that would not result in negative outcomes. This new narrative is practiced over and over again in therapy until a new interpretation of the situation is more or less complete. When a person is confronted in the future with similar stimuli, they are much less likely to act in anti-social ways (Latessa 2004).

Under some circumstances, CBT is effective. Andrews et al (1990) examined the degree to which 80 different re-entry programs addressed cognitive behavioral issues, worked with high risk offenders and addressed "criminogenic needs for change." Their objective was to examine the relationship between CBT and desistance. They found an average of a ten percent reduction in recidivism for all 80 re-entry programs but for those programs that adopted the prescribed principles of CBT, "there was a 30-percent reduction in recidivism" (372). Landenberger and Lipsey (2005) reviewed 58 studies and "found that on average cognitive behavior therapy reduced recidivism by 25%, but the most effective configurations found more than 50% in reductions."

According to MacKenzie's (2008) analysis of different programs, CBT focused on individual change represents the best approach to personal transformation:

Almost all the effective programs focused on individual-level change. In contrast, the ineffective programs frequently emphasize developing opportunities. For

example, cognitive skills programs emphasize individual-level changes in thinking, reasoning, empathy, and problem solving. In contrast, life skills and work programs, examples of ineffective programs, often focus on giving the offenders opportunities in the community. Based on these observations, I propose that effective programs must focus on changing the individual (12).

Because it is so effective, CBT is widely administered to offenders. One only has to visit the National Re-entry Policy Council website to witness its popularity and ubiquity in programming. Milkman and Wanberg (2007) claim that it is the predominant therapeutic method with over 5,000 correctional staff trained to include CBT in group therapy sessions in the US. O'Donnell (2011) claims, "CBT programs are clearly the most common and most pervasive means of treatment, aside of substance abuse treatment, used for offenders today" (8). However, she also argues, "CBT is generally associated with a reduction in recidivism, though its widespread applicability in the realm distorted cognition has led to its use as a "catch-all" for criminal populations—many of who would benefit more from other treatment programs" (O'Donnell 2011: 2).

CBT is an important part of the general rehabilitation equation, but it hides the fact that some groups of people seem to be arrested for their 'thinking errors' more than others. Wacquant (2009) refers to this strategy to "treat" the behaviors of criminals that are "undesirable, offensive or threatening" as "*medicalization.*" Suggesting that a person is a delinquent "because she suffers from alcohol dependency, drug addiction, or mental deficiencies, and thus to search for a medical remedy to a problem that is defined from the outset as an individual pathology liable to be treated by health professionals" (xxi). Many critical race and criminology scholars challenge the notion that people are in prison

because of thinking errors and suggest that several layers of race, class and gender discrimination must also be addressed (Cruikshank 1999, Soss et al 2009; Alexander 2010).

CBT also seeks to resolve 'traumatic' life experiences from one's past, but it does not address the structural issues related to inequality, poverty and racism that make trauma more likely to occur for some individuals as compared to others (Milot et al 2010). Perhaps individual change is needed, but I question to what extent it is possible to transform societal, and infrastructural issues through correcting individual thinking errors. A person with fewer thinking errors may be a benefit to his or her community, but if that person is part of a group that faces structural concerns, then CBT may not be a sufficient response to issues related to mass incarceration. Instead, CBT's emphasis on individual responsibility actually prevents a collective response to structural inequalities.

Neo-liberal Employment Strategies for Offenders

Studies that examine the relationship between employment status and recidivism suggest, "that although obtaining employment is not associated with a significant decrease in likelihood of reincarceration, it is associated with significantly greater time [as in delay] to reincarceration." (Tripodi et al 2010:706). Consequently, it is logical for correctional and re-entry agencies to help individuals gain employment. However, this task is easier said than done. On average, incarcerated individuals have fewer job skills than non-incarcerated individuals (Travis 2005). People in prison are less likely to have completed high school than the general population—"On any given day, about one in every ten young, male, high school dropouts is in jail or juvenile detention, compared with one in 35 young, male, high school graduates" (Dillon 2009), and the unemployment

rate for the incoming prison population is roughly twice that of the regular population (Travis 2005:158).

Job training as a policy choice for federal and state correctional institutions is based on the assumption that unemployment (often as high as 50%) for ex-offenders is not due to discrimination or a lack of suitable jobs, but rather a lack of job skills (Lafer 2002) . Holzer (1996) argues that employers are more reluctant to hire ex-offenders than any other group of people. Hesitancy to hire ex-offenders is even more problematic for racial minorities. Pager (2003) found, holding everything else equal, whites with criminal records were less likely to get called back after a job interview compared to whites without criminal records—17 to 34 percent respectively. Yet, whites with criminal records were more likely than all blacks with or without criminal records to get called back after a job interview—blacks without a criminal record were called back at a rate of 14 percent and those with a criminal record, 5 percent (958). Given that roughly 40 percent of people in prison are black and roughly two-thirds of all inmates are people of color, the argument that unemployment is due to a lack of job skills remains unfounded.

Regardless, neo-liberal policymakers in the field of corrections promote an individualistic, "entrepreneurial spirit" in the form of job training (Wacquant 2009: 307). I will briefly highlight job training for ex-offenders as it exists in several forms within the correctional institution: 1) training within prison industries, 2) soft skill development, and 3) technical education (Lafer 2002; Wright 2003).

Prison industries provide opportunities for entrepreneurs to employ prisoners. In exchange for basic work skills and acceptance of low wages, business owners are able to manufacture their products cheaply inside prison walls. Products include everything

from office furniture, clothing, apparel and the printing of brochures. In theory, inmates develop marketable skills, they learn to develop a strong work ethic, gain a sense of responsibility, and possibly develop a sense of pride in their work[31]. However, some scholars suggest these outcomes are not common. According to Lafer (2002), prison industries do not have altruistic notions of 'job training,' but in fact, would rather employ people with lengthy sentences so they do not have to spend as much time re-training new workers. Likewise, insiders in the prison industry prefer people with longer sentences who have committed crimes that require higher levels of intelligence, like kidnapping and armed robbery. Consequently, in this view, job training is not intended for life on the outside, but rather productivity at the cheapest rate within the prison system (110). According to Wright (2003) the work done inside prison is comparable to work done in sweatshops overseas. Such work does not transfer well outside of prison—one would have to travel to China or Indonesia to find similar jobs (116).

The effects of total institutions prevent prisoners from developing 'soft skills' like personal initiative, critical thinking, assertiveness or team brainstorming when they are at work (Lafer 2002: 72-73; Wright 2003; Sohnen 2011). Soft skills also include skills like the ability to coordinate, persuade, negotiate, communicate and establish and maintain relationships in the workplace (Fan et al 2005:8). The development of these skills is important as research demonstrates that soft skills are a significant determinant for not only obtaining a job, but also for increased earnings (Fan et al 2005: 13). Soft skills are considered to be one of the most important factors in the obtainment of work, but any soft

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[31] State and Federal Prison Industries discuss these points. Visit the websites of the following institutions:
 (Iowa Department of Corrections 2012)
 (State of California 2012)
UNICOR (US Department of Justice 2012))

skills that existed prior to prison are diminished the longer one is institutionalized within prison (Schmid and Jones 1991; Schmitt et al 2010).

Fortunately, agencies at several levels of government recognize the need to foster soft-skill development. The Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Adult Program, a US Department of Labor initiative, recommends their grantee organizations, like Amicus, focus on soft skill development. Amicus offers a program called Employment Advantage which assists people inside and outside the prison to navigate the job interview process, teaches them how to dress appropriately, and instills proper work behaviors like punctuality and effort into its participants. In addition, two employees of Amicus developed Heads-Up Strategies, which focuses specifically on, "resume writing, interview skills and job searches.[32]" On the federal level, the National Institute of Corrections developed a curriculum to teach corrections practitioners how to assist offenders in their job search through the fostering of these skills.[33]

Soft skill development is a very useful and practical endeavor but there are additional issues to think about. For one, Moss and Tilly (1996) found that, "Many managers view black men as lacking in these soft skills" (252). Black men represent roughly 40 percent of all incarcerated individuals despite the fact that they represent roughly 13 percent of US the population[34] (Travis 2005). In other words, regardless of whether or not soft skills are developed, black ex-offenders might be discriminated against anyway. Secondly, in what ways can soft skills be learned in prison given the

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[32] (Mwarabu 2011)

[33] (US Department of Justice 2011)

[34] (US Census Bureau 2012)

negative effects of total institutions[35]? Attributes like a "strong work ethic, a positive attitude, time management skills, problem-solving skills, flexibility and the ability to learn from criticism" Lorenz 2009) are antithetical to a prison environment which requires toughness and defensiveness (Goffman 1961; Schmid and Jones 1991). Sohnen (2011) comments on this point:

> Our practices and hopes as educators and activists crash into the harsh realities of neoliberal capitalism. Indeed, in an increasingly networked and wired marketplace that depends upon technological savvy and interpersonal skills, the formerly incarcerated face daunting challenges. For while languishing in prisons and juvenile detention centers obviously means the incarcerated are not advancing their job skills, some observers have also noted how prisons teach behavior patterns almost guaranteed to cause friction in any workplace. As Paul Street has argued, "the alternatively aggressive and sullen posture that prevails behind bars is deadly in a job market where entry-level occupations increasingly demand 'soft' skills related to selling and customer service (192).

Regardless of the benefits of soft skill training for a few individuals, the effects of the total institution play a more significant role in prison when one considers the sheer numbers of people incarcerated without soft skill training (Sohnen 2011).

"Hard skills" that are cultivated through technical education are also significant pieces of the employment puzzle for ex-offenders. Trades like welding and plumbing and the ability to read, write and perform math can be important to any job search—regardless of one's criminal status. Development of these skills greatly improves an

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[35] The following chapter will discuss the effects of the total institution on an incarcerated individual in greater detail

offender's chances of getting a job outside of prison (Gordon and Weldon 2003). In general, I suggest that technical training is an important form of rehabilitation.

Job training in the form of soft or technical skill development is not a job-creating policy for ex-offenders (Lafer 2002). However, a policy which focuses on job training makes it possible for policymakers to assert that lack of employment among ex-offenders is the problem of unemployed individuals rather than a systematic one. Implicit in job training policy is the assumption that the labor market has an abundance of jobs available if people were only properly trained for them. Gordon Lafer (2002) discusses this point as it relates to the Job Training Partnership Act:

> Beginning with President Reagan, federal officials have consistently asserted that much or all the unemployment problem reflects a skills mismatch rather than a shortage of jobs. In fact, however, all available evidence points to the opposite conclusion…Over the period 1984 to 1996—throughout the height of the presumed skills shortage—the number of people in need of work exceeded the total number of job openings by an average of five to one…For the majority of participants [in the government funded Job Training Partnership Act], the program had no statistically significant effects [on employment]. For those aged sixteen to twenty-one, the program actually had negative effects, with JTPA trainees earning less than the control group (3-5).

In other words, the ideological visions of Reagan and other neo-liberal thinkers frame the national employment problem as one of laziness and individual responsibility (Lafer 2002:165). The burden of overcoming the, "cultural trope of individual responsibility," is immense for ex-offenders. Ex-offenders are considered to be the least

deserving of public-funded goods (Wacquant 2009), they are some of the least educated members of society (Travis 2005; Western 2006), on average they have less work experience than non-criminals (Travis 2005) and they are often located in hostile social locations which prevents their personal and vocational growth (Goffman 1963; Schmid and Jones 1991) Yet, their value in society can only be marginally redeemed according to adherents of neo-liberalism by their *individual* ability to obtain gainful employment. Despite the odds, many ex-offenders achieve this standard, which only reinforces the claim by neo-liberals that they were right in posing it.

The Arts and Collective Awareness

CBT and employment training are useful transitional strategies for individuals leaving prison, but art and theatre programs are examples of programming that challenge, or at the very least acknowledge, the negative effects of mass incarceration. The existence of theatre programming within correctional institutions is limited to select institutions across the country (Shailor 2011). Its inclusion in the programming repertoire of prisons is largely based on the initiative of local artists and activists, the approval of wardens, and the extent to which the program complies with the strict rules within the institution (Shailor 2011). Unlike a variety of therapy and employment programs, neither state nor federal institutions mandate theatre programs. Yet, a small number of programs have proven to be useful for some prison inmates.

The foundations for theater programming may trace its philosophical lineage back to prison movements which first developed alongside other social movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s (Hames Garcia 2004). Critical prison scholar Hames-Garcia (2004) uses the arguments of Stateville Prisoners Organization (SPO) by suggesting the

"prison movement began with "the case of the Soledad Brothers and the Attica rebellion and [continued] through the 1970s" (194). Public awareness of prison injustices was further raised by Tom Wicker (1994) in his exposé of the Attica Prison Revolt. Hames-Garcia now claims that a re-emergence of "Critical Resistance…has been growing since 1999" (194). In his examination of literature from intellectuals inside the US prison system, Hames-Garcia (2004) discusses "prison theorists [that] call for a collectivist conception of the self. This collectivist self, committed to complex solidarity, arrives at moral knowledge in the process of acting in society to bring about a freer, more just world. Thus practical action that aims to change the world (praxis) is simultaneously the cause and result of moral theory, overcoming the traditional split between theory and practice" (195). It is this form of praxis that resonates directly with the prison theatre arts practitioners discussed in this section.

Many prison theater practitioners formally state their desire to abolish "the prison industrial complex" (Hartnett 2011:5). In contrast to the position that prison is a consequence of the problems of individual prisoners, Hartnett and others claim that the negative effects of prison and social inequalities are the problem. Given this perspective, drama teachers and acting coaches use strategies that help inmates re-conceptualize who they are, where they came from and how each relates to their current situation of incarceration.

At Luther Luckett Kentucky state prison, inmates participate in productions of Shakespeare. In fact, inmates in this prison were filmed in the documentary *Shakespeare Behind Bars* (Rogerson 2005), as they were participating in *The Tempest*. This particular play explores themes of loss, regret, forgiveness, amnesty, justice, virtue over vengeance

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and responsibility. The inmates, regardless of their crimes and sentences, were able to explore a new version of 'self' through the characters they portrayed. The inmates discuss how performing Shakespearean drama not only requires a level of abstract reasoning and thought not otherwise offered behind prison walls, it also provides inmates the opportunity to take the role of another person and to develop empathy and social awareness. This is in direct contrast to the total institutions that implicitly breed selfishness and insularity (Schmid and Jones 1991; Tofteland 2011:219).

Buzz Alexander (2011) is an English Teacher at the University of Michigan and leads a theatre workshop in both men's and women's state prisons in Michigan. He brings his Eng 319 class to the prison to collaborate with prison inmates. Both students and inmates write and perform plays, do improvisation, and complete exercises which allow individuals to pursue identities that aren't confined within prison walls. As a result, prisoners and non-prisoner students involved in this programming recognize their collective interest in addressing conditions like injustice, racism and inequality. Alexander (2011) finds that:

> Participants cross the barriers of class and race to begin forging new bonds of solidarity, bonds that empower us to try to break through imposed silences…
> Among other things, the participants have been silenced in the past by alienated and overcrowded homes…ragged, rotting schools and demoralized teachers ...hunger…environmental pollution…the police car…the color of one's skin…state uniforms…of arbitrary orders…of constant boredom…of parole board denials (158).

Each of the problems quoted above by Alexander do not reflect individual shortcomings, but rather sociological conditions which estrange individuals from mainstream society. Inmates in such programs are able to address problems that not only affect them as individuals but also affect their entire communities. Role-playing allows the inmates to articulate who they are, in relation to the community that surrounds them. According to Alexander (2011),

> For these artists, practicing their craft amounts not only to resistance to the conditions of prison, but resistance to what they were given at birth: lousy health care and housing and schools; little access to employment; dangerous neighborhoods …malnutrition, prostitution; the heritage of violence. To become an artist, or an actor or a poet, to grow into articulation and originality and dignity, means resisting what has been done to them and what they have done to themselves and others (175).

Recognizing human dignity is a major point of contention for correctional policy. I contend that human dignity is central to our ability to sympathize, empathize and act in pro-social ways that emerge from our identities as members of a community. Human dignity does not fall outside sociological analysis. According to the classic argument of Mead (1962), an individual's sense of 'self' is socially constructed from relationships with others and social institutions with which they come in contact. As discussed earlier citing the work of Foucault, total institutions,[36] like prisons, create docile bodies which reinforce a self-image without agency, self-determination or human worth. Arts programming provides individuals an opportunity to create a new understanding of self in

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[36] Total institutions will be discussed in more depth Chapter IV.

connectedness to others and thus intrinsically motivates people to engage with the world around them.[37]

Hames-Garcia (2004) writes about Pancho Aguila, a prisoner and activist in the San Francisco Bay area, who expresses a desire for collective experience and dignity through his poetry.

"For Aguila, the acknowledgment of connection between people at the individual and social group levels is a precondition both for freedom and for the solidarity necessary to build a social movement for the attainment of freedom. Aguila views his poetry as intimately connected to such a movement for freedom and justice, a movement understood as the creation of social relations that uplift, rather than degrade, human dignity" (208).

Jonathan Shailor (2011) discusses social dignity as it emerged from his 'Theatre of Empowerment' program in a Wisconsin state prison. Using his own son as an example, he examines what he would want out of an incarceration model if he were to become a danger to himself or others:

I will want him contained and corrected, but I will also want him to be treated with understanding and kindness. I don't want him to become convinced of his own worthlessness, to become a prisoner of his own shame. I don't believe that he would be helped (nor would society be helped) by having him placed in a hostile environment designed primarily to punish him, in part by depriving him of normal opportunities for socialization and education…As I grow into a fuller awareness of the work that other educators are doing in our nation's prisons, I am beginning

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[37] Durkheim (1964) refers to this sense of moral solidarity as "the collective conscience."

to understand how our efforts challenge the dehumanizing stereotypes and daily humiliations of the prison-industrial complex (Shailor 2011: 229).

Support for Theatre Programs

Shailor (2011) admits there is a dearth of evidence which demonstrates rehabilitative effectiveness for arts programming in prison, but he cites Brewster (1983) who found that "arts programming at the four [California] institutions he studied resulted in a total 'social benefit' of $65,732[38] and reduced disciplinary actions" after one accounts for the reduction in extra costs associated with recidivism and behavioral issues inside of prison. Shailor (2011) also cites Moller (2003) who compared the behavior for a group of 35 inmates in a theatre program to 30 individuals from the general population of the same New York prison and found the theatre participants "had fewer infractions and spent fewer days in disciplinary confinement (19). Finally, Shailor (2011) cites a study that took place in California from 1980 to 1987 which found that "69.2% of the Arts-In-Corrections parolees retained their favorable status in contrast to the 42% level for all releases" (19). The self-selection bias of the participants for these arts programs somewhat tarnish the results, but the effect on the individuals who *did* participate in the arts programs is useful to note.

Arts programming peaked in 1977 when the, "Law Enforcement Assistance Administration and the National Endowment of the Arts worked together to support placement of artists in 54 state and federal penal facilities[39]" (Shailor 2011:20). Unfortunately the view that arts programming is important is not always shared by the

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[38] Per inmate

[39] That number is all the more significant considering the prison population was roughly 12% of what is today.

prison administrators in charge of programming[40]. For instance, despite its popularity among prison staff, college faculty and inmates, Shailor's Shakespeare project in Racine, Wisconsin, failed to be renewed for 2008-2009. He (2011) discusses the following reasons for the lack of renewal:

> The warden decided that Racine (WI) Correctional Institution's priority was now on preparing prisoners for reentry and reintegration, and this required a reallocation of staff and resources. Also, that multiple facilitators for the program in 2008-2009 posed "a security risk.'…In my appeal of the decision, I argued that I could run the program on a zero budget (I should also have noted that the program is excellent preparation for prisoners' reentry and reintegration into society) and that the three facilitators who would be joining me in the fall were highly qualified educators with a long history with the Shakespeare Project and who would receive the same volunteer training and security clearances as all other RCI volunteers. This issue in particular indicates how starkly different my perspective is from the warden's. What I saw as the most promising innovation in the program—in that it would move us away from a one-man show [Shailor as sole director] and toward a broad-based educational effort—is precisely what he saw as the greatest liability (249).

The biggest threat to neo-liberalism is not increased government expenditures. If that were the case, theater programming run by volunteers would more than likely be expanding in the prison systems. The threat theatre programming poses to neo-liberalism is the way in which theater resists the power of total institutions and collectively

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[40] Shailor (2011) also notes that California recently terminated its 33 year theatre arts program in 2010.

empowers prisoners. In fact, theatre can incite collective angst. Buzz Alexander (2011) describes a time when one of his prison productions initially got him fired:

"The audience gave us a standing ovation and plied us with excited questions about the scenes and process. We [the volunteer theater practitioners] left very high and thought the extreme shakedown on the way out simply indicated a stringent shift command on duty that night. I was stunned when I phoned the prison the next day expecting compliments and learned from Deputy Warden Foltz that we were fired. A letter from Warden Howes a few days later said our performance had bordered on inciting to riot" (24).

Perhaps the best application of the word threat is employed by Herbert Blumer (1958) in his discussion of racial prejudice. Blumer (1958) describes racial prejudice as the result of group position. He states, "To characterize one group, is by opposition, to define one's own group" (Blumer 1958:4). He continues,

"The remaining feeling essential to race prejudice is a fear or apprehension that the subordinate racial group is threatening, or will threaten, the position of the dominant group. Thus acts or suspended acts that are interpreted as an attack on the natural superiority of the dominant group, or the intrusion into the spheres of group exclusiveness, or an encroachment on their proprietary claim are crucial in arousing and fashioning race prejudice. These acts mean 'getting out of place'" (Blumer 1958:4).

Inmates who are humanized through theatre programs may threaten the second-class status they normally inhabit. As Goffman (1961) suggests in *Asylums*, the distance between inmates and staff within prisons must go unsullied for control over inmates to be

maintained. While it is largely symbolic, theater programs allow inmates to feel

something other than their subordinate position in prison and in society at large. In a

similar light, prison staff members cannot be brought down to the same level as inmates.

For instance, one warden suggested to Buzz Alexander (2011) that certain boundaries of

theater cannot be crossed: "Officers who are made fun of lose authority, which can lead

to disobedience and even assault" (25). And while differences in group position is

certainly applicable to race within the prison system, as a disproportionate number of

inmates are people of color, all inmates are somewhat affected by the stigma of their

criminal records (Alexander, M. 2011; Pager 2003). For instance, depending on the state,

many felons are disenfranchised for life (Useem and Piehl 2008). As it was discussed by

Pager (2003) and Holzer (1996) earlier, it is far more difficult for ex-convicts to get hired

for work after their release from prison than non-convicts.

Yet, not all prison wardens and staff feel personally threatened by the inclusion of

theatre programming. Curt Tofteland (2011) describes a succession of four different

wardens at Luther Luckett Correctional Complex (LLCC) in Kentucky who have

wholeheartedly embraced his Shakespeare program and discuss the positive changes in

behavior of inmates within LLCC. To ensure the longevity of the program, Tofteland

(2011) provides a long list of rules to follow when working inside a prison, two of which

include: "Align your program with the correctional institution's vision, mission and

values" and "Follow correctional rules and regulations as if you were an inmate" (229).

Collective, cultural change that is forwarded by, and that may result from, theater

and arts programming need not be considered a threat to the safety of the institution. In

fact, it is seen by some wardens to improve safety (Tofteland 2011). The real threat to

our status quo understanding of corrections emerges when we begin to consider whether incarceration is the most appropriate approach for convicted criminals.

To challenge people's perceptions of convicted criminals, various programs, including ones in Kansas, Illinois, and Pennsylvania include performances for the public in order to restore the humanity of these individuals to the public (McCabe-Juhnke 2011; Palidofsky 2011; Sepinuck 2011). Pompa's (2011) Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program engages individuals from outside the prison with people inside the prison: "By engaging in dialogue, people on both sides of prison walls can discover new ways of thinking about ourselves, our society, and the systems that keep us all imprisoned—some of us literally and for excessively long periods. If we are ever going to abolish this disturbing reality, we need to build relationships across class and race and other social barriers; we need to connect with each other through the walls, both literally and figuratively" (253).

I do not suggest that theatre and arts opportunities do not currently exist within the criminal justice system. I am suggesting that the arts are not a central concern as compared to custody, control and in general, retribution. In many ways, the lack of prisoner empowerment implicit in a custodial setting represents an extension of Marx's critique of alienation as it is experienced in the workplace (Smith and Hepburn 1979). Collectively empowering prisoners greatly threatens correctional institutions' emphasis on custody and incarceration, just as worker control over the labor process threatens capitalist control. In that sense, the total institution structure, which emphasizes individual responsibility and personal blame to the extreme, also reinforces alienation from one's creative self, from others, and from the enriching activities in which we would

otherwise participate (Smith and Hepburn 1979). As a result, inmates are unable to recognize their common interests with one another (expect for alliances with gangs).

A theatre program which calls attention to common structural inequalities among its participants is a major threat to an institution and a society that depends on a focus on personal shame and a diminished emphasis on collective action.   In sum, theatre and art programs, as they relate to alienation, offer ideological contrasts to neo-liberalism. Perhaps this is why art programs are underfunded and lack the widespread support granted to CBT and employment training programs which embody a neo-liberal view of individual responsibility for one's life situation.

Liberal Arts Education in Prison

Early in my research, I had an unexpected conversation with a member of a local, public criminal justice system in a YMCA locker room. We were discussing our backgrounds and my dissertation topic, re-entry, became the center of our conversation. Without any further explanation of my research topic other than re-entry, this agent immediately started discussing the irrelevance of 'British Lit.'

"These guys [inmates], they take courses in British Lit and it is a complete waste of time. British Lit is not going to help them get a job. They need to become brake techs. Things that will help them get jobs right out of prison. I tell them, 'you are a felon' and nobody is going to hire you with a degree in British Lit."

In his defense, I agree that British literature may not provide a fast track to success within technical fields. But his analysis comes strictly from the perspective that one's value in society derives from the job you obtain. British literature or another liberal arts course may not provide one with specific technical job skills (although it

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undoubtedly helps develops valuable reading, writing and critical thinking skills), but does that mean that it is not worthwhile for a prisoner to take such a course? Why is it important for those lucky enough to attend a liberal arts school to get a broad education and not important for people who are incarcerated in prison?

Liberal arts courses *are* available to some inmates in prisons depending on the state, the institution and the amount of funding available. In most cases, students must academically qualify before they can enroll in these courses. Many of these courses are conducted through correspondence with a local institution of higher education. Across the nation, roughly five percent of all inmates enroll in some kind of liberal arts education (US Dept. of Education 2009).

Depending on the structure of the classroom and the curriculum, a liberal arts education offers opportunities for resistance to the individualistic neo-liberal paradigm in ways that are similar to theatre and art programs. Perhaps the most well-known program and the one that most firmly addresses its emancipatory ideological leanings is the Bard Prison Initiative.

Bard College is an established liberal arts institution in New York State that provides courses to inmates inside maximum security prisons. The instruction provided to this selective group of inmates is privately funded by the Bard College foundation. According to the its website, (BPI 2012) "now enrolls nearly 200 women and men full time in a rigorous and diverse liberal arts curriculum, offering both associate and bachelor's degrees." Each year, Bard selects roughly ten percent of all inmates who apply to the school. Liberal arts professors teach advanced courses including English, Greek Philosophy, Sociology and Physics. According to a televised *60 Minutes* (Simon 2007)

feature, student-inmates spend up to six hours studying a day and engage in intellectual discourse outside of the classroom.

Karpowitz (2005) describes Bard's unique pedagogical approach as a direct response to the individualistic paradigm promoted by other programs:

BPI [teaches] in a way that differs greatly from the dominant methods of engaging with the moral agency of the punished. Unlike methods grounded in rehabilitation, corrections, and therapeutic behavioral modification, the Initiative cultivates students' capacity for and engagement in the liberal arts. Many educational institutions that cross the boundaries of the prison are based in religious or therapeutic models. They threaten to intensify, I suggest, the most problematic and dominant paradigms that underlie hegemonic approaches to the problem of moral agency and punishment. This may be the case despite and even because of their emphasis on concepts like change, transformation, and forgiveness. Their practical focus is trained on personal attention to individual behavior for the sake of its adjustment to "social norms (313).

Empirical research demonstrates a direct inverse relationship between an advanced education and recidivism (Karpowitz and Kenner 1995). Karpowitz and Kenner (1995) report that "college-in-prison programs slashed rates of re-incarceration from 60% to less than 15%" (2). At first glance, one would reason that a Bachelor's degree dramatically improves a job seeker's resume, which in turn improves the likelihood that one is more likely to find a job. While this is likely to be true, Karpowitz (2005) claims this fact does not account for the personal transformation that occurs when one pursues a liberal arts education.

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It is the details of the curriculum that account for Bard's success. Karpowitz

(2005) states that Bard's curriculum focuses on abstract concepts which complicate the

binaries between right and wrong, structures and individuals, difference and solidarity,

objectivity and subjectivity. These complications are intentional and are in direct

contrast to traditional, "common-sense" methods which focus on normative morality,

behavior modification, and industrial teaching. According to Karpowitz (2005),

> Individualistic modes of understanding crime and punishment are dangerously
>
> partial aspects of a complex truth. The public emphasis on one aspect of a moral
>
> and political question—especially its individual aspects—often functions to
>
> obscure and repress more problematic and indeed more structural aspects of the
>
> very same phenomenon. Prisons acknowledge and inscribe responsibility onto
>
> the culpable individual; colleges within prisons resonate with the acceptance of
>
> what Morris called non-moral guilt, and with kindred concepts of political
>
> responsibility (328).

It is no surprise that neo-liberal social policy limits the amount of college

education available to incarcerated individuals. Policies like No "Child Left Behind"

seek to quantify complex standards of mainstream education outcomes through

standardized tests, compartmentalize the success of individual students and teachers, and

minimize the significance of structural inequalities that exist within the US education

system (Hursh 2005). Given the shift in that direction for education as a whole, it is no

surprise that for 'less deserving' individuals, like criminals, a liberal arts education that

does not have a direct and obvious contribution to the workforce is seen as superfluous

(Page 2004).[41]

Bohrman and Murakawa (2005) critique the way in which neo-liberalism

recommends smaller government investments in education and other forms of social

welfare but calls for expanding institutions of punishment. "Welfare retrenchment and

punishment expansion represent opposite trends in state spending, but they rely on the

same ideology. This ideology holds that the liberal welfare state corrodes personal

responsibility, divorces work from reward, and lets crime go without punishment;

consequently the lenient welfare regime attracts opportunistic immigrants and cultivates

criminal values" (110). Bohrman and Murakawa (2005) argue the same points forwarded

by Karpowitz (2005): Neo-liberal programming emphasizes guilt; a liberal arts education

emphasizes collective responsibility.

Conclusion

Employment training, cognitive behavior therapy, theatre programming and

liberal arts education are just four of many prison and post-prison rehabilitative and

reform strategies for ex-offenders. This chapter did not provide an exhaustive account of

all programming choices, nor single out one as the only solution to rehabilitation. Rather,

I presented a theoretical analysis intended to help us better understand the ideological

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[41] Joshua Page (2004) eloquently describes the arguments posed by some politicians in US Congress in the early 1990s around the question of offering the Pell Grant to prisoners:

By constructing the Pell Grant case as an either/or contest between prisoners and their supporters on one side, and traditional students from working families and crime victims on the other side, the lawmakers presented a clear-cut choice to their colleagues: eliminate convicts from the grant program and help law-abiding students from working families and crime victims, or retain prisoner eligibility and hurt traditional students and offend victims. In arguing that the entire issue came down to a choice between politically honored social groups and a dishonored, stigmatized social collectivity, the lawmakers elided most discussions about the penological consequences of denying Pell Grants to the incarcerated (369)

motivations behind programming. In the process of making social policies for ex-offenders, we should ask the question, "Who really benefits from these social policies and in what ways?" I suggest that ex-offenders may benefit from individualistic social policies like cognitive behavior therapy and employment training on a personal level, but these policies fail to address the adverse effects of prison or the structural inequalities of class and race that may have significant impacts on entire communities. As a result, neo-liberalism employs reactive policies that do not prevent crime from happening in the first place.

Collective approaches like theater arts and liberal arts programming are not as pragmatic in their approaches, but where they are used, they have been successful. Interestingly, whereas CBT and employment training are largely housed inside of most prisons and are integrated neatly with the functions of the prison. Theatre and liberal arts education programs are outsourced and largely run by voluntary institutions, or the inmates have to come up with money themselves to pay for their education (Page 2004; Schwartzapfel 2010).). The discrepancy in access and available resources between collectivist versus individualist approaches alone, suggest that neo-liberal policy is dominant in the public discourse pertaining to corrections.

A related debate for the most appropriate pedagogy for blacks took place in the late 19th century between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Dubois. These two black leaders during the post-Reconstruction period argued over the most appropriate pedagogical direction for former black slaves and their descendents. Washington sought to expand technical, industrial training so that African-Americans might be adequately prepared for the workforce. His philosophy was based on the belief that political

mobilization could not be achieved without first gaining economic empowerment.

Washington's focus on economic progress was two-fold in its reasoning. Firstly, if the

majority of the black population had steady, even if menial jobs, it established a broader

financial purse to tap into during political campaigns. Secondly, Washington believed if

blacks were able to obtain jobs in less than prestigious fields, and do them well, blacks

would eventually be seen as deserving of civil rights from whites (Franklin 1973).

In contrast, Du Bois did not believe that pandering to whites in the form of cheap

labor would yield equality in the long run. According to Du Bois, the 'negro' struggle

was as symbolic as it was tangibly economic and that gaining access to menial labor

would not put an end to the prejudice and racism experienced by blacks in the US. To

ameliorate this shortcoming in Washington's plan, Du Bois' sought to provide a liberal

arts education to the "Talented Tenth" of the black population. For Du Bois, the

"Talented Tenth" represented black intellectual elites who were capable of gaining power

within academia, the arts and the broader political structure[42] (Du Bois 1903).

While it is appropriate to frame Du Bois and Washington's debate as pedagogical,

perhaps their discussion can also be viewed contemporarily as a debate about the

strategies for the *management* of a large and disenfranchised population—at least in

terms of social policy. The Tilden-Hayes compromise of 1876 effectively undermined

the Reconstruction efforts in the south; consequently, white hegemony in state, county

and city governments regained its authority pre-civil war authority (McKay 1973). Given

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[42] This description of the debate above falls short of adequately describing a complex discourse between two great intellectuals. The private correspondence between Du Bois and Washington at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century demonstrates a much more congenial bond than what is normally discussed in their more public work. It's apparent that Du Bois and Washington understood each other's viewpoint well, but they disagreed on the strategy that would prove to be most useful in garnering valuable political and social resources.

the political context of the times, it is not surprising that Washington won the hearts of white moderates and conservative blacks as compared to the radical and transcendent suggestions of DuBois. The American majority was not ready to accept blacks as full citizens, even if slavery was illegal, but they were willing to see them work.

Perhaps we are in a similar struggle today. Michelle Alexander (2011) discusses the ways in which prison is the new Jim Crow of our contemporary era in that a social underclass of minorities are no longer formally segregated by separate but equal laws, and yet segregation continues to exist in the form of prisons. To that end, implicit segregation and resulting second-class citizenship continues today as people with felonies in some states can never regain the "right" to vote. Of course, while there is a large disproportion of inmates who are of color, this second-class citizenship affects all incarcerated individuals (Travis 2005; Western 2006). In general, Karpowitz (2005), like Du Bois, questions whether the underclass of prisoners can gain empowerment and the ability to realize genuine personal and social change as long we continue to reinforce through individualistic rehabilitative techniques, the notion that prisoners are second-class citizens.

CHAPTER IV

FILLING THE VOID(S): TOTAL INSTITUTIONS, FRIENDS AND MENTORS

This chapter will go deeper into the philosophical rationale for Amicus' One-to-

One program. Like the arguments made by the collectivist practitioners in this chapter,

Amicus practitioners specifically address the negative effects of the total institution

(Goffman 1961). Unlike the collectivist perspective described in this chapter however,

Amicus' programming is far more individualistic in that it addresses the formation of the

self. Nonetheless, I discuss how Amicus may be in the process of altering its

programming to better fit into the neo-liberal paradigm.

Total institutions greatly affect incarcerated individuals' sense of self (Goffman

1961). According to Goffman (1961), "a total institution may be defined as a place of

residence and work where a large number of like-minded individuals cut off from the

wider society for an appreciable amount of time together lead an enclosed formally

administered round of life" (11). Prisons are classic examples of a total institution.

Extreme loneliness, an inability to make decisions for oneself, an inability to develop

genuine relationships with fellow inmates and an inability to keep up with societal

changes are all by-products of the prison system (Goffman 1961; Schmid and Jones

1991).

My study addresses the way in which one non-profit organization, Amicus, seeks

to remedy the negative effects of total institutions. Amicus recruits volunteers to become

simply friends with incarcerated individuals. While Amicus staff members do not

explicitly quote Erving Goffman (1959; 1961), they evoke imagery found in his writings

when they discuss their motivation for developing relationships between volunteers and

inmates. The traditional Amicus model for their One-to-One program is specifically and formally rooted in *horizontal* power relationships found in friendships. Amicus continues to facilitate these friendships, but at the request of the DoC, they are beginning to employ a new mentorship model which may bring about different results. While the terms "mentor" and "friend" are sometimes used interchangeably at Amicus, Amicus is beginning to reframe their goals as an organization to fit a more neo-liberal ideology. Entering into the Amicus programming repertoire are *mentorships*. Mentorships are vertical power relationships in which one person passes knowledge on to another. I will argue in this chapter that vertical power relationships are extensions of neo-liberal paternalism. In this chapter, I explain how the friendship model contradicts the philosophies of total institutions and how mentorships (vertical power relationships) are clear expressions of neo-liberalism[43].

The Recruitment of One-to-One Volunteers

For over forty years, Amicus has been cultivating friendships between non-offender volunteers and offenders in prison through a program called One-to-One. Amicus administrators often recall how One-to-One started with an unlikely pairing. Ted Herman, an incarcerated Jewish attorney wrote letters to an Irish-Catholic judge about conditions in prison. Within a matter of months, the unlikely duo of inmate and politician became close friends. Ted Herman recognized the impact that this friendship had on his sense of self-worth and decided to promote the program to others.

One-to-One remains the flagship program at Amicus. Currently, there are several dozen matches between people from the outside and incarcerated men and women. While

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[43] While total institutions existed prior to neo-liberal policy making, neo-liberalism's emphasis on incarceration as a policy choice has compounded the number of people who are affected by total institutions.

Amicus has developed and added programming, changed office buildings and changed its sources of funding, the One-to-One program has kept largely the same goal in mind since its inception.

Chris is the current volunteer recruitment coordinator for the One-to-One program. He recruits and matches people who have something in common, whether it be religion, race, age, hobbies or other criteria that are identified by the person in prison. He does his best to find a friend for any prisoner who requests one, no matter what their length of sentence or crime. The only limiting factor is whether the inmate is in segregation (known in prison parlance as the hole) to a degree that makes it too difficult to arrange a meeting between volunteer and inmate. In addition, he makes certain that volunteers have no interest in proselytizing religion or seeking catharsis in the relationship[44]. While it is rare, there are some people he will not allow to volunteer for the program.

The matching process is time-intensive and complicated. First of all, volunteers need to be recruited[45]. In addition, both volunteers and offenders need to be interviewed, go through training programs and secure permission to visit the prison. The time between initial recruitment and getting to the first visit can take several months. This process could be expedited with more staff members, but that would be an added

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[44] Chris avoids volunteers who are interested in becoming a friend in order to understand the psychological profile of an inmate. This is mostly likely to occur when the volunteer was either a victim or a former perpetrator of a crime.

[45] Recruitment drives take place in a number of different places including places of worship, malls, Facebook and at community events.

expense. Recently, Amicus obtained a grant to allow this and will be hiring someone to aid this process.[46]

Chris himself interviews each volunteer as well as the offenders in prison. In this interview, he asks each of them about both prohibited motivations for volunteering or requesting a friend. He does a background check to get an idea of the volunteers' professional and personal lives. Ex-offenders are able to participate as volunteers, but, a volunteer is not to have any other agenda besides developing a friendship. While it is rare, Chris has had to halt the matching process when he's discovered that an ex-offender is motivated to be a friend just to find meaning in his or her own past.

Amicus is not a religious organization, but Chris is happy to connect people who share a similar religious perspective. If a volunteer indicates they are interested in proselytizing religion to unwilling participants, this is another red flag that will halt the matching process.[47]

At the time of this writing, there were 63 unmatched male offenders waiting for a friend. It is beyond the capacity of Amicus to connect everyone with a friend. Amicus only serves prisons in the Twin Cities, Minnesota area and in that geographic area there are a limited number of male volunteers waiting to befriend a male offender. In contrast, there are only three unmatched female offenders waiting for a friend. This is both a

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[46] On a side note, the expense of the program speaks to the cost-effective dilemmas experienced by correctional institutions and departments of justice and safety. Even if friendships like the One-to-One program ultimately prove to be a cheaper alternative to other programs and make the streets safer, they still require a shift in programming costs.

[47] Volunteers are not matched with unwilling participants of any kind. Inmates find out about One-to-One through other Amicus programs and through other inmates. The self-selection bias is problematic when Amicus claims that they are positively contributing to the prevention of recidivism. It is possible these people are already less likely to recidivate than the general population. As it is discussed in the research chapter, the self-selection bias makes it difficult for Circles to demonstrate a broad based niche for the wider inmate population because it is possible they might be serving people who are already making a change. Consequently, it's difficult to measure the effect of the One-to-One program.

function of the gendered nature of volunteerism and also the small number of women who are incarcerated in Minnesota. These women will be matched with someone as soon as Chris has time to conduct the appropriate interviews. There are more women volunteers and there are fewer women in prison and fewer women asking for friends.

Once someone is chosen to become a friend, they are required to attend a three-hour training session. They receive and discuss the One-to-One manual and they have an opportunity to meet an offender and a volunteer who have participated in the program. According to Chris, that's the most important seller of the program: "People want to meet and talk and glean and ask questions from people who have actually participated. It's the easiest part my training, and it's the most engaging part of the training, because it really brings it home for those who have a slight interest and if they can see that and bear witness to that kind of testimony it really helps."

One-to-One and the Total Institution

The total institution as it is manifested in prisons is well documented, specifically by Goffman (1961). Regardless of the perks or punishments within any particular prison setting, some things are endemic within a total institution. Specific issues that I will address here include: (1) complete isolation from the outside, (2) an inability to make decisions for oneself, (3) alienation from fellow inmates and correctional staff and one's 'self' according to the structures of the total institution, and (4) the loss of the culture of the outside world. As a result of time spent in a total institution, individuals are created who are emotionally guarded, self-serving, focused on short-term fixes, and disempowered by age and by intellect. They are disempowered to make any significant decisions about their personal appearance, much less their long-term personal fate.

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Offenders develop a criminal self-identity which causes them to distrust the criminal justice system as well as mainstream society. In this section, I will discuss the ways in which Amicus strives to counter these anti-social outcomes of the total institution.[48] Finally, while One-to-One friendships are appreciated by staff within correctional facilities there is a new emphasis on mentorships. I conclude by discussing the implications of that new emphasis.

Isolation

The first and most obvious feature of a total institution is the isolation of the incarcerated individual from the outside world. "Their encompassing or total character is symbolized by the barrier to social intercourse with the outside and to departure that is often built right into the physical plant, such as locked, doors, high walls, barbed wire, cliffs, water, forests, or moors" (Goffman 1961:4). This is recognized by Amicus and is discussed on their webpage:

> Prison is all about walls. Most obviously, there's the real, physical wall. There's also a psychological wall, the wall that makes inmates "the other," "them," dehumanized and cut off from the community. Being trapped behind that kind of wall makes it very difficult for offenders to succeed at changing their thinking and building a new, productive life when they get out. The Amicus One-to-One program is about tearing down that wall by giving inmates the opportunity to form positive relationships with people from the community. These relationships give inmates a supportive ear to talk to, an example of how to live a productive life and help to reduce the inmates' feelings of isolation from the community.

Despite the fact that Goffman and many other sociologists (Rieger 1971; Johnson 1976; Richards 1978; Flanagan 1980; Toch 1982; Johnson and Walker 1983; Wool and Dooley 1987; Adams 1992) have long discussed the effects of loneliness on incarcerated

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[48] Because my project is a broad organizational analysis I do not have empirical data for the interactions between agents of Amicus and offenders. While I recognize this limitation, Amicus has an abundance of testimonials, which at the very least, accurately depicts their philosophical perspectives and organizational mission of their programming.

individuals, loneliness is not a primary concern for prison administrators. Prison

systems, like the California state system (California Department of Corrections 2011) for

instance, acknowledge the positive role of visitation for inmates, but it is the

responsibility of the inmate or the inmate's friends and family to meet that need. The

Minnesota DoC (2011) does acknowledge these visits have a positive effect on the

behaviors of people in prison, and in general, visitation and social supports significantly

help prevent recidivism. "Positive associations with the outside world can lead to reduced

group recidivism rates when released, in part because the relationships they form can help

them look forward to their post-release lives, rather than focusing on their present

punishment" (2) While most prisons have visitation hours and provide the necessary staff

members to make visitation possible, prisons are not responsible for finding people

willing to meet with inmates. Again, it is up to private individuals, and in the case of

Minnesota, an organization like Amicus, to make visitation possible.

Prisons are intended to separate individuals from the rest of society, not create

positive social environments (Goffman 1961). Non-profit organizations like Amicus try

to make human connections between incarcerated individuals and community members.

According to Louise, the president of Amicus, the organization was founded on this

notion somewhat incidentally:

> Well, I think that this gets into some of the historical roots of Amicus in the very
> first visit between Judge Riley and Ted Herman. Ted had lost all of his family, his
> friends, his contacts and that's all we really have in the long run when we come
> right down to it, you know. At the end of our lives what we crave are the human
> connections and when people go to prison they suffer a social debt. And that's
> what they're experiencing rather than, "Oh, my god, I'll never be able to get a job
> again." You know, that's a piece of it, because that's what gives your life
> meaning too. But I think it's what we crave in life as a human—a human
> connection. And when you feel like you're cut off from all meaningful human
> connection, the people that you have to connect to are not people that you feel

safe sharing your life with, then your self-worth suffers and you feel like you don't want to make an effort.

The need for human connection described by Louise resonates with sociological literature, which examines the ways in which one's sense of self needs affirmation of others.   More specifically, one's self is a product of the social environment rather than innate personality characteristics. Mead claims that the social self is the product of an on-going interpretive experience between an individual and his or her given social environment (Mead 1962). Cooley (1902) describes the way in which we understand ourselves through a looking glass, the view of which is provided through the interactions we have with other people. The reactions of others to our person and to our actions, continuously remind us who we are and who we should be. What emerges from our interactions are not only behavioral characteristics, but a dynamic and distinct personal identity. If we are cut off from the rest of society, or the picture of who we are is painted by somewhat hostile institutions and individuals, then our sense of self is distorted.

Goffman (1961) adds to this discussion: "The self, then, can be seen as something that resides in the arrangements prevailing in a social system for its members. The self in this sense is not a property of the person to whom it is attributed, but dwells rather in the pattern of social control that is exerted in connection with the person by himself and those around him. This special kind of institutional arrangement does not so much support the self, as constitute it" (154). Wright (1992) follows up with a more contemporary explanation of the way the self is defined through social interaction, "One's identity, like other aspects of the self, is clearly a social product. It develops largely out of the responses one's actions elicit from significant others or, more precisely, the

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symbolic meaning of her/his own acts as they are reflected back in others' responses. The person literally comes to define her/himself in the way (s)he is treated by others" (42).

Schmid and Jones (1991) discuss the ways in which inmates undergo complex identity changes the longer they live in prison. They contend that inmates "do not possess 'criminal identities' until after they spend some time in prison (326). A 'criminal identity,' as defined by these scholars, does not result from a feeling of guilt, rather it is the result of the interactions between other inmates and prison guards. As the result of initiation rituals of the total institution, inmates are officially designated as second-class citizens (Goffman 1961).

Inmates must also anticipate the ways in which they may interact with other inmates. Entering prison, inmates fear "assault, rape and death. They are also concerned about their identities, fearing that—if they survive prison at all—they are in danger of changing in prison, either through the intentional efforts of the rehabilitation personnel or through the unavoidable hardening effects of the prison environment" (Schmid and Jones 1991:327). As Russ points out, the prison environment can make it difficult to maintain the positive sense of self that one has developed over the course of one's life,

> You've always got the threat of any one of these people taking advantage of you. In some facilities they double bunk where there's overcrowding. Now that adds a whole other layer of where you're sharing a very small space with someone who may be physically or mentally stronger than you and may want to take advantage of that. I think for most of the offenders inside, the one thing they've learned in there is that they can't share what's on their heart with the folks that are in there because it becomes a joke before the lunch so they keep everything inside.

Loneliness and isolation can occur even when surrounded by other people (Zamble 1992). This finding has a home in other classic sociological works. Emile Durkheim (1951) explained the significance of loneliness using the term egoism. To

explain egoism, Durkheim discussed the ways in which suicide trends could be explained sociologically by examining the degrees to which people experience social integration. In his study of religious groups in France over a century ago, Durkheim found that Protestants—members of a religious group with fewer community bonds than Catholicism and Judaism in the 19th century—were more likely to commit suicide. Durkheim suggests that one's mental health and sense of purpose in life is partially dependent on the quality of relationships around us. That argument suggests that even if we think highly of ourselves, our reason for living is largely social. It is well-documented by psychologists and sociologists that human beings need social experiences and we live longer when we have good friends (Sias and Bartoo 2007). The World Health Organization cites studies that find, "social isolation and exclusion are associated with increased rates of premature death and poorer chances of survival after a heart attack. People who get less social and emotional support from others are more likely to experience less well-being, more depression, a greater risk of pregnancy complications and higher levels of disability from chronic diseases. In addition, *bad* close relationships can lead to poor mental and physical health" (WHO 2003:22). In other words, inmates are prime candidates for poor health and, in fact each of the above health concerns significantly affects the ability to reintegrate into society.

The question which arises for this study is to what extent does isolation and social experience in relation to the prison setting have anything to do with recidivism? From a sociological perspective, I contend that isolation manifests a malnourished sense of self which leaves the ex-offender unprepared for life on the outside of prison.

Definition of Self and Corrections Policy

The concept of self is often discussed in terms of self-esteem. Contemporary criminal justice scholars like Latessa and Smith (2011) argue that self-esteem is unrelated to whether or not convicts are likely to commit crime. For instance, a person might feel very good about oneself, but might recidivate due to behavioral issues or because of inadequate housing and poor employment opportunities. According to Latessa and Smith (2011), there is no evidence that programs that 'foster self regard' are helpful.

Depending on how you define self-esteem, Latessa and Smith's (2011) argument is widely supported. But not everyone agrees. Neil Smelser (1989), teamed up with the state of California in the late 1980's and early 1990's to promote self-esteem policies for school children (1989). He and other contributors to his text, made the argument that young people with lower self-esteem were more likely to pursue destructive behaviors like underage drinking and unprotected sex. Those with high self-esteem were more likely to fully participate in positive behaviors, like attending school and extra-curricular activities. Unfortunately, this logic was more of an assumption than supported by empirical evidence. Since this report was issued, scholars have refuted the extent to which self-esteem is correlated with pro-social behavior (Crocker 2002).

According to Crocker (2002), self-esteem is one of many different personality characteristics that might contribute to a variety of pro-social or deviant behaviors. The ways in which self-esteem could affect behavioral tendencies is dependent upon individual personality characteristics, gender and age as well as the complex interactions between family members and cultural dynamics. According to Crocker (2002), the most recent scholarship notes that in 'high-achieving' families, successful and committed

young people may actually be driven to succeed due to their *low* self-esteem. For example, young people may not consider themselves 'good enough' unless they prove their self-worth to others. In addition, low self-esteem might lead to high degrees of conformity, in which people might self-consciously live strictly according to the laws of society in order to avoid ridicule. On the other hand, high self-esteem for some people results in a certain degree of complacency. People might be very happy with themselves to the extent they do not need to follow the rules of society.[49] Or, one's self-esteem is high as it results from successfully pursuing what is traditionally assumed to be anti-social behavior. In sum, self-esteem, as it is defined in the traditional sense is an insufficient explanation for the reasons people engage in deviant or pro-social behavior (Crocker 2002).[50]

Nonetheless, I contend that one's sense of self remains an important variable in social policy decisions but that we should reevaluate the notion of self and self-esteem. From a policy perspective, instead of pursuing ways to help people *like* themselves more, it would be more impactful to help them develop a new understanding of self. Wright (1992) explains his interpretation of self as an important variable for motivation, "In addition to developing a conception of self as an identifiable entity, the individual comes to ascribe to the self a variety of attributes that, taken together, comprise her/his conception of what the self is like, i.e., her/his "identity." The individual's expression and maintenance of the more important of these self attributes usually has implications for the worth and well-being of the self as a whole" (18). Under this premise, one's identity has

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[49] I am not suggesting that high self-esteem is not a worthwhile endeavor. I am suggesting that we cannot assume that we can predict behaviors across a population according to self-esteem.

[50] These examples are not deterministic claims about self-esteem, but they are empirically sound examples, which defy the notion that we can make causal statements between self-esteem and pro-social behavior.

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major implications for certain behaviors. According to Wright (1992), people behave in ways that will preserve their positive sense of self. As it relates to self-esteem, a person might reinforce their belief that they are very good at stealing cars. On the other hand, if a person discovers through positive relationships, that their self includes a pro-social trait like honesty, they will continue to behave in a way that preserves that piece of their identity. Consequently, while self-esteem is the popular terminology for this emphasis, it is important to focus on clarifying identity as a motivating behavior.

Friendship research describes the ways in which an internal sense of self is developed through interactions with others who mirror a favorable self-identity (Wright 1984). This is all the more significant when one examines the types of relationships implicit in a total institution. According to sociologists, spending time with someone, with no therapeutic intention in mind, can reconfigure who we think we might be and our reasons for living (Karpowitz 2005; Shailor 2011). Visitation from a friend alters a sense of self that is not necessarily about self-esteem. Self-worth *could* be measured by how much people 'like' themselves, but it could also be measured by the way one understands their own identity. Wright (1992) formally explains five behavioral tendencies that contribute to the preservation of identity:

> The individual will behave in ways that 1) maintain and, if necessary, reaffirm her/his sense of individuality, 2) affirm or reaffirm her/his important self-attributes, 3) lead to the most positive assessments of self in situations that either encourage or compel self-evaluation, 4) promote changes in self-attributes in the direction of growth and positive elaboration, and 5) avoid or neutralize situations or events that threaten the worth or well-being of the self. This set of self-referent motives

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constitutes the linkage between the individual's conception of self and other aspects of her/his experience and behavior, including her/his personal relationships (18).

In other words, while self-esteem may not be significant for pro-social behavior, one's identity and sense of self is a very important determinant for expressing certain behaviors. And as Wright (1992) explains above, fostering one's identity is dependent upon the environment surrounding the individual. Individuals seek to affirm a sense of self through their interactions with others. Russ, the community engagement director for Amicus, provides a simple but profound example to describe the significant impact on one's personal aesthetic that emerges from face-to-face interaction with an Amicus friend:

> To be able to mirror an [Amicus friend] that is what [we do]. They might look at me and say, "I like the haircut, maybe I should try that. Maybe I should start shaving again." Whether or not – I'm not saying the picture that you and I set right here is the perfect picture but it gives them something to work on, to be able to focus on. A friend is a rich thing. I mean, what would you do if you didn't have a friend?

Total Institutions and Identity Formation

Rewarding and enriching friendships do exist in a prison setting, but the quality and types of those relationships vary. Many of the friendships formed in prison support criminal activity inside and outside of prison. According to Pritikin (2009), there is sufficient evidence to suggest, "that offenders learn from older or more experienced inmates how to commit crimes and avoid detection more effectively" (1054). "Studies have shown that placing low-risk offenders together with high-risk offenders actually increases the risk of failure for the former, even if they are placed together in rehabilitation programs—so the bad eggs seem to have more of an influence on the good eggs than vice versa" (Pritikin 2009: 1055). Russ comments on this below:

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When a friendship develops, in order for there to be a real friendship, a trust develops. And once there's trust, then your friend is more apt to try new behaviors. For a lot of folks in our state correctional facilities, many of them have had friends or people that they hang out with that maybe weren't really friends but were – I don't know what we call them, 'business associates', people that were off-track themselves -- and so it promoted the behavior that they were exhibiting that got them into prison. And what we hope, and our model is, to take people that are doing well in life, or that are at least law abiding and caring, empathetic people, and match them up with folks who may have never had a friend like that, who may model what living on the other side of things would look like[51]. It's not that these people in the facility aren't smart; for the most part they're very intelligent; it's just that they were taught the wrong things and now they're in "Criminal University," "Criminal College" and so to pull them out of that and get their skills on track, I will find them a friend.

In general, total institutions, which focus on custody and control, implicitly create a mirror image of their inmates, among other things, as inhuman, asocial and irreconcilably bad (Goffman 1961). Guards reinforce this image, as they are required for their own safety, to assume an unsympathetic, authority-figure role (Goffman 1961, Zimbardo 1972). Additionally, in order to cope with the prison experience, inmates must create a new, hypermasculine self, in order to protect themselves from danger (Schmid and Jones 1991). One of the inmates in Schmid and Jones' study testified that, "If you don't learn to be tough, you will definitely pay for it. This toughness is demonstrated through a mean look, tough language or an extremely big build" (330). Jackson Katz (1999), a prominent masculinity scholar and activist calls such impression management 'Tough Guise.' This guise is used to shield one's sense of vulnerability. In the place of vulnerability, is a defensive aggressiveness.

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[51] This point is supported by Bales and Mears (2008) as it directly relates to prison visitation. Interestingly enough, they contend that visitation can be effective depending on who is visiting them. Obviously, peers that were intimately involved in criminal behavior are not recommended. Family visitation is perhaps the most complicated. Depending on the number of variables including race, age and marital status, family visitors can dramatically increase the anxiety of an inmate. Visiting with children can intensify feelings of loneliness, shame and depression. While this research may seem to counter the argument I'm making here, I contend that a new friendship is experienced much differently.

Unfortunately, if one is constantly on the front stage, (Goffman 1959) acting

tough and performing aggressive behaviors, it is more difficult to develop authentic

relationships with others in prison. As Schmid and Jones (1991) state, "While he is in

confinement, an inmate's decision to suspend his [original] identity leaves him with little

or no basis for interaction" (330). Having an outside friend allows an individual to

maintain one's 'dualistic self.' In this case, the 'dualistic self' represents one's original

pre-prison identity and the one acquired in prison. In addition, a friend from the outside

allows for a person to not only maintain one's previous identity, but also to develop a

new positive one. In the following excerpt, Russ explains the ways in which an Amicus

friend is significantly different than the other inmates in prison:

> [Inmates] may have things that [they] – dreams that if [they] shared in there,
> somebody would cut them down in a minute and tell [them] that, "You're
> incapable." Where now you've got an [Amicus friend] that may know somebody
> that may have some social currency and are able to reach this person or that
> person to help kick start your dream. The possibilities are endless. When they
> get this opportunity to have this person who is coming from the outside who has
> said, "I'm not going to run and shoot my mouth off about what you say," there
> becomes a sharing of what's going on, what's on each one's heart. For a lot of
> our volunteers, they feel like the friend that they get inside, the friendship is
> deeper than a lot of the friendships that they have with the people they come up
> with, the people they hang out with, because they have this sharing, this, "I can
> tell you about some of the sensitive areas about me because I trust you won't run
> and tell it and I'm not going to run with your secrets."

Furthermore, Russ explains the way in which a friend offers a 'breather' for the

impression management an inmate must keep up inside of prison:

> They keep it in and, you know, you got to consider the place where they're at.
> You've got all these people with these negative thoughts and it's not like any
> other community. You know, people think that when people get out, their life
> will start again. Their life hasn't stopped. They're having victories and
> accomplishments, failures and problems, just like everybody is outside but that
> community is made up of – obviously, there's probably a much heavier
> concentration of bad behavior and it's all being monitored by sort of a police

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state. So the only time that you *really* get a chance to take a breather is when this friend comes and you can share what you've been thinking about.

If inmates do not get a 'breather' to be something other than their front-stage prison identity, according to Schmid and Jones (1991) their violent and hypermasculine 'self' can become permanent. As was discussed in the previous chapter, anti-social behaviors are antithetical to the social skills required in both personal and vocational lives outside of prison (Schmitt et al 2011; Sohnen 2011). In this sense, the prison prepares individuals to be ineffective and unsympathetic communicators. According to research which describes the lack of human connection inmates feel in prison (Adams 1992) most inmates would prefer not to lose their communication skills. For instance, as Wright (1992) discussed earlier, if possible, individuals will, "seek to avoid or neutralize situations or events that threaten the worth or well-being of the self" (18).   The ability to avoid situations that threaten one's pro-social, genuine self is significantly hampered within the confines of a total institution. A friend on the outside allows for the possibility of creating a sense of self not otherwise reinforced within the prison setting.

The need for a healthy sense of self is widely supported by re-entry researchers. Petersilia (2003) cites research which contrasts 'persisters' from 'desisters.' Persisters are individuals who continued to commit crime, not because they liked it, but because they saw no alternative. They saw their past through 'condemnation scripts.' Desisters on the other hand, 'employed redemption scripts,' to transform their deviant histories into the present good…At some point, due to the help of some outside force, often someone who believed in them, they were able to turn their lives around" (208). Petersila (2003) cites Maruna's (2001) work which states, "Reformed offenders are constantly looking for reinforcement from others that they have changed. They use this information in their

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self-narratives to describe a change in their identities." Maruna states, "Desistance is only possible when ex-offenders develop a coherent pro-social identity for themselves" (208). To that end, experts like Petersilia (2003), Travis (2005), Wexler (2001) and Maruna (2001) recommend public ceremonies by justice and correctional entities, which reinforce the establishment of a reformed self.

According to Amicus, a new sense of self as a result of visitation, changes the behavior of inmates for the better. Unlike most rehabilitation services, these behavior changes are not necessarily intended to affect life on the outside. The length of one's sentence in prison does not determine whether someone will be matched for a friend. According to several Amicus staff members, the primary goal is to create a connection between a volunteer and offender. Yet, according to Louise, there are specific outcomes witnessed by prison staff:

> I think we can claim success with longer-term inmates. If they are spending the rest of their lives in prison, how are they using their time in there? Are they doing something with it that is productive or are they still feeling desperate and lonely and unhappy and miserable? It would be pretty amazing if people didn't feel that a lot of time, if they're doing a long sentence, but it's possible for people to move beyond that as their predominant feeling throughout their sentence. So, you know, wardens and other staff in prisons, they've noticed that after a prisoner starts getting visits from a volunteer, their demeanor changes, the way they carry themselves, the way they groom themselves, the way they spend their time.

Amicus staff members routinely point to these specific behavior changes that take place in prison due to the type of friendships that they have arranged with inmates as evidence for their success. While, this is not a specific outcome that they demand from the friendship, it is believed to be a positive, latent[52] function of a friendship.

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[52] Amicus uses behavior records to demonstrate their usefulness as an agency when they apply for grants.

Acculturation

One of the most powerful scenes in the 1994 film *Shawshank Redemption* (Darabont and King 1994) based on a novel by Stephen King, occurs when an elderly inmate named Brooks is released from prison after several decades. Inside prison, Brooks had a high status as the prison librarian and mentor to many of the younger inmates. Knowing he would lose his high status in exchange for that of a lowly ex-convict on the outside, Brooks attempted to sabotage his release date by holding a knife to one of his fellow inmates. He was eventually talked down from this threatening posture and was released into society. After his release, Brooks struggled to adjust to such things as car traffic and his employment as a bagger at a grocery store. His inner monologue is powerful:

> "I can't believe how fast life moves on the outside. I saw an automobile once when I was a kid. Now they're everywhere. The world went and got itself in a big damn hurry…I got a job, bagging groceries at the Foodway. It's hard work, I try to keep up but my hands hurt most of the time. I don't think the store manager likes me very much…I have trouble sleeping at night; I have bad dreams like I'm falling. I wake up scared. Sometimes it takes me awhile to remember where I am. Maybe I should get me a gun and can rob the Foodway so they'd send me home. I could shoot the manager while I was at it. Sort of like a bonus. I don't like here, I'm tired of being afraid all the time. I've decided not to stay. I doubt they'll kick up any fuss, not for an old crook like me."

Brooks was not prepared for the outside world because he was not exposed to it in any way. Those who are never incarcerated, take for granted our ability to keep up with the subtle but profound changes that happen over time. According to Amicus, a friend can bring the outside world into the prison. Properly acculturating people to the outside is a significant issue to be addressed by correctional social policy. Russ describes the testimonies from an individual who left prison:

I've heard guys say that while they're in there it's like being on a country road doing ten miles an hour and then, when you step out of there all of a sudden, you're on the freeway doing a hundred miles an hour. What that friend can do is reach over and steady the wheel. So when I talk with folks that are coming out, it's like they're coming out kind of where they went in, so I think having this friend kind of keeps you abreast of, 'There's a new Target Field over here, this has changed, that's changed, this is what they're talking about, this is how they're wearing their pants.' Even modeling the clothes, what the clothes look like out there. Inside everything – the colors are muted, you don't have music just going on like you hear as you go in the elevator or as you move through the city, you don't smell perfume or see any of the things; all the things that we sort of take for granted: the colors, the smells, the sounds. So when a person comes out, they can be overwhelmed with that. Just climbing on the bus and trying to get down here. As one guy said to me when he came, he just got out and came down here, that he felt that when he got on the bus and other people got on, everybody sat next to somebody but him, and it looked like everybody was looking at him—he was supersensitive to the stimuli that's going on and it takes time to kind of settle things down.

Long stints in prison result in anxiety-ridden exits. While exciting and stimulating for some, it also presents challenges for unprepared inmates. In Russ' description above, sensory deprivation takes a toll on inmates and the acclimation process to the outside world can be a challenging endeavor to overcome. Imagine for instance, the experience of a job interview. In addition to the nerves associated with a felony status, a lack of education and more often than not, being a person of color, imagine feeling completely overwhelmed by your own ignorance for the appropriate clothing and hairstyles to wear and the topics of conversation to pursue. Cultural lag is all the more powerful when it comes to using devices like cell phones, computers and perhaps new transit systems (Ogburn 1966).

Self-Determination

According to Goffman (1961) "On the outside, for example, the inmate probably could unthinkingly decide how he wanted his coffee, whether to light a cigarette, or when

to talk; on the inside, such rights may become problematic" (45). Russ, the community engagement director for Amicus continues this notion:

> I haven't lived in there. From the time I go in there I notice, and you know-- if you're living in a place where the guards are always there--you do what you're told. You don't get creative. You're told when you can get up, get out of your cell, where you can move, when you can eat, when it's time for you to go to a restroom, when it's time for you to take a shower.

The primary goal of a prison system is to control a large number of convicted criminals. Due to the guard-to-inmate ratio, and the need to keep a safe institution, much of the inmate's life is decided for him or her. From the perspective of 'corrections,' this makes the most logical sense (Perrow 1986). Inmate autonomy is inversely related to the control the prison has over inmates (Goffman 1961). However, according to Adams (1992) institutionalizing someone to the extent they cannot think for themselves runs completely counter to the expectations for developing responsible behavior that we expect from individuals when they leave prison. Adams (1992) states, "a severe loss of autonomy, as brought by institutional rules that limit choice in nearly every aspect of an inmate's life, including the most trivial matters, can generate feelings of helplessness and dependency that are inconsistent with the inmate's status of adult" (283).

The inability to pursue autonomous activity negatively affects one's sense of personal responsibility. As Bandura (1994) claims, "Any factor that influences choice behavior can profoundly affect the direction of personal development. This is because the social influences operating in selected environments continue to promote certain competencies, values, and interests long after the efficacy decisional determinant has rendered its inaugurating effect." This last sentence is intended to describe the social influences that affect a person, but can be applied directly to the role of the total

institution in the lives of individuals. The prisonization[53] process (Clemmer 1940)

promotes certain competencies, values, and interests that are focused on the success of

the inmate residing within a prison system. In other words, inmates take with them any

bad habits that they developed inside of prison (Sapsford 1978; Adams 1992).

These habits are not necessarily 'asocial' in nature from the perspective of a

prison warden. In fact, according to Goffman (1961) perhaps the least prepared inmate

for life outside of prison is the ideal inmate inside. The fictional account from

Shawshank Redemption in the preceding section exemplifies the realities discussed by

empirical research. Brooks, an agreeable and docile inmate, assimilated so well to the

prison culture that he was unable to adjust to life on the outside.

In contrast to relationships within the total institution, a friendship from the

outside allows for self-determining capacities simply by giving these two individuals the

chance to make a choice about the nature of their relationship. According to Russ,

> We have our lists of boundaries and rules and regulations. But as you might
> expect, once these people meet and they build a relationship or a friendship that's
> uniquely theirs.

For people outside prison, developing a 'unique' relationship between any two

people is a decision that we take for granted. Non-incarcerated individuals can choose

with whom they develop friendships and they can also choose with whom they do not

develop relationships. That is not the experience of inmates. They do not get to choose

their fellow inmates and they do not get to choose the correctional officers or the wardens

who oversee their every action. As was discussed earlier, the friendship facilitated by

Amicus allows inmates to take initiative for their future in terms of future planning. At

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[53] One's social adaption to prison life

the same time, true to a friendship, these individuals can also talk about sports or family without violating expectations of the relationship.

Implicit in a friendship, in comparison to a relationship with a parole or correctional officer, is a mutually agreed upon sense of purpose. The ability to make a decision with someone else about the one's future life path is subtle but significant. Amicus does not specifically state as an agency that they are responsible for improving self-determining capabilities of inmates, but their One-to-One program gives inmates a rare opportunity, even if just once a month, to decide for themselves what they might want from their lives.

Implicit in this discussion about self-determining capacities is the nature of the relationship between an Amicus friend and the inmate with whom the friend is paired. Amicus is adamant that a friendship is a horizontal relationship between two individuals. Louise, the president of Amicus is explicit about that point below:

> I think what makes Amicus unique is that – and are, you know, in the combination with our relationship-based programming, we believe that the answers are inside of the individual, that they can probably figure out their path best, better than we can figure out a path for them, but they need companions along the way to support and encourage them, that we can be adequate companions for part of that journey but probably it's important for them to get connected with the community and to find other companions.

Choices involved in friendships allow for autonomy of which individuals are stripped within the prison setting. In addition, Amicus friendships are not based on 'fixing' anyone, but rather are based on structuring opportunities for individuals to make decisions about who they are and what they hope to do in the future.

Significance of Friendships

There is some policy momentum within corrections to provide mentors to willing inmates. I have no interest in criticizing any particular mentorship program that has been successful for inmates, but I do contend it is worthwhile to compare the role of a friend in comparison to a mentor. I will start this section by examining general definitions for friendship, comparing that definition with the definitions of Amicus staff and then I will discuss the implicit power relationship within a mentorship.

One of the leading friendship scholars is Paul H. Wright (1992). He explains the significance of a friendship in the following way:

A strong personal relationship provides one way, perhaps the most important way, in which a person may find affirmation for her/his sense of individuality. In addition to this basic asset, individuals may find personal relationships rewarding because their partners provide one or more of the following benefits or "relationship values:" self-affirmation value, ego support value, stimulation value, security value, and utility value (18).

These claims by Wright (1992) are addressed in previous segments within this chapter. The main point to reiterate here is that our sense of self as a motivating tool, is dependent on enriching relationships that remind us of who we are and who we want to be. And, there are specific qualities within a friendship that make these things possible.

According to Chris, the volunteer coordinator at Amicus, an Amicus friend represents a fresh start when it comes to forming a new sense of self. This is significant when we recall the role of unhealthy relationships that exist between other inmates, and

previous friends and relatives. Chris describes the way in which one of his inmate clients described the significance of a new friendship:

> A friendship is a trust between two people and it relates to a companionship, a mutual companionship, I would say. I interviewed a woman (inmate) a couple weeks ago and she said, 'I'm looking for a relationship that needs no mending.' She said, "All my other relationships, not that they're faulty, but there's a history and there are things that need to be mended and there's work that needs to be done on that. But this is something that is brand new and it's a level playing field and it has no history." And she was intrigued by that and that was her interest. That doesn't define friendship but it defines kind of what the mission of this One-to-One program is. And I've never heard an inmate certainly talk about it in that way, that it is something that's brand new, that needs no work from the get-go. It's evolving; it's conceived in that first meeting.

A friendship is significantly different than a relationship designed for specific outcomes. Within a neo-liberal political environment, programs that aspire for specific outcomes are more likely to receive grant money. Consequently, as an agency, while Amicus finds itself engaging in work that might be successful, the outcomes are potentially diverse in scope and open-ended. Chris describes what he expects from the friendship created by their organization:

> So there's a certain level of trust in a friendship, there [are] expectations but not concrete expectations in that there's not stated expectations. In other words, you're not coming into this relationship saying, "This is what we hope to gain from it." There's none of that. There aren't expectations in terms of a mentorship where they say: 'Well, three days a week I want you four hours a day looking for a job or we need to meet twice a week at this time and you need to be there.' There's none of that. There's no weight on either participant's shoulders in that sense.

A friendship is not only non-binding for the inmate, it allows the volunteer friend to be relaxed, and be oneself. It is possible that this friend from the outside might be the only outlet through which an inmate gets to interact with someone who is not playing the role of 'guard' or 'inmate.' Once these individuals are able to be themselves, more

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genuine change is possible. According to Louise, this point can be difficult for a

volunteer to understand:

> And that's why when we talk to our volunteers about their role we tell them, "It's not your job to make sure that they don't recidivate. That's not your job. That's their job to make sure they don't recidivate, not yours. All you do is – it's very hard for volunteers to wrap their mind around that if they are sort of goal-oriented people because it can be counter-productive to go in saying with the attitude, "I'm here to make sure they don't recidivate. What do they need to do so I can teach them that?" And then you get into the mentoring role and they didn't necessarily want a mentor, they wanted a friend. So it's a hard one.

The roles of volunteers described above speak to the somewhat radical nature of a

friendship. While having concrete goals would suggest something specific a volunteer

could do for the inmate, Amicus believes the friendship approach, which avoids the

goals, proves to be both more effective and more empowering for both the volunteer and

inmate. According to Russ,

> I can be a much better friend than a mentor and probably get you the same information that you were looking for. And [as a volunteer] I'm not threatened whether: "Am I telling you right?" or "I'm just making a suggestion, have you thought about trying it this way?" In a friendship, you may make suggestions [about life choices]. Then if this person doesn't take your suggestions, [you] don't feel like he's not doing what [you] told him. I think it's much more open-ended.

Regarding the decision-making that occurs between the friends, Louise, makes a

similar point:

> It's mutual, absolutely mutual and that's what we want. I mean, in the One-to-One program, and we've always said, in that program it is not about one-upmanship where the volunteer is better than the inmate.

The ability to make choices about the nature of the relationship does not

necessarily mean there is absolute freedom in the relationship. While a mentor or

supervisory agent is accountable for the success of his or her clients, a friend holds a

different kind of accountability. Accountability, as it is described by Amicus staff,

emerges from the nature of genuine friendships. From the perspective of Amicus, a friend would have expectations for the relationship, but only after trust has developed, which according to Amicus staff generally takes a minimum of six months. For instance, according to Russ, a friend might ask, "Are you saving money?" and "Have you been behaving?" A volunteer might even tell their incarcerated friend, "You need to get job training" or "You need to contact your family." According to Russ and Louise, these questions and statements will eventually arise if a real friendship is being developed, but they are to emerge organically, not out of some specific requirement. Louise points out, "If the volunteer and offender are still talking about the local baseball team after several months, it might mean that this relationship isn't going anywhere." But real friendships, according to Amicus, will ultimately reach beyond superficial topics and will seek out measures of accountability. A Louise describes,

> I don't think this accountability thing is any different in a relationship that two friends who are old college buddies and just really good friends or people who meet in life and become really good friends. There's always that accountability and support going on. If I started behaving in a way that I knew was not true to my values and I told my friend about stuff I was doing I would definitely expect feedback from her. And if I didn't get it, I would question what's gone wrong with our friendship and I would expect that I could give her feedback if I heard her tell me that. I mean, I think this is just part of being friends. What I'm getting at is that there's a lot of support but there is a lot of accountability that goes into relationships. And so what I've heard, you know, from one inmate or offender, he put it pretty simply that, "I got out of prison, I thought about doing some of the stuff I've done before and then I thought, 'How would I explain that to my volunteer,' that I had made that choice when he knows I know better because I had told him so that I know better." So there's an accountability that goes into realizing somebody has given a lot of their – not just their time and effort in driving out to Stillwater or wherever they're going – but they've given a lot of themselves to this relationship and what can I give back to them? You know, at least I can give back accountability to the stuff that I professed to believe.

This form of accountability is supported by Wright's (1992) work on friendships.

Wright (1992) states that, "Different kinds of relationships vary widely with respect to

what the individual expects from them and what (s)he recognizes as her or his obligations and commitments to them. These differing expectations are strongly influenced by definitions and standards established within the broader social milieu (19)." Amicus seeks to structure its relationships in ways that are mutually accountable.

The Emergence of Mentorships

With the cooperation of the DoC in Minnesota, mentorships have entered into the programming repertoire of Amicus alongside the friendship model. The matching process for friendship and mentorship is identical from the perspective of Chris, the volunteer coordinator. He matches inmates who are interested in having a mentor with a person who wants to be a mentor. Some of these new mentors were formerly friends with previous inmates.

However, there are major differences that might have significant implications for the nature of the relationship. First, to limit the financial and mentorship commitment, the Minnesota DoC (2011) suggests the mentorship begin six months before release from prison. This is despite the fact that expert researchers suggest it is crucial that inmates begin the re-entry process as soon as they are sentenced to prison (Petersilia 2003; Travis 2005). The same researchers suggest that the few weeks before one's release from prison are filled with anxiety and distractions. While a mentorship would begin months before a release date, Amicus staff claims that the trust necessary to form a genuine friendship takes a minimum of six months. Chris discussed the possible differences between a new mentor program and the original friendship program:

> The distinguishing characteristics as I see it are mentor – now I haven't run a
> mentorship program here – a mentor is going to have some concrete, tangible
> expectations of the client. This is what I expect of you, there's going to be solid
> advice given out. There's not a wagging of the finger saying, "You must do this,"

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but "From my experience we together hope to gain this goal and here are the things I see you need to do to get to here." And there's those kind of conversations are governing the relationship, and those kinds of conversations are not governing a One-to-One relationship.

Additionally, a mentorship, according to Louise has very specific requirements attached to it:

> [As a mentor] 'I'm a person here who has been trained and has some skills and knowledge about things that you need to know about and I want to impart those things to you. And you're presumably in that relationship because you're getting out of and you want as much knowledge and skill as anybody can give to you so that you can be successful.' So a mentor might say, "Okay, have you done this? Have you done that? Are you getting all of these papers together? Have you been in correspondence with so-and-so? Have you planned how you're going to get to see your PO?" All of these things that a friend wouldn't come in and tell you, you know, you've got to do these things.

According to Louise, there is an implicit difference between the programs. This largely has to do with the difference in the level of trust that might develop between either a friend or a mentor.

> A mentorship I think is where you're intentionally trying to impart some skills to another person. So, and we do use mentors in the program when we think it's appropriate. If a person is within three months of release of prison and we think it takes at least six months to develop a friendship with somebody – to get on the threshold of a friendship with somebody in prison then what do you do with three months? Well, then we can get into a mentorship in which the volunteer doesn't go in there and just try to build that trust as – I mean, that's one of the things you're trying to do but you don't have very long to do.

By definition, a mentorship is not based on the mutual development of trust that one must form within a friendship. A mentorship, while intended to be benevolent in nature, is a one-sided offering of advice from a person with some authority to a person with no authority. A mentorship is intended to speed up the preparations for an inmate's release from prison, and presupposes it is not as crucial that the mentee makes decisions about their life plans by him or herself. Rather, the mentee is explicitly told what he or she needs to do. I'm not suggesting this is a bad thing, in fact, it might prove to be more

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useful than a friendship, but it is significantly different. Unlike a friendship, a mentorship does not develop self-efficacy, it does not enrich one's sense of personal identity in the same way, and it is not about curing one's sense of loneliness. On the other hand, a mentorship might provide the necessary structure a friendship lacks. Jay, the research and internship coordinator at Amicus wrote about the nature of this dichotomy:

> I find it helpful to think about human relationships occurring along two continuums within one of two contexts: The two continuums are a voluntary to involuntary continuum - the "choice" to be in a particular relationship and the power differential between the parties - an autonomy to coercion continuum. Powerful relationships occur within public formal contexts but usually their influence is more situational and therefore more transitory. For example, I voluntarily decide to go to a therapist. I pay for it. It is not coercive. There are professional boundaries. Another example, even more germane to Amicus, within a public formal context [is that] there are agencies with police power - prisons, probation, and parole - relationships with prison guards, and probation officers are involuntary and can quickly become coercive.

The voluntary relationship of friendships contrasts the involuntary nature of police power. The trend of increasingly more professional oversight, perhaps in the form of a mentorship is a significant shift in programming. Perhaps this shift is beneficial to an inmate, and it is also relevant for correctional agencies to explore their programming options. Nonetheless, for programs to gain support from neo-liberal policymakers, government officials, funders and the public, they should maintain the offender's subordinate status. According to Wacquant (2009), "Rehabilitation was effectively replaced by a managerialist philosophy…In this perspective, the prison serves to isolate and neutralize the stochastic management of risks…Indeed, thirty years ago parole officers graduated from schools of social work and studied the basics of sociology and psychology. Today, while their caseloads have doubled, they are trained in schools of

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criminal justice where they learn police techniques and the handling of firearms. [They are guided by a new panoptic philosophy…]" (145).

Amicus mentors do not perform the same work as a parole officer, but perhaps the transition from friend to mentor parallels the change in focus experienced by parole officers. In general, Jay describing his own views and not necessarily those of Amicus, is skeptical about the recent direction of programming. He raises the following points which coincide with my own critique:

> Although Amicus' intentional one-to-one work occurs within a public formal context, we promote one-to-one relationships that are qualitatively different from many other formal relationships in that context. We want our volunteers to achieve relationships similar to natural informal-private friendships - relationships that are voluntary in which the parties allow each other considerable autonomy. On the other hand, Amicus is increasingly accountable, through performance-based contracts and outcome evaluations, to government - correctional - agencies with coercive police power and a goal of reduced recidivism. We operate within the formal public sector. Indeed we require DoC approval to engage with our clients while they are still inmates and we believe starting volunteer matches at least six months prior to release from these highly structured involuntary coercive environments aides the development of trusting effective voluntary matches!

> We are always conscious that we are accountable to the DoC. The rub is how we facilitate relationships that are voluntary that promote autonomy and not simply become agents of the DOC with its involuntary and bottom-line coercive relationships. As we promote mentorships, are we simply expanding our array of services or are we evolving from the "visitation business" to the "re-entry business" with the latter's emphasis on lower recidivism? I think without highly reflective and self-critical practice, the move from friendships to mentorships will signal relationships with decreasing autonomy and decreasing intimacy - devolving into inauthentic relationships.

A Neo-liberal Change in Focus?

Due to the current neo-liberal political environment, the DoC must demonstrate to taxpayers and lawmakers that it is funding programs with measurable outcomes (Soss et al 2009). In contrast to a friendship, a mentorship implies a straightforward, paternalistic channel of information that is passed from the mentor to the mentee. A policy of that

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nature can be empirically tested for effectiveness. A mentorship implies a linear programming model. If the inmate does not succeed, it might be easier to 'diagnose' his or her problem. Nonetheless, a mentorship enables a neo-liberal obsession with outcomes (Soss et al 2009). A friendship, on the other hand is messy, non-linear but potentially more empowering for inmates. In addition, a friendship is potentially more expensive, time-consuming and more difficult to implement in ways that allow for concrete measurement. Finally, friendships are generally defined by the enrichment between two individuals, not the extent to which they prevent crime. Such a premise might be difficult to sell to a public that seeks cheap and clearly-defined solutions for the prison population.

Jay's earlier assessment of mentorships and friendships resonates. He questions the extent to which mentorship programming makes Amicus agents of the state. Traditionally, as a private non-profit, Amicus was able to keep a professional distance from the DoC. This professional distance allows the inmates to not associate their matched friendship with the DoC. According to Jay, this allowed trust to develop between volunteers and inmates. Because a friendship is not coercive, it allows inmates freedom and autonomy to be something other than the identities that emerge from the total institution. If a mentorship program requires specific outcomes, the DoC will want some oversight for the nature of the relationship. If an inmate believes the mentorship is an extension of the total institution, to what extent will that compromise the strength of what was originally a friendship? Moreover, is a volunteer mentor a cheaper version of a parole or probation officer? A mentorship program provides similar, yet less intensive kinds of labor as a parole agent but for little cost. If this is true, both sides of neo-

liberalism are served by mentorships: they are (1) *paternalistic* in that they provide oversight over inmates and (2) there is *less public financial investment* because volunteers are the best kinds of workers—free (Soss, et al 2009).

The Amicus mentorship program is only in the beginning stages of implementation and it is too early to make broad conclusions about its effectiveness. Perhaps I've been unfairly skeptical of mentorships. In the state of Washington in 2002, juveniles with mentors were 10 percent less likely to recidivate than those without mentors (Drake and Barnoski 2002). Furthermore, a study that looked at Ready4Work programs across the country, found that "compared with participants who did not have a mentor, mentored participants were 35 percent less likely to have recidivated within a year of being released" (Bauldry et al 2009:16). According to this report, in line with the neo-liberal paradigm as it was outlined in chapter 2, this type of mentorship program focused specifically on job attainment: "Of the 4,450 Ready4Work participants, 56 percent secured at least one job while they were active in the program. Those who took advantage of mentoring appeared to benefit from the experience—participants who met with a mentor at least once were twice as likely to obtain a job as were those who were not mentored" (Bauldry et al 2009:15). Consequently, it is within the realm of possibility that mentorships will be more useful than friendships for incarcerated individuals.

Nonetheless, friendships remain unique in their application. Individual motivation for change based on the development of one's self-identity is much different than motivation for change according to recidivism prevention. As it was illustrated by the literature on the self in this chapter, and also by the effects of collectivist rehabilitative strategies in the previous chapter, positive individual change is much more profound

when one's identity is transformed. Based on the work of Amicus and the other researchers cited in this chapter, I contend that positive personal change cannot happen in isolation from pro-social individuals and it should not be coerced. At the same time I cannot suggest that mentorships do not offer pro-social relationships, only that they are a means to an end. In sum, a mentorship program satisfies neo-liberal ends as it primarily focuses on individual development in relation to employment rather than the development of self in relation to others in society.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: GETTING TO KNOW NEO-LIBERALISM THROUGH

RE-ENTRY AND CORRECTIONAL POLICY

Amicus: The Remedy for and the Beneficiary of Neo-liberal Policymaking

In Chapter II, I discussed the significant socio-historical issues from which re-entry policies emerge. The release of 600,000-700,000 prisoners into the outside world every year is unprecedented in US history. Due to the prison inmate buildup over the last 30 to 40 years, US social policy began to address the unique concerns associated with the reintegration of inmates in the first decade of the 21st Century. Unlike the state-centered policies of the past however, a new model of government was already in place. Front-line service delivery is no longer primarily the domain of government, rather that of grant-funded non-profit and for-profit organizations. Private organizations have been around for over a century, but the primary reliance on non-profits for service delivery is unique to this contemporary era (Smith and Lipsky 1993; Moulton and Anheier 2001).

This relatively new approach to service delivery falls under the domain of neo-liberal policy making (Keevers et al 2008; Wacquant 2009; Soss et al 2011). Amicus, a non-profit re-entry organization, has expanded and lost programming, developed additional marketing strategies, structurally readjusted to include more volunteers, and also attempted to include more sophisticated research designs in order to fully account for its impact on Minnesota's re-entry population. Each of these structural adjustments is a response to a competitive market.

Scholars such as Perrow (1986), Smith and Lipsky (1993), Barnekov and Raffel (1990) have discussed empirical and theoretical implications of the privatization and the

downsizing of large bureaucracies into more innovative and flexible organizations. In theory, small organizations are more flexible and innovative than large bureaucracies (Perrow 1986), but in a neo-liberal environment, small organizations are not autonomous organizations (Soss et al 2011). More importantly, in order to deliver services to the people that need it the most, non-profits must *demonstrate* their effectiveness to granting organizations-usually federal and state government agencies (Soss et al 2011). Consequently, neo-liberal policymakers play two contradictory roles. In the name of efficiency and thrift, they downsize centralized bureaucratic government services and outsource to small organizations; conversely, in order to save money, they impose bureaucratic standards on the very organizations that were contracted to save money (Soss et al 2011). Given the patchwork of re-entry non-profit organizations (Re-entry Policy Council 2005; Wacquant 2009), government actually becomes more cumbersome, not less. In fact, if money is saved, it is not because service delivery is more efficient, rather because fewer services are delivered (Smith and Lipsky 1993; Soss et al 2011).

In his seminal work for *Atlantic Monthly*, Eric Schlosser (1998) studied the formation of a prison-industrial complex. Schlosser raises several questions including: Who benefits from the expansion of the prison system? And to what extent is it ethical to make money off of a prison population? Similar questions are raised in my study. In general, regardless of the effectiveness of Amicus' programming, Amicus exists because prisons exist. So do all other re-entry organizations. Louise, the president of Amicus is the first to admit this, as she stated in a conversation with her colleagues that she "looks forward to the day when Amicus' services are no longer needed." From an ethical

perspective, Amicus takes no joy in contributing to the prison-industrial complex. Nonetheless, "rehabilitative" programs are beneficiaries of this prison build-up.

Prison and Re-entry Programming and Beyond

Guiding my last two substantive chapters was the examination of neo-liberal emphasis on individual responsibility and its emphasis on an expansive penal apparatus (Wacquant 2009). Because of our society's focus on individualism, CBT and job training programs are the most pervasive rehabilitative approaches. I defer to the existing literature which suggests these approaches are undeniably useful on some level (Andrews et al 1990; Cullen and Gendreau 2000; Latessa 2004; Landenberger and Lipsey 2005; Mackenzie 2008; Tripodi et al 2010). The sheer number of people who are imprisoned and released each year undermine the aims of both CBT and job training programs. Cognitive behavior therapists would be the first to admit that their services are best applied to only the highest risk offenders; it is unlikely that 2.5 million people are in prison for thinking errors. (Latessa 2004) CBT implies criminal behavior is largely an individual problem (Mackenzie 2008). Meanwhile, criminologists and sociologists are well aware of the deleterious social effects of gender, race and social class inequalities on crime (Pager 2004; Travis 2004; Western 2006). A similar critique about individualistic rehabilitation is directed at the emphasis on employment training. Sociologists suggest the problems associated with employment have more to do with a lack of decent jobs, than a lack of decent workers—the inverse of statements by neo-liberal policymakers like Ronald Reagan (Lafer 2002; Wacquant 2009).

Social-constructionist scholars have long pointed to the often misguided individualistic nature of policy interventions (Conrad and Schneider 1992; Conrad and

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Barker 2010).[54] They suggest social problems are often constructed as individualistic or reactive in nature, which fails to address the structural issues in society. While it goes beyond issues related to incarceration and rehabilitation, the following example related to diabetes among Arizona Native Americans will illustrate an important point. In the documentary film *Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making us Sick* Donald Warne (2008), medical doctor and president and CEO of American Indian Health Management & Policy states,

> When we look at the allocation of resources and looking at [diabetes] from a policy perspective, we [the public] will work with some communities and spend many, many millions of dollars on genetics research in those populations, and at the same time we won't spend $40,000 dollars for a P.E. teacher. So, we haven't prioritized the allocation of resources to reflect the needs of the community, we've allocated resources to reflect the needs of policymakers and a medical research community.

In general, the needs of the communities most affected by mass incarceration are not being met by either CBT or job training. Those who benefit most are the teams of therapists and prison industries. Perhaps as suggested by Warne (2008), there might be some simple, non-punitive, preventative measures that would be far more useful and cheaper than mass incarceration. In the excerpt above, Warne suggests $40,000 spent on a gym teacher might go further than the millions of dollars spent on genetic research as it relates to diabetes. Is an obvious, much simpler and cheaper solution to rehabilitation

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[54] I suggest cognitive behavior therapy as a rehabilitative approach would fit nicely with Conrad and Schneider's (1992) book title, *Deviance and Medicalization: From Badness to Sickness*.

staring us in the face?[55] Hirshi's (1969) simple but straightforward discussion of social bond theory seems the most relevant. In summation, Hirshi (1969) suggests that people are much less likely to commit crimes in the first place if they are involved, committed, attached and believe in pro-social activities.

According to Wacquant (2009) within a neo-liberalism paradigm, publicly funded, extra-curricular activities are considered superfluous, wasteful sectors of government spending. Much to the chagrin of education scholars (Hursh 2007), school programs like music, physical education and art are being cut in favor of curriculums that attempt to prepare students for standardized tests. In order for schools to receive funding and to avoid sanctions, students must perform according to standards set by "No Child Left Behind" (Hursh 2007). Much like what I've described for the problems associated with small, non-profit research programs; government funders seek out concrete results in the form of test scores in favor of creativity and personal introspection.

In other words, if we are to accept Hirshi's (1969) proposal that involvement in pro-social activities prevent crime, neo-liberalism's desire to cut co-curricular programming and expand standardized testing, might also be contributing to a rise in criminal behavior. In place of the enrichment that occurs with co-curricular activities, neo-liberalism's approach to crime prevention is based on an individual's personal morality system. According to Wacquant (2009) this is why there is a unique partnership between neo-conservative morality and neo-liberal economic policies (311). To paraphrase this idea into common vernacular, "If people just accepted their place in society and followed the rules, we wouldn't need to spend so much money on schools *or* prisons." For the time being, neo-liberals would rather spend public money on

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[55] One might argue that ending mass incarceration would be one approach to save money

punishment, vocational training, and CBT, all of which are assumed to be "necessary," rather than on enrichment programs which are assumed to be "extra."

In Chapter III, I discussed the ways in which theatre programs and the Bard Prison Initiative are pushing back against the neo-liberal perspectives of rehabilitation. At no cost to the government, teachers, professors and artists are finding their way into maximum security prisons and are suggesting instilling prison inmates with new ways of seeing the world. These programs intentionally challenge the concrete notions of right and wrong that are conditioned through the criminal justice system. Prior to these interventions, many inmates perceived themselves to be in the unredeemable 'bad' category. But when one is able to discover abstract and structural explanations for social phenomena, absolute moralism, as it is forwarded by neo-conservativism, becomes unsatisfactory. In its place, inmates are able to redefine their perceptions of self as they begin to understand their place in their community. No longer do inmates feel the need to be "good" because someone told them to, but rather, because they become their own free-thinking moral agents who seek out what is right for themselves and for their communities. The fact that prisoners respond so positively to this type of education demonstrates that it is an error to assume the arts and the liberal arts are simply "extras."

My Contribution to the Existing Literature

The scope of my project is unique for several reasons. First, neo-liberal policymaking chooses to employ non-profit and for-profit organizations over government organizations for social problems. To that end, I briefly examined the strategies Amicus uses to pursue government grants and to remain viable from both a programming and public-relations perspective. For the most part, Amicus is a successful non-profit which

has adapted to neo-liberal social policy. Second, while this study is not the first examination of the ways non-profits exist within a neo-liberal political economy (Smith and Lipsky 1993; Devault 2008; Soss et al 2009; Wacquant 2009; Schram et al 2010) to the best of my knowledge, it is one of the first to address a *re-entry* non-profit from a theoretically sociological perspective. I address the ways in which the influence of neo-liberalism is all the more profound for re-entry.

Paternalistic oversight through neo-liberal government policy is two-fold in the re-entry arena: (1) There is a pressure on non-profits to conform to market demands (despite the vulnerability of their clientele) and (2) There is a pressure on ex-offenders to conform to individualistic, entrepreneurial measures of success (Wacquant 2009; Jurik 2008). In order to remain viable and receive funding, non-profits must demonstrate with concrete evidence that they are supporting the neo-liberal paradigm by developing individuals who properly conform to the ideology that one's primary value in society is "worker." All other positive consequences from correctional programming are latent from a neo-liberal perspective.

The work of a non-profit re-entry organization is unique when one considers the context of mass incarceration. In general, mass incarceration is counter-productive from a rehabilitation perspective. It generally makes individuals worse off than when they entered (Pritikin 2009; Schmid and Jones 1991). For that reason, I suggest that the most important work of Amicus' One-to-One program is the way it mitigates the negative effects of mass incarceration. This is not to say Amicus volunteers only address the problems associated with mass incarceration, but as it was described in Chapter IV, a friend takes on new meaning behind prison walls.

Wacquant (2009) suggests US society would rather invest in mass incarceration for individuals than welfare and education for the poor. This is based on the neo-liberal belief that failed upward mobility and criminal behavior is the result of individual life choices and the culture of poverty rather than systemic poverty and racism. Despite the fact that violent crime rates have decreased in the last 30 years, the prison population has soared, due to tougher, longer sentences, more prison time as the result of drug arrests, and high recidivism rates (Travis 2004). These "Tough on Crime" policies were supposedly intended to punish, lock-up and deter would-be criminals. Again, punishment, incapacitation and deterrence, are based on individual, neo-classical criminological understandings of crime. Apparently that philosophy of crime prevention has not worked, the US now has highest rate of imprisonment in the world (US BJS 2012).

Ironically, neo-liberal policymaking has contributed to mass incarceration while attempting to mitigate the effects of mass incarceration, since neo-liberal policies are behind initiatives to pay for programs that seek to integrate people back into society. This seems to follow a contradictory and expensive logic.

If we follow the conclusions of many scholars in the field of criminology, we already incarcerate too many people at too high a cost (Petersilia 2003; Travis 2005; Western 2006; Useem and Piehl 2008; Pritikin 2009; Wacquant 2009). According to the US Bureau of Justice Statistics (2012), it costs an average of $25,000 a year to incarcerate an inmate. Another way to look at this figure is that it costs roughly $25,000 a year to make someone less adaptable to a fast-paced capitalist society (among many other anti-social adaptations of incarcerated individuals)—exactly opposite of the goal of

free market advocates (Pritikin 2009). Even worse, the costs of incarceration become greater when we account for the additional money spent to mitigate *effects* of incarceration.

While it is beyond the scope of this study, one cannot help but wonder what lends support for the continual advocacy of punishment through mass incarceration. Karpowitz (2005) discusses the social-psychological dimensions of punishment. Inspired by philosopher Herbert Morris, Karpowitz (2005) suggests that [collective] "guilt might arise from our complicity in the conditions that exacerbate crime, from our envy and resentment toward those who have indulged in the forbidden, or from the legally legitimized pleasures of indulging rage, fear, anger, or contempt against the condemned" (306). In a society that suffers from extreme inequality, this makes sense. In a perverse way, punishment allows those with privilege to blame the less privileged people for their strife, it reinforces what is right (success) and wrong (poverty) and it allows us to have a scapegoat for our problems in society. Whatever the social-psychological function, punishment reinforces neo-liberalism's emphasis on individual responsibility.

Possibilities for a Different Paradigm

Campbell (2001) defines a paradigm as an "elite assumption that constrains the cognitive range of useful solutions available to policy makers." Marx and Engels (1846/1977) suggest, "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling *material* force of society is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force" (172). The neo-liberal ideology emerges from capitalism's encompassing push to accumulate wealth. As a result, all other human enterprises are subservient to this cause (Marx and Engels 1848/1977). From a neo-liberal perspective,

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capitalist wealth accumulation is inhibited by economic regulation, an expensive welfare state, irresponsible and dependent individuals, and a lack of economic and social control over the working masses (Wacquant 2009:307). Consequently, much of our social policy today, especially that promoted by Republicans and many Democrats is to cut social welfare spending and to focus on the control of the poor.

According to these premises, in order to achieve reform for both the incarceration and rehabilitation of offenders, we must challenge the economic base of capitalism and/or the ideological superstructure of neo-liberalism. This is daunting and beyond the scope of this project. However, perhaps there is another problem associated with capitalism and neo-liberalism that we can more easily address: inequality.

While the US has the resources available to lessen the extreme inequalities between the rich and poor (Reich 2010; Krugman 2009), neo-liberal politics prevent us from pursuing this goal. Increasing inequality in the US is largely the result of the deliberate policy decisions to disinvest and devolve the state welfare structures and also the diminishing tax rates on the wealthy which results in constraints on the state's fiscal resources (Wacquant 2009:307). Consequently, fewer resources are available to the public in the form of education, welfare and health care, and as a result, government is rendered less effective. The public loses faith in the government and wants less spending for ineffective social programs. This cycle of devolution of the public sector continues indefinitely. From a neo-liberal perspective, the anti-government consensus that emerges from this pattern fits perfectly with the intentions of furthering free-market ideology.

It is difficult to predict what will inspire Americans to think more collectively about social problems. Perhaps the contradictions of capitalism will become so self-

evident they will inevitably lead us to reject neo-liberal ideologies for an alternative form of political-economic infrastructure (Marx 1848/1978). However, following the suggestions of symbolic interactionists and social constructionists, I argue that no change happens until we deliberately call attention to and agree on the problem at hand (Blumer 1969; Conrad and Barker 2010). If that is true, who should do this work of calling attention to and naming the problem?

As it happens, this work is already being attempted by the Bard Prison Initiative and by a variety of theater and arts prison programs as they provide their students with a repertoire of language and critical thinking skills (Karpowitz 2005; Hartnett 2011). These programs not only facilitate prisoners' attainment of knowledge, they also give prisoners the chance to be taken seriously as intellectuals and as human beings. In the same vein, Amicus also prides itself on the facilitation of friendship, simply because they believe having a good friend is a valuable end in itself. These kinds of interventions are all the more empowering for people in prison—a place that is inherently designed to snuff out individuality and agency (Goffman 1961, Schmid and Jones 1991; Karpowitz 2005; Hartnett 2011). In contrast, neo-liberal programs like job training and CBT are based on the deficits of inmates and are designed to produce employment and recidivism statistics. In that sense, neo-liberal programs promote extrinsic motivations to offenders and the organizations that work with them. This is despite the fact that many scholars suggest that negative reactance to rehabilitation is less likely to occur when individuals have choices and are intrinsically motivated to change (Brehm and Brehm 1981; Pritikin 2009).

Given the current priorities of neo-liberalism, we cannot expect publicly-funded programs to be directed at the self-empowering endeavors I've described in a broad, collective way. However, those who advocate for alternatives to neo-liberalism can make change through their work as teachers, artists and friends. This is not only appropriate for the prison, but is appropriate anywhere inequality has prevented people from pursuing and achieving a dignified life. If we do choose to be activists in this arena, it is essential that we do not reinforce the paternalistic oversight of neo-liberalism. For true empowerment to take place, we must allow the individuals we work with to make claim to their rights as agents of social change and human dignity.

Critics of neo-liberalism suggest this form of policymaking is becoming more pervasive internationally; not only for the criminal justice system, but also in the fields of health care, education and social welfare (Larner 2000; Campbell and Pedersen 2001; Gray and Mcdonald 2006; Fisher 2007; Horton 2007; Wacquant 2009). Unfortunately, in the form of neo-liberalism, American exceptionalism remains strong in the field of corrections. Mass incarceration in the United States has not solved our most pressing social issues and it certainly has not curtailed the recidivism rate (Pritikin 2009). The US prides itself on being the leader of democratic policymaking but it is decades behind the most forward thinking nations when it comes to correctional policymaking. For instance, Donald Schmid (2001) documents the application of the restorative justice model in New Zealand. In this model, offenders, victims, and community members, as it is appropriate for the crime, come together to share and discuss the steps needed to restore a sense of justice in the community. Restorative justice implementation reduced crime committed

by youth offenders two-thirds between 1996 and 2000 (Schmid 2001: 92).[56] In Norway,

a country in which most of its prisons are without walls and fences, inmates have

programs with state of the art music studios. Norway also allows its most violent

criminals to use chainsaws without supervision, has a maximum sentence of 21 years,

and also has a recidivism rate of 20 percent (Adams 2010). In the United States, the

reconviction rate for felonies and misdemeanors in 2007 was roughly 47 percent (US BJS

2012). In fact, in terms of raw numbers, the only nation that is comparable to our current

rate of incarceration (740 per 100,000 people) is the pre-World War II era of the Soviet

Union under Joseph Stalin (800 per 100,000 people) (Applebaum 2003).

Scope of Study and Limitations

Critics of neo-liberal policymaking address several domains of social policy

which include education (Apple 2004; Hursh 2007; Roberts 2007; Sloan 2008; Silk et al

2010; Yates and Lakes 2010), welfare (Morgen 2001; Keevers et al 2008; Soss et al

2009; Soss et al 2011), health care (McGregor 2001; Fisher 2007; Horton 2007) and of

course the prison system (Davis 2008; Wacquant 2009; Wacquant 2010; Yates and Lakes

2010). These scholars address a number of shortcomings that result from neo-liberal

policy-making including unequal access to services based on race, gender and class

(Hursh 2007; Davis 2008; Wacquant 2009;Yates and Lakes 2010). Scholars also

examine the ways in which social-service programs must adjust their missions and use

evidence-based programming and competitive grant writing in order to stay funded

(Larner 2001; Gray and Mcdonald 2006; Hursh 2008; Keevers et al 2008; Soss et al

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[56] For the record, Amicus administrators are well-versed in restorative justice. They attempted to
implement a model similar to a Canadian version for sex-offenders, but failed to receive both moral and
financial support from the state government.

2009; Wacquant 2009; Soss et al 2011). In other words, two tiers of social activity the actual people receiving services, and the organizations that serve them are addressed alongside a critique of neo-liberalism.

I continued both legacies of investigation in my analysis. My project is a brief and un-exhaustive account of the effects of neo-liberal policy making on a re-entry organization for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals. I do not specifically evaluate the cost-effectiveness of Amicus; nor do I provide an ethnographic account of the typical day at Amicus. As a result, I don't fully account for the rich interaction between employees, clients and organizational partners. In the future, I would like to address these areas in order to better understand the frustrations, contradictions and successes of an organization which is at a junction of so many critical social problems, including incarceration and racial and class inequalities.

Through the inductive research process, I continually found myself addressing sociological issues at the organizational level. No doubt, a deeper and broader study of both micro-level and macro-level social relations could provide additional support to my arguments.

In addition, while my study is at the meso-level, I did not branch beyond one organization for my primary data collection. A more in-depth analysis of two or more organizations would provide additional perspectives not discussed here. More time and resources would allow for investigating the funding organizations for re-entry organizations and better understanding the decision-making process of policymakers in general. But perhaps these weaknesses are also important strengths. At the expense of depth, I devoted considerable energy to locating very specific points of contention for

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hegemonic correctional and organizational philosophies that exist under a neo-liberal paradigm. I provide additional evidence that organizations respond to the political-economic climate through adjustments in organizational research, administrative restructuring, new marketing strategies, and the development of interventions intended to aid offenders upon their release. I hope that a survey of the organizational dilemmas faced by one organization is a productive starting point for future research.

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