

THEORIZING COMMUNITY INTEGRATION AS DESISTANCE-PROMOTION

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Recent criminological studies have focused on what promotes desistance from crime, ranging from internal promoters (such as narrative identity shift) to external promoters (such as employment and marriage). An understudied promoter is the role of ordinary community members in integrating released offenders into community life. This article draws on qualitative data collected from a Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) program in Vermont, which uses community volunteers to create a circle around selected medium-to-high risk offenders (often sex offenders) who present a risk for reoffense due to their isolation. The nature of the forged relationships is examined, and the article asserts that desistance can be achieved through the actions of community members who communicate a sense of shared moral space, and a genuine sense of belonging. By actively integrating offenders into community life, CoSA model normative lives, create normative and ordinary relationships of mutual obligation and respect, and aid in the de-labeling process by focusing on the other attributes of offenders beyond their criminality. This article concludes by theorizing the role of community integration as an antecedent to desistance, rather than an outcome. In so doing, our knowledge of offender reintegration and desistance processes can be more fully understood.

Keywords: desistance from crime; offender reentry; reintegration; Circles of Support and Accountability; rehabilitation

The shift in culture away from a “penal-welfare” system to a “culture of control” has been well documented by historians and criminologists (Garland, 2001). Neoliberal discourse, which includes a focus on individual responsibility rather than social causes of crime, has been characterized as emphasizing several features of crime control: decentralization of control, shifting blame to individual offenders, an obsession with risk calculation and control, and governing crime in everyday life (Garland, 2001; Loader & Sparks, 2002; Simon, 2007). Although sociologists may lament this drift away from social and structural understandings of criminal behavior, what Loader and Sparks (2002, p. 87) call the “new governance of crime” provides a locus for analyzing the ways that communities engage in crime control and discourse about criminality.

Communities’ fear of crime and their attitudes toward what they perceive as the lenience of the criminal justice system have been well documented (Sasson, 1995; Surette, 2006). The punitive impulse, “get tough” policies, and experiment with mass incarceration has brought

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with it a host of additional social problems, including high rates of recidivism and a burdened justice system (Clear & Frost, 2013). Beyond the practical problems that offenders face in returning from prison, community attachments and the power of informal control mechanisms that stem from community engagement are often ruptured by a long prison term (Clear, 2007). Re-engaging formerly incarcerated individuals with the communities to which they return is a challenge only recently recognized by funding agencies and human services.

In recent years, reentry programs have emerged at the federal level in the United States designed specifically to address the social and community-level impediments that offenders face on prison release. The federal government, states, and municipalities have begun to recognize the challenges posed by the large numbers of returning offenders in finding housing, employment, and relationships that would allow for successful desistance from crime. Several federally funded initiatives attempt to address those needs for offenders, and aid in the transition to community life.

Although agencies have collaborated on providing housing assistance, employment training and referral options, education programs, and substance abuse and mental health programs, the reentry services have been administered by professionals whereas the role of nonprofessional community members has been underutilized and unexamined. Moreover, in a climate of community-based fear of “habitual” offenders fueled by mass-mediated rhetoric about the intransigence of offenders, true reintegration into community life remains largely elusive.

This article will attempt to fill the void in the criminological and programmatic literature on the potential role that ordinary community members can play in advancing desistance among offenders by enabling their integration into community life. Drawing on data from a program that utilizes the Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) model, this article will describe the relationships formed between CoSA volunteer teams and their “core” member: a recently released medium- to high-risk offender (typically a sex offender) deemed in need of social supports. Analyzing the model and how it functions provides insights into the potential role of communities in offender reentry, and provides food for thought as to the implications of the “new governance of crime” (Loader & Sparks, 2002, p. 87). Moreover, the dynamics between offenders and their community volunteers demonstrate the *processual* aspects of desistance. Rather than thinking of community volunteers as harnessing “turning points,” as Sampson and Laub (1993) suggest, or capitalizing on desistance hooks (Carlsson, 2012), volunteers help create desistance signals to cement them, and they do so by communicating that the social distance between “them” and “us” is smaller than even core members would expect; in fact, they share the same moral space as ordinary citizens. This article argues that community inclusion can precede and promote desistance.

In this article, I will describe three dimensions of an integrative model of desistance (such as CoSA) that can be extrapolated to desistance generally, with the objective of demonstrating the potential role of community members in maintaining desistance. First, civically-engaged integration serves to model normal and normative life for released offenders. Second, communities communicate the prospect of sharing normative space by engaging deeply with offenders. And third, communities expedite a de-labeling process with offenders by sharing normative space with them. Of primary importance is an assertion that communities are undertheorized and understudied in the process of reintegration for offenders (see Farrall & Calverley, 2006). Beyond the belief that it is just “a good idea” to utilize

communities, the theoretical contribution stems from two points. Thus far, the desistance literature includes explanations about the significance of life course in external stabilizers, in narrative identity reconstruction, and in situational factors in desistance. The potential for constructing a positive self-identity can be harnessed with community engagement, as can employment and relationship stabilizers. I would suggest that the support of unpaid volunteers can be a more powerful prompt to desistance than paid professionals. In addition, more broadly, civil society is affected negatively by the exclusion of offenders upon release from prison. From a criminal justice ethics standpoint, values can be produced and reinforced through civic engagement. A discussion follows about the moral imperative of community integration.

METHOD

There is a small but solid body of literature out of Canada that measures the impact of CoSA in studies that compare quasi-experimental groups to control groups. These studies have found a significant reduction in recidivism for high-risk sexual offenders—at times as great as a 70% reduction in reoffending among those with a CoSA compared with those without one (Bates, Saunders, & Wilson, 2007; Duwe, 2013; Wilson, Cortoni, & McWhinnie, 2009; Wilson, Picheca, & Prinzo, 2005, 2007; Wilson & Prinzo, 2001). Although there is evidence that CoSA works to reduce recidivism, *how* CoSA works (in other words, what the nature of the relationships forged is) has not been well documented, particularly in the United States (See Hanvey et al., 2011; Nellis, 2009). I was contracted by the State of Vermont's Department of Corrections to conduct a qualitative evaluation of its CoSA program in 2010. Vermont Corrections began CoSA in 2005 and has created over 100 CoSAs, more than any other state in the United States. Data on their effectiveness are being analyzed, but anecdotally they are very successful in reducing crime, and at a minimum, keeping offenders in the community for longer periods of time before returning to prison, and even then for less serious offenses. Of the CoSAs evaluated for this project, only one had received a new charge, which was lower than would be expected, although the sample is too small to determine the impact definitively. However, all but one of the core members attributed their success to the support of their CoSA team.

PARTICIPANTS

A CoSA includes the core member who has been released from prison and is at the center of the circle, the volunteers who support him or her, and the reentry coordinator hired to manage the CoSA. The evaluation included interviews with 20 core members, 9 reentry coordinators, and 57 volunteers. The CoSA were located in 10 different cities around the state. With the permission of Corrections, and approval of the Institutional Review Board of the University of Vermont, I made clear to evaluation participants that their decision to allow me to use the data for publication was discretionary and did not affect their participation in the CoSA program. Participants signed a consent form indicating their willingness to participate in the "research" part, or not, and enclosed it in an envelope while I left the room to avoid a sense of coercion. The sealed envelopes were stored in a locked file cabinet and only opened upon the completion and submission of the final report for Corrections. I agreed to destroy the data of those who declined to be part of my published research.

MEASURES

The Vermont Department of Corrections was interested in *how* and *why* CoSA works, what makes good CoSA teams, how they are implemented, what impact they have, what the nature of the relationships are, and so on. How best to stop offenders reoffending and reintegrate them into civil society. Because the evaluation was intended to understand *how* CoSA works, the best methodology for exploring this question was qualitative interviews. The method of data acquisition was open-ended, semi-structured interviews. The nature of the questions varied. For example, reentry coordinators were asked about their roles, the challenges of arranging and running CoSAs, and so on, whereas core members were asked about their reentry challenges, how they viewed the CoSA, what impact the CoSA experience has had on them, and so on. Volunteers were not only asked those questions about the core member but also asked about their own motivations for volunteering, the nature of team relationships and dynamics, and relationship to the core member's probation officer, and so on.

PROCEDURE

Interviews were conducted in private with core members in order to allow them space and freedom to speak freely without fear of offending their CoSA teams. Where possible, which was most of the time, interviews with CoSA teams were conducted in groups (e.g., the whole team of three or four in a CoSA interviewed together) to facilitate a conversation among the team members about the roles they play and how they see the CoSA functioning. Reentry coordinators were interviewed individually about the factors they consider in setting up teams, how they select and screen for appropriate volunteers and core members, the challenges in setting up and running CoSA, and so forth.

ANALYSIS

Interviews were professionally transcribed after being delivered electronically via a secure link. Transcripts were coded for conceptual themes and "saturation," a condition in which key concepts surface repeatedly and new information ceases to emerge. Thus, the ideas presented reflect participants' genuine sense of CoSA and were not dictated from a pre-conceived set of evaluator-generated ideas. Interviews were conducted using a guide, which covered the basic questions, but ideas sometimes evolved through the course of an interview that would involve a probing follow-up question or went in a distinct direction based upon the experiences reported. Thus, the guide was not used as a strict questionnaire. The key themes that emerged from the research are described below.

RESULTS

DESISTANCE VIA SHARED MORAL AND NORMATIVE SPACE

There have been tremendous strides in the literature on the process of desistance from crime over the past decade or so (Farrall, 2002, 2004; Farrall & Calverley, 2006; Laub & Sampson, 2003; Maruna, 2001; McNeill, 2006, 2009, 2012; Uggen & Piliavin, 1998). Still, most of the existing research debates the relative importance of external or internal factors in achieving desistance. For example, many studies address the significance of aging out of

crime, and how that process is sped up by stable relationships and employment. Also at issue is the extent to which external structural assists are determining or if internal subjective states matter more (Maruna, 2001). And of course, those two are related as well.

Yet, the federal funds to impact the obstacles offenders face in reentering society after a prison term attend almost exclusively to the external stabilizers such as housing, employment, and substance abuse treatment. In addition, as programs aim to reduce recidivism, underlying the program initiatives are tacit theories about the nature of reoffense risk. As risk models are firmly entrenched in correctional rehabilitation, reentry programs often address employment and housing as risk reduction measures. As Arrigo (2013) has argued, correctional rehabilitation and offender reentry initiatives reinforce notions of risk and its management; however, an ethical approach to reintegration would minimize “riskiness” and instead embrace an “inspired, care-centered ethic of reengagement” (p. 15). Risk management paradigms frame offenders within a context that fortifies an individualistic logic rather than a social one that is more nuanced and salient to lived experience.

Maruna (2012) points out, “‘risk’ exists in the dynamic interplay between persons and our situations” (p. 80). The interplay can be catalyzed into secondary (or more enduring) desistance by others’ validation—for example, endorsement by a probation officer. As King (2013) suggests, creating new identities is “accompanied by an alteration to the individual’s sense of *moral agency*” (p. 161). Whereas desistant periods (which we know that offenders have) can fortify desistant identities, reinforcement is aided by “testimony” by others as to the desistant state of the offender (see also Maruna, 2001).

Expanding the literature on desistance, Bottoms, Shapland, Costello, Holmes, and Muir (2004) declare that desistance is achieved through an interaction between risk factors (and the degree to which they are targeted in treatment), structural factors, social context, and agency. In other words, certain factors, such as age, are predictive (in the aggregate at least) of offending risk. Beyond those risk factors, social context (such as culture and environment) plays a significant role in desisting and persisting, inasmuch as opportunities for legal or illegal behaviors present and subcultural supports influence actors in situ. Finally, as McNeill (2006) points out, cognitive change (or how offenders regard their desistance) is key to cementing a new lifestyle and identity. McNeill (2006, p. 383) asserts that offenders vacillate between “crime and conformity,” and as such, the process of moving from one to the other provides an occasion to promote change. Stabilizing offenders through employment or effective probation is one method for promoting desistance (Farrall, 2002, 2004; McNeill & Weaver, 2010) but there is a neglected aspect in the Bottoms et al. theorizing of desistance: the *practical* and *ethical* role of communities in the integration process as desistance promoters or saboteurs. Active civic engagement between offenders and citizens teaches community values explicitly via interactions designed to guide and support offenders as they transition (Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004). In addition, community values are transmitted implicitly by expressing the values of inclusion, citizenship, fundamental human rights, and forgiveness.

MODELING NORMATIVE COMMUNITY LIFE

Many of the core members were isolated from ordinary community life. Perhaps their families were dysfunctional, or estranged, or were inappropriate to associate with upon release. Many were “outlaws” in communities, and had reputations in their towns because

of high-profile crimes. On release, they faced several impediments related to these matters. First of all, they felt detached, and this loneliness put them at higher risk for reoffense (Willis & Grace, 2009). Their isolation, and often long institutionalization, meant that transitioning to a more conventional life was challenging because of their lack of familiarity with normal routines, and a dearth of role models for normative behaviors. Second, the team assisted in the construction of normative identities in a process of de-labeling, by helping to shed a deviant self-image or creating another pro-social identity (Maruna & LeBel, 2003). I will discuss each of these in turn to demonstrate the values that community members communicate in an inclusive model such as CoSA.

Mitigating Exclusion and Isolation

Core members had restrictions on where they could live, where they could go, and with whom they could spend time. In Canada, eligible core members were selected on the basis of having served their maximum sentence, and were no longer under correctional supervision. In Vermont, virtually all inmates released are under correctional conditions, and still very much subject to supervision. These restrictions make integration more challenging. For example, offenders on conditional release in Vermont generally cannot drive automobiles, even to and from work. Having CoSA volunteers drive core members places they need or want to go adds value to core members' lives and paves the way for relationship building. In addition to the isolation and need for practical assistance, core members come to rely on their team members, and learn through the process that the team has no agenda for them other than to see them succeed on the outside. As a core member explained,

I didn't really have any family and not many friends. So I was really kind of sort of alone in the world . . . And so [having a CoSA] was and still is kind of a little bit—it can be overwhelming. Because I've been alone for a very long time . . . And it's hard to get used to people that actually sincerely want to do something for me without anything in return. So it's been a different experience for me.

This same core member, as well as others, admitted having tremendous difficulty trusting others, and in particular, "do-gooders" whose interest in them and concern was suspect. Yet, over time they developed trust, and that was possible through the ordinary but generous engagement on the part of the volunteers. In addition to the mundane help with everyday life challenges, such as grocery shopping and creating a budget, CoSA team volunteers helped in the process of adjusting to being outside. As one volunteer explained,

You know, they're out there, they're alone. Everybody wants to get out but then it's a little scary out there. There's nobody standing there to tell you what to do.

Newly released offenders, especially after a lengthy prison stint, can quickly become overwhelmed. Incorporating their daily life struggles into the community's civic responsibility can be a powerful message of inclusion. A few core members had been in prison so long that they needed to learn how to use a cell phone, or how to use a self-service grocery store checkout. CoSA team members could help with such matters and in doing so conveyed that core members could incrementally master ordinary life challenges, and participate in civil society.

Another way that teams demonstrate the “radical inclusion” described by Hannem (2013, p. 279) is by sharing their lives with each other. As one volunteer explained CoSA’s inclusiveness,

[the core members] also know surprisingly more about our lives than a lot of people. That makes some people really nervous when they think about it. But we sit here and we talk—“man, I had a lousy week, the car broke down, my kid got in trouble at school, nananana”—we have rotten weeks, too, but we don’t do dope and we try not to get plastered on Friday night. And whatever else it is, we try to deal with those things, and talk about how we dealt with those things. We don’t beat the snot out of the kid for getting in trouble at school because every kid gets in trouble at school sooner or later. So that kind of stuff. And I think that’s the real learning piece, too, is that we all have stressors in our lives and we all don’t make decisions that get us arrested.

The CoSA team as community members model for the core member what ordinary, pro-social, noncriminal life is like, and in talking through the many issues that come up, the group can orient the core member toward better ways to handle stress, or resolve relationship issues, or conflicts with employers and the like. Modeling, and talking through challenging situations is distinct from more control-oriented solutions, and affords core members a measure of “autonomy” in making choices. Moreover, as Day and Ward (2010, p. 290) explain, values develop from “social and cultural allegiances” that in turn provide “normative resources.” In other words, the fusion of the development of mutual obligation and appropriate feedback through the CoSA relationship, along with the role modeling of the team, provide core members with a toolkit for navigating social life. As in any healthy relationship, Day and Ward discovered that in rehabilitative relationships, positive outcomes are more likely to stem from relationships that promote offenders’ “dignity as moral agents” (p. 302).

For example, one core member told his team he had never had “normal interactions” with females. The CoSA team comprised women who provided opportunities for him to “practice having appropriate conversations with women.” This is but one example of the ways that interacting with the CoSA team creates occasions for core members to witness and rehearse the way ordinary relationships work, and also to receive feedback about normative behavior in the context of a trusting relationship. Although the core member needed to learn normative behaviors, the approach by the team in this and other situations was a “strengths-based” approach that presumes the core member is capable of sharing the same moral space as others. Arrigo and Takahashi (2007) describe the “recommunalization” process as “the acquisition of psycho-social competencies” (p. 140). Conventional citizens can nurture such competencies. As a core member explained the benefit of a CoSA,

They’ve helped me in so many ways that I don’t think I would have survived and stayed out without them. Because I’ve been able to always—the biggest thing that they’ve helped me with is—these are people I can talk to, people I can trust, people I can say, “look, this is what I’m thinking—is my thinking wrong or am I thinking correctly?” And I always know I can trust the answer I get from each one of them. That’s the way they’ve helped me the most.

Although the more successful teams concentrated on supporting the core member as he or she ventured into a new life, “the accountability piece” was referenced many times

by volunteers as an important component of the integration strategy. However, in practice, accountability does not resemble the control-oriented practices associated with probation. Rather, accountability would best be described as capacity building in the core member. Because many core members had not maintained steady employment or relationships, they lacked basic skills in how to sustain pro-social, healthy relationships. For example, teams practiced with them how to resign from a job appropriately, how to consider a newly formed relationship in terms of how it might appear to others, namely, probation officers, and so on. In this way, although these skill-building exercises may have in fact diminished criminal risk, they were overtly intended to make the core member more successful in ordinary life situations.

Community integration can aid in desistance, as evidenced by the data from interviews. In fact, as McNeill (2014) argues, a more abiding desistant state, abetted by and evidenced by a sense of belonging, can depend on one's experiences upon release. In other words, integration into a community can precede and promote desistance. As one team volunteer said about his core member:

When they picked him and Corrections recommended him, I went "you've got to be kidding." This is a person who has been in [the system] for years. But I think it's about a mindset, and a mindset may not come until *after* they're out here.

In a final example that illustrates how the community can help fortify desistant overtures, a core member explained his CoSA experience,

It helps me focus and stay on track, because I know that there's people other than just—I know my family's gonna want me to do good. It's just . . . I've never had people like that that cared if I . . . stayed out of trouble. But they actually ask me how my week's goin', if I'm doin' all right. It just feels good to have 'em talk to me and stuff and know that they care.

Inclusion demonstrates concern as well as high expectations for behavior, thereby communicating shared values and a presumption that the social distance and normative space between the offender and ordinary citizens is not so great (Fox, 2010).

De-Labeling

Once an offender is released from prison, there are numerous obstacles that sabotage attempts to build a positive self-identity. Barriers in the form of collateral consequences, like housing restrictions, employment challenges, and public scorn (especially for sex offenders) can bear down on even a motivated offender. Thus, upon release, motivation to desist may be high, and the time is ripe for capitalizing on this subjective state. However, the genuine challenges, loneliness, and uncertainty about how to fashion such a noncriminal life all contribute to a sense of, as one described, "having a target on your back." Core members reported looking over their shoulders repeatedly as they were accustomed to doing in prison, and feeling out of place in public.

Maruna (2012) suggests opportunities for offenders to "signal" desistance, as opposed to a more risk management orientation of reading outward signs of desistance or persistence. As opposed to community members waiting for someone to reoffend, if the community communicates an expectation that the offender will be a positive force, then the prophecy may be self-fulfilling. In an example from a team member,

We had a guy who came out and . . . he didn't want to do his community service and we . . . said get out there cleaning . . . And it took time. He was out here in the summer . . . and somebody—some shopkeeper would come out and say “hey, the place looks good in front of my store” . . . And all of a sudden, over time, he developed some pride in that job. And people—you could see him just sort of smiling—“hey, this is good. People value me.”

Maruna (2006) and Braithwaite and Mugford (1994) persuasively suggest that we create rituals for reintegration, considering the elaborate punishment rituals we create. Inclusion can be powerfully expressed in a less ritualistic manner that conveys belonging as well as high expectations for behavior. As a volunteer explained core members' thinking,

“There's people that can accept me for the person I am with all my imperfections. And I can be a better person. And they recognize it.” Some of these guys – never in their lives has anybody said “Good job! Thanks a lot” . . . that just doesn't happen . . . I think that's definitely a part of it is just building those positive relationships.

Community engagement, however, may not have features of a decertification ritual (Maruna, 2006; Maruna & LeBel, 2003); the simple act of integrating an offender into ordinary community life conveys certain values and a strengths-based approach, as opposed to a risk-centric one. As a core member described,

The CoSA team was somebody that I can prove to that I can do good and that I *will* do good. And I mean like I wasn't rewarded for what I was doing but it was just—I don't know, it felt good seeing somebody else smile because I was doing the right thing. And they constantly—I don't know—I guess that's how they reward me with the “good jobs” and the pats on the back and stuff, and it's nice.

In addition, the community creates its own “moral authority” (Fox, 2010, 2012) by virtue of its presumption of goodness (or capacity for goodness) on the part of the returning offender and willingness to invest time and energy in offenders, some of whom have committed heinous crimes. Many CoSAs celebrate when the core member has graduated—meaning, finished one year successfully in the CoSA. Yet, de-labeling happens slowly within relationships. As a core member explained,

It's more than like . . . I have deficits. It's more that I have worth and I have worth . . . [by] just encouraging [me]. And I get the sense like . . . I'm able to shed with them the feeling like, “are they going to react to me?” Also like I'm a freak and . . . they for me do not validate, give me a sense of validation of my own negative inferiority. You know what I'm saying? I don't get that from them. I don't know how else to say it.

Several core members and volunteers expressed the idea of holding up a mirror to the core member that shows all the qualities the team sees, all the promise, beyond the offenses committed. According to a core member,

They kind of like helped me to see that there's more than just . . . the way that I see myself or the way that I see that the world sees me because it's not all there is. There actually—they show me a respect that I've never seen in my life. So it just kind of blows my mind.

As a volunteer described,

Core members get to see how other people—I mean none of us approve of what he did. But we can sit here and say, “okay, you did this. Now let’s work on who you *really* are . . .”

Maruna (2001) found that desisters from crime had successfully created narratives that explained their criminality as situational, nothing but a diversion from their true selves; this allowed for them to engage a sense of optimism. But our exclusionary practices make creating and defending such a positive sense of self difficult for offenders; optimism does not come easily in the face of the barriers they confront. As Maruna (2006) says elsewhere, the state cannot integrate offenders; communities can. Inclusionary community integration powerfully demonstrates what Jacobs (2013) calls “civil disposition.” Civil disposition is necessary to succeed in society. To the extent that prisoners’ agency is undermined by punishment, and reentry can diminish capacities for “trust and trustworthiness,” it is unethical (Jacobs, 2013, p. 4).

Jacobs argues some punishment may be considered unethical to the extent that it diminishes learning civil disposition in the returning offender and among citizens. By civility, Jacobs (2013) means “respect for persons as having equal moral standing and meriting humane concern” (p. 4). Thus, with respect to offender integration into community life, values are significant both as part of a moral or ethical imperative for communities to signal a state of shared moral space with offenders; through the process of interaction between offenders and citizens, the values of engagement, honesty, reciprocity, and forgiveness are inscribed into the contours of everyday life.

CONCLUSION

There are several significant dimensions to a community-based integration program like CoSA. First, the model illustrates the power of positive labeling in moving an offender from a state of temporal desistance to a more enduring identity. Beyond the notion of secondary desistance as the more enduring kind that emanates from a changed sense of self, tertiary desistance, according to McNeill (2014), is the variety that evolves out of a sense of belonging. As such, community integration can be seen as a precursor to successful desistance, rather than an outcome of desistance. The lesson then, from a pragmatic perspective, is that communities need be long on support; accountability, which develops over time, is mutual. Moreover, community integration tends to mitigate against the more damaging and exclusionary aspects of incarceration and the liminal state of reentry. As Arrigo and Takahashi (2006) explain about the “recommunalization” process, strengths-based “resocialization” contains the components needed to “make a reconstitution of place and personhood possible” (p. 313). If reentry programs exist in an effort to stabilize and integrate criminalized persons, then oversubscribing to risk principles will backfire and not convey the ethical message of acceptance which will enable a sense of place and purpose. Whereas CoSA is simply one model, the elements suggested by the important role of community are transferable and theoretically important.

Community-based models have some inherent risks of devolving to a form of net-widening (Cohen, 1985). If harder social controls such as correctional supervision are not relaxed with the composition of a community-based team, then the CoSA team (or other community model) hazards piling on more intense supervision, which unwittingly reinforces a risk

management orientation to offenders' release. Insofar as CoSA can offset the harder social control and embody strengths-based "radical inclusion" (Hannem, 2013, p. 279; see also Hannem & Petrunik, 2007), then the potential of the model is more fully realized in the form of tertiary desistance (McNeill, 2014).

Ward and Stewart (2003, p. 135) champion the notion that attending to "human well-being" rather than just criminogenic needs is both a more sophisticated understanding of criminals' needs, and a statement that criminals and ordinary citizens share more normative space than is imagined in risk-based models (see also Ward & Brown, 2004; Ward & Maruna, 2007). Besides, as Day and Ward (2010) assert, values underscore correctional practice. Even within a retributive framework which has been operating in corrections for decades, there is an imperative to ensure that punishment is neither too harsh nor too lenient. Extending exclusionary practice beyond incarceration is antithetical to retributive doctrine. Communities that punish need also to signal punishment's end.

However, the unfortunate "what works" mantra, and the fixation on scientific principles insist on risks that are often deemed set in stone, dictated by past behaviors, reinforcing a negative perception, and de-emphasizing capacity for normal lives; rather, offenders' lives pose risks to be managed. Yet, if we apply the simple but elegant findings from research on parenting (Baumrind, 1991), we find that loving authority that emphasizes stewards' and wards' capacities for reason, and shared normative space, we can infer that our exclusionary "criminology of the other" (Garland, 2001) will not serve our communities' best interests. The simple acts associated with community inclusion and de-labeling of offenders promote enhanced (normative) identities among ex-offenders, a sense of empowerment, autonomy, and contribution to a positive culture (Arrigo & Takahashi, 2006; Day & Ward, 2010). Ethically and pragmatically, civil society is enhanced when communities' values include an ethos of enabling and enhancing "civil disposition" (Jacobs, 2013) in citizens' capacity for integrating those who offend among us.

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