

Strain and Adaptation Among Probation Officers: An Application of Merton's Classic
Strain Theory

by

Joshua Lester

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Thesis Committee:

Dr. Meredith Dye, Chair

Dr. Angela Mertig

Dr. Ron Aday

I dedicate this paper to those who have found themselves trapped in a system which neglects to serve them properly. I also dedicate this paper to those who continue to work in the criminal justice system and maintain empathy for the offenders they encounter daily and continue with a passion for offender success.

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ABSTRACT

To better understand the implications of probationary practices, strain experienced by probationary staff, and deviation from current practices, I administered a 42- question survey instrument to twenty-six probation officers in Middle Tennessee at a privatized and non-privatized probation facility. The survey used two original scales to measure participant's perceived strain towards probationary goals and their use of adaptations. These key variables of interest, including strain and modes of adaptation were constructed from Merton's Classic Strain Theory in application to probationary standards. Results indicated: 1) support of Merton's theoretical model-, those who identified as experiencing perceived strain indicated use of adaptations such as innovation, retreatism, ritualism, and rebellion, 2) confusion among probation officers in terms of facility practices and goals of probation, 3) common use of middle ground and "not sure" responses when asked questions pertaining to respondents' ethical practices.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PO	Probation Officer
VOP	Violation of Probation

INTRODUCTION

Since its inception, the explicit goal of probation as displayed in guidelines, mission and vision statements has been the successful completion of a probationary sentence. If this is the end goal for a probation officer and offender, why is it that the U.S. Department of Justice reports that nearly 40% of new prison intakes are due to the inability to complete probation guidelines (Guerino, Harrison, Sabol 2011)? Does the current system allow probation officers to assist offenders in completion of probation? Are offenders unable to complete the probation guidelines due to felt strains such as financial stresses, reduced autonomy, diminished employment opportunities, and lack of privacy (Durnescu 2011, Payne and Gainey 1998)? Since probation officers have such a large amount of power in an individual's probation what impact does the probation officer have on successful offender completion? Furthermore, how do officers meet the goals of probation given offender strains?

These strains are especially complicated within privatized probation, where the end goal of probation officers/offenders may be unclear. Articles on the unethical practices in privatized probation and whether privatized probation is a scheme to take money from low income populations are becoming more popular in mainstream media (ACLU 2010, Bronner 2012, Solon 2014). Do probation officers within a privatized probation setting perceive the offender's completion of probation as "success" or the end goal for probation? What are other goals within privatized probation? How do probation officers within privatized settings adapt to perceived strains in order to meet probation success goals?

The purpose of this research is to identify the perceived strains among community correction probation officers and their use of “alternative modes of adaptation” (Merton 1938) necessary to meet the end goals of probation completion. To my knowledge, there is no current research on perceived strain among probation officers or the use of alternative modes of adaptation, especially within privatized probation settings.

BACKGROUND LITERATURE

BRIEF HISTORY OF PROBATION IN THE UNITED STATES: FROM TREATMENT TO CONTROL MODELS

The first probation officer, John Augustus (1785-1859), described probation as a suitable way to keep those who broke the law in the community, as long as they did not commit additional crimes (Lidner 2007). During the mid-1800s Augustus and Mathew Davenport Hill, who is also recognized for his early impact on probation, placed emphasis on helping the individual who broke the law secure social needs such as housing and employment (Lidner 2007). Currently one’s social condition can have a great effect on one’s probability of interaction with the criminal justice system. The same interaction existed during the mid-1800s, and had a large impact on John Augustus’s social work behavior (Lidner 2007). By the late 1800s and mid-1900s, correction officials were given discretion to tailor treatment needs of individual offenders (Mackenzie 2001). This approach, according to Mackenzie (2001), followed a medical-type approach that focused on rehabilitation.

During the 1960s, President Lyndon Johnson’s Blue Ribbon Panel sought to uncover problems related to crime causation and control in the United States.

Recommendations were reduced probation and parole caseloads; increased services for felons, juveniles, and adult misdemeanors who could profit from community treatment; and training of officers to provide more active interventions (Mackenzie 2001). The Blue Ribbon Panel proposal limited 35 offenders to every probation officer. Due to lack of funding and implementation, the recommended program guidelines and rehabilitative/medical approach often yielded “unsatisfying results” (Mackenzie 2001:302).

During the 1970s Lipton, Martison, and Wilks (cited in Mackenzie 2001) reported results that treatment programs, with few exceptions, proved ineffective. Despite critiques of the report, their conclusions sparked a “nothing works” perspective. In other words, treatment models were thought of as a waste of time and resources. Mackenzie (2001) suggested that other events taking place at that time set a context for the “weak” treatment perspective. For example, during this time focus was on the Civil Rights movement and the Vietnam War. Coupled with rising crime rates, the weary public’s opinion of safety and crime opened the door for new policy, which included a war on crime and what some call the “law and order period” (Mackenzie 2001).

By the late 1970s, policies such as the “war on drugs,” mandatory minimums, and three strike laws fueled a “get tough on crime” perspective that had direct effects on community probation facilities. With increasing incarceration rates, probation was once again sought out as a means to reduce prison population levels. These policy changes were also paired with an increased number of offenders within the criminal justice system as a whole and on probation specifically. Reflecting these changes, offenders within the probation system rose from 1.8 million to 5.9 million from 1980 to 1998 (Gideon and Sung 2011; Mackenzie 2001). The number increased to 7.3 million by 2007 (Delude,

Mitchell, Barber 2012). Compared with Johnson's Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations, the American Probation and Parole Association (Taxman 2002) reports an average ratio of 160 offenders to every one probation officer.

Other changes to probation included "non-treatment-oriented" conditions termed "intermediate sanctions." These included electronic monitoring and intensive supervision, drug/urine testing, and increased control over offenders in the community (Mackenzie 2001). In effect, the probation system transitioned into a more control-oriented system. However, due to this transition in models, the use of probation produced what scholars call "net widening." This is now evident not only in the increased rate of offenders on probationary services, but also in the way the "war on drugs" and other policies increased the amount of offenders with "petty crimes" or misdemeanor charges in the probation system (Natapoff 2012). Placing offenders in what some would call a system increased the amount of offenders and inmates within the criminal justice system as a whole. Phelps (2013) explains that net widening also occurs when offenders placed on probation are just as likely to be returned to the criminal justice system due to the amount of control, supervision, and violations placed on the offender in probation. Ironically, the increase in offenders within probation was an attempt to decrease the amount of inmates in jail. Violation or violation of probation is a term used within the probation system meaning that the offender did not follow the guidelines of his/her probation set by the court.

Caplan (2006) explains that the transition from rehabilitative to control perspectives, has added anomie to the probation officers' profession. The profession, according to Caplan, has been negatively influenced by the use of new surveillance

technologies instead of rehabilitation technologies, increase in caseloads due to an attempt to decrease prison populations and increase monitoring, and overall confusion of parole and probation roles due to lack of rehabilitation programs.

TRANSITION WITHIN COMMUNITY PROBATION IN TENNESSEE

In the state of Tennessee, probation is handled in two levels. Felony offenses are handled at the state level through the Tennessee Department of Probation and Parole. Misdemeanor charges are handled at the county level. The misdemeanor charges that are covered within community probation include class A to class E misdemeanors. For the over 77,000 offenders in community corrections within the state of Tennessee (Tennessee Bureau of Investigation 2014), the state allows county level control. A community either has a public or private probation facility to supervise its misdemeanor offenders; at times both may be present within one community. The county decides whether to absorb the responsibilities of supervising or "selling" these cases by contracting with a private organization.

Privatized probation facilities readily absorb a county's offenders. Much like a public facility, a private facility's goal is to supervise and collect debts from the offender. The difference in the two practices is the amount an offender is being charged for these services. In a publicly owned facility the focus is not a continuous "supervision charge" that the offender must pay each time they meet their probation officer. Instead, they are to pay the court cost and restitution if applicable. If there is an issue of nonpayment, the court simply handles payment directly. For example, if an offender was fined and unable to pay the fine the court would then allow the offender a certain time to pay the fine. If the offender is still not able to pay the fine as a whole, then a hardship type application is

filed and the offender then makes payments to the court without accruing interest. In a privatized facility, the lack of payment results in additional violations and charges. As the new “debt collectors,” privatized probation corporations have the right to warrant and imprison a person for nonpayment with little, if any, oversight. In addition, the overall practice of making a profit blurs the organizational goals of a privatized facility. For example, if the stake holders within the organization (probation officers) are given incentives (raises, better office, continued employment) for the number of drug screens they distribute or the amount of offenders they maintain on their caseload the goal of assisting the offender complete probation are confused and role confusion occurs.

THE PROBATION OFFICER AND OFFENDER

At the center of these issues within the probation system is the interaction of probation officer and offender. Unlike John Augustus, probation officers today have multiple and conflicting goals that often lead to strain and require violating offenders for not meeting set conditions of probation. Strains in any profession influence performance and the care for those who are being serviced. An issue is formed when the probation officer, who is thought to have the control, is unable to meet the probation goals due to strains felt by offenders. In addition, other strains affecting the probation officer profession are the lack of job satisfaction and the ability to perform one’s varied tasks (Lee and Johnson 2009). While DeMichele (2014) explains that the probation officers’ viewpoints began to change due to a shift in training, professionalism, and accreditation systems, structural changes also left some officers with strain in how to meet their success goals. For example, conditions of supervision include electronic monitoring devices, scheduled and unscheduled home visits, drug tests, daily call-ins, no associating

with known felons, police contact, and paying fees (DeMichele 2014). Another common goal in privatized community supervision is to offer services to ensure offender completion. In other words, the probation officer should assist in offender completion of the sentence, either by providing community based resources or collaborative services. Offering services can include providing a list of possible community service options or offering hardship applications. Although these services could be given, there becomes a common question of whether probation officers are providing resources. Without resources it may be more difficult for the offender to complete probation. Services such as mandatory drug testing, mandatory visits per month and offender fees make the probationer's success unlikely.

To elaborate, offenders are expected to pay supervision fees while on probation. This fee is for "supervision" as well as to pay court costs and/or restitution. When an offender is unable to pay probationary fees by the end of the term of their sentence, they are violated. A violation means the offender did not complete the required goals set for the offender in court; the consequence is typically revocation of probation and commencement of the deferred jail/prison sentence.

In addition to failure to pay supervision fees, there are several different types of violations. These depend on which guideline they did not fulfill. In terms of drug testing, probation officers are typically required per court order to conduct drug screenings. Drug screening becomes a strain in terms of decreasing the offenders chance of meeting their goals (DeMichele 2014; Pain and Ganey 1998; Taxman 2013). Offenders who suffer from addiction are subjected to more punishment instead of assistance and treatment (Taxman 2013). The lack of treatment and continuous use of drug screening become a

strain on the offender. Another strain is the mandatory visits per month offenders are expected to meet their probation officers. This becomes a strain for the probation officer when the offender is unable to meet the required amount of times, which could be because the offender lacks transportation or is unable to meet due to employment. Other strains include mandatory narcotics anonymous (NA), alcoholics anonymous (AA), anger management and group classes. All of these take more time out of the offender's day and impact employment.

US VS THEM

The transition from treatment to control models, and accompanying changes in probation conditions, helped solidify an "us versus them" mentality among officers and offenders. These issues are often identified in probation research (Bosker, Witteman, Hermanns 2013; Rudes, Viglione, Taxman 2011) and include offender and PO (probation officer) satisfaction with probation, PO's perceptions of offenders, and issues associated with desensitization—separating offenders from the rest of the public (Delude, Mitchell, Barb 2012; Rudes, Viglione, Taxman, 2011; Williams 2006). For example, Bosker et al. (2013) identified the duration of probation officer employment indicated significant differences when choosing intervention plans. Research by Gayman and Bradley (2013) also found that duration of employment was significantly correlated with job satisfaction and stress. Also, Gardner et al (2006) found that probation officers were more likely to believe a female offender was a liar compared to a male offender. Lastly, Sluder and Reddington (1993) discovered significant differences among probationary practices when accounting for probation officer political orientation and level of education.

Desensitized behavior and the inability to build a relationship affect the likelihood of the probationer and probation officer's success in completing probation. "Skills identified by probation officers in terms of skills needed to supervise offenders are: concerned relational abilities, coping with offender emotions, interpersonal communication skills and interviewing skills" (Delude, Mitchell, and Barber 2012:36). All of these skills have the potential of declining with a dehumanizing barrier such as an "us versus them" perspective. Although, researchers discuss probationer attitudes and behavior such as officer attitudes towards offenders, the current literature does not examine the strains creating these attitudes/behaviors. While there is no current research focusing on the perceived strains and ways in which POs adapt to everyday strains, this "us versus them" concept may be related to perceived strain as a form of dissociation, or a coping mechanism for perceived strain. The concept is certainly important for framing an understanding of strains in meeting probation goals and how/why officers adapt to those strains in order to meet probation goals.

OFFICER ROLES AND ISOMORPHISM

The transition towards an evidence based practice, which is a concept in the control model, increased confusion in the role a probation officer is to maintain. For example, treatment models as discussed earlier may not yield satisfying results due to the amount of variables present during an offender's case or the clear lack of funding for treatment based practices. DeMichele (2014) explains that within the context of neo-institutional theories probation officers come to know their roles through three ways of isomorphism—or the way an organizational field is constructed using imitation, professional norms, and coercion. These three factors shape the interconnections, shared

meanings, and goals for a set of organizational units. DeMichele termed these mimetic isomorphism, normative isomorphism, and coercive isomorphism.

Mimetic isomorphism is modeled behavior which follows the organization's goals. Issues emerge when the goal of the organization is not clearly defined. For example, there is confusion about whether the probation officer is to offer services and follow a social worker type model, a punishment/control model, or a treatment model. The probation officer is not sure if they are to take on the role of a social worker, or a cop. The balance of multiple roles adds confusion to the profession. Normative isomorphism is based on the socialization that takes place within the probation officer profession. For example, the common norm of the "nothing works" model or the "us versus them" mentality will have an impact on the probation officer profession and cause strain as to what the role of a probation officer really is and how to "assist" their offenders. In coercive isomorphism the probation officer is faced with the challenge of making themselves a legitimate resource. "Legitimacy" is often determined by which level of government the organization is under and what model the current public favors. For example, if current public opinion is one in which punishment is the focus, the probation officer profession must follow the guidelines to gain legitimacy. Changes in public support for rehabilitative or control/evidence based practices adds confusion and strain to the role of the probation officer.

Each probation officer creates their own type of practice with each type of isomorphism. The end goals that a probation officer is to meet consists of their perceptions of each type of isomorphism. For the most part these goals are displayed in the company's mission statements and probationary guidelines. If the guidelines and

mission statements of a probation officer's company do not match the way they have learned and constructed their profession, then there is strain in the probation officer's profession. This inability to meet probation goals, not knowing which model to follow, failure to conform to professional norms, or lacking legitimacy in the public mind are all sources of strain. How officers adapt to these strains as well as offender strains is the focus of this research.

In sum, the inability to perform tasks and complete goals causes strain within the probation officer occupation. There is confusion as to what goals the probation officer is expected to complete. Added procedures are obstacles that cause a strain for the probation officer. These strains include ensuring the offender successfully completes probation while passing drug tests, attending meetings, and paying fines. In addition, an "us versus them" mentality develops between officer and offender groups, and creates barriers to reaching probation success goals. The ways officers are trained and practice via various forms of isomorphism helps explain additional sources of strain and the ability of officers to adapt to strain to meet probation goals of completion (or violation for failure to meet guidelines/conditions of probation).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In an attempt to solve a social problem (crime), the probation system and profession have created codes of conduct, standards, and behavioral expectations for officers and offenders which have changed over time. Ironically, these may not assist offenders in completing probationary goals. Instead, the system is more often composed of strains for both offenders and officers that create barriers to completion of probation.

The way these issues are situated within the probation profession can be explained using the notion of a “social problems worker” described by Joel Best (2008). Best explains that the social problems worker is a stage within the construction of social problems. “Social Problems work consists of applying constructions of social problems or social policies to their immediate, practical situation” (Best 2008: 227). Best describes the enforcement of policy by the social problems worker as “finding themselves squeezed between great expectations and mundane reality” (Best 2008: 228). Workers are caught between the expectations of the larger cultural, institutional, and organizational systems and the practical nature of implementing policies that affect their subjects. These policies are not arbitrary, but stem from larger socially constructed beliefs. According to Best, there are cultural understandings which affect society and the way we structure policies. These policies then affect how the social problems worker completes their job goals. This is where the social problems worker is forced to determine what is ideal and reality. The confusion in determining what is ideal and what is reality creates conflict. The conflict between practices and what an individual knows or thinks is right occurs in many professions.

Probation officers work every day to implement policies and attempt to enforce these policies on the offender, or “subject”. Reality and real life encounters with probationers are not as clear cut as the guidelines which the probation officer must follow. The probation officer is forced to use their discretion and decide whether to violate an individual because that is what the policy mandates, even if that is not what they believe should occur. Probation officers have a large amount of discretion in their profession. They do not have supervisors closely watching them with their large number

of caseloads. Best explains that when a social problems worker has a large amount of discretion, paired with idealistic goals (e.g., treatment/control-oriented models and probation completion goals) it will cause them to ignore particular policies. The probation officer is more inclined to choose alternatives to these policies to fit their “practical” world. By making their own rules or alternatives to meeting their goals, probation officers are adapting to strain in their profession.

APPLICATION OF MERTON'S CLASSICAL STRAIN THEORY

According to Robert Merton (1938), strain (or anomie) is the disjuncture between approved means and success goals, or the inability to meet one's goals using socially acceptable means. To compensate for strain and meet one's goals, individuals will use modes of adaptation. Merton's modes of adaptation include conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion (Merton 1938).

In terms of probation officers, these goals and norms are guidelines put in place by the probation organization, and state and federal guidelines (Featherstone and Deflem 2003). This includes the overall goal of successful completion of probation. Strains are any type of barrier to meeting these goals through approved norms/guidelines, and specifically to the primary goal of successfully completing a probation sentence. The way and extent to which probation officers adapt to strain through “deviant” modes is unknown. The research uses Merton's Classic Strain Theory to understand probation officer discretion in their reactions to strain and the means to meeting probation goals of successful completion.

Using this framework, conformity is ideally the most common response. This is when a probation officer understands and accepts the goals of probation as well as the

means to meeting these goals. Accepting probation completion as the primary goal, these officers follow set guidelines to assist offenders in reaching this goal. The means may be through treatment or control-oriented models. When offenders fail drug tests or fail to make payments, for example, these officers conform to the norms and expectations of the probation guidelines and violate offenders.

In general, innovation is the most common “deviant” mode of adaptation (Akers and Sellers 2004). The extent to which probation officers “innovate” is a concern for the proposed study. This is when a probation officer accepts the goal of successful completion of probation but rejects the approved means of achieving that goal when these are blocked by strains. These officers understand offender strains and attempt to meet the goals in other illegitimate ways. For example, a probation officer utilizing the innovative adaptation is one who would allow an offender to meet every other week instead of once a week.

A ritualist understands the strains yet holds strong to the guidelines and rarely, if ever, deviates from protocol. In other words, they reject the goal (e.g., view goal as unattainable), but continue with the means to the goal. These probation officers may be cynical about the system and reject the notion that offenders will complete probation; most offenders will be violated and enter the revolving door of the criminal justice system. Despite this rejection of probationary goals, these officers continue to implement policies and guidelines established to meet this goal. In effect, these officers are “just doing their jobs.”

A person using retreatism has lost faith in the entire system. The probation officer rejects the means and the goals of probation altogether. This would be a person just trying

to earn a paycheck. This person would understand the incapability of current probation and choose not to participate. This person may be looking for another job.

In rebellion, an individual no longer cares for the goal or the means, but unlike a retreatist, will substitute their own goals and means for those that are socially/legally approved. For example, someone utilizing this mode would overthrow the system altogether. A person using a rebellion mode may see violations or debt collection/profit as a primary goal of probation. This may be more evident in privatized probation settings. As such, these officers may set out to find violations, refuse to work with offenders to meet the traditional goal of completing probation, and hold tightly to an “us versus them” mentality. Examples of each of these modes of adaption to strain are displayed in Table 1.

METHODOLOGY

DATA COLLECTION

The research focused on perceived probation officer strain and adaptation to perceived strain. A 42-item survey instrument (see Appendix A) included a strain scale as well as a scale to measure modes of adaptation. The survey was available to respondents on Survey Monkey from 03/11/16 – 03/24/16. No incentive was provided for participating in the survey. Recruitment occurred with the assistance of management from two probation offices within Middle Tennessee. Rapport was gained with both individuals with the understanding that they would distribute the email with the survey link to probation officers. A pre-notice email was emailed to management prior to the email with a link to the survey. The sample included probation officers at a local

privatized probation facility as well as a non-privatized drug court probation center. Because of the limited number of probation officers, the entire population of two facilities (one privatized and one non privatized), was asked to complete the survey. At the time of recruitment there were a total of nine privatized facilities in the Middle Tennessee area with an average of 11 probation officers on site. However, during the research the organization's contract with the county was terminated and the facility made plans to close. Closures affected the survey response rate. In addition, due to the closing and several legal proceedings occurring during data collection, communication with management was ended. The lack of communication during and after data collection hindered the ability to determine an accurate response rate.

To increase response as much as possible I visited the facility to discuss the research and provide the probationary staff with a copy of the survey and a brief description of the research prior to the closing of the organization. The purpose of the meeting was to contact those probation staff that may no longer be able to complete the survey by the provided email link.

Conducting research within a probation setting posed problems for several reasons. Probation officers likely do not want to provide any information that may jeopardize their position or cast blame on their organization. Several studies have yielded low response rates in regards to probation facilities (Bosker, Witteman, and Hermanns 2013; Rosencrance 1985; Taxman 2002). Given that many probation officers left the organization around the time of survey administration, it is difficult to calculate an accurate response rate. Twenty-six probation officers responded to the survey, 7 men and 18 women (1 respondent did not complete demographics). Based on conservative

estimates, then, approximately 26% of those eligible for participation, responded to the survey. Given the nature of the situation, the response rate for this population and type of survey was acceptable.

MEASURES

To measure strain and modes of adaptation, the survey included two original scales. The scales were 5-point Likert scales with response options of strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree (coded as 0 to 5).

The first scale measured the goals/strain, which was officer perceptions of probationary goals. The scale included nine statements pertaining to the probation officer's view on the probation system as a whole as well as their own facility. The specific items were adapted from the facility's mission, values, and vision statements gathered through the organization's website. Statements pertaining to probation as a whole were gathered from state and federal probation guidelines.

Specific items that composed the goals/strain scale included: "Probation is a great alternative in regards to jail"; "Probation provides resources to help offenders complete probation goals"; "The probationary goals the offender must meet are easily attainable"; "My probation company offers innovative and efficient community based solutions"; "My Company is effective and meets the needs of its offenders"; "The goals I must meet as a probation officer are realistic"; "Working as a probation officer is difficult due to the goals the offender must meet"; "Compromising with offenders needs is important in order to complete probationary goals"; and "The guidelines/standards I am told to use as a probation officer differ from my personal morals/values."

Responses to each of these items indicated the officer's level of perceived strains in achieving probation goals, or the extent to which the means to probation goals (i.e., probation completion) are perceived as blocked. This operationalization of goals/strains was based on Merton's definition. For higher scores, officers agreed with the probationary role/goal and perceived less strain.

Using these nine items, I create a composite score measuring strain, which was based on the summed responses. Items seven "Working as a probation officer is difficult due to the goals the offenders must meet" and nine "The guidelines/standards I am told to use as a probation officer differ from my personal morals/values" were reverse coded such that higher scores indicated less strain. A lower value on a probation goal indicated more strain. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale was very good at .872.

In addition to these items, officers were asked directly: "Do you think the goal of probation is offender completion?" (no, not sure, or yes). For "no" responses, officers were asked what they thought was the goal of probation. The responses were then gathered in an open ended variable. The question on offender completion was reverse coded such that higher scores indicated less strain. This was done to ensure the variable matched the direction of the other goal/strain measures.

The second modes of adaptation scale consisted of nine items, which measured the ways probation officers meet probation goals and the extent to which officers adapt to strain due to blocked means-goals. The modes of adaptation scale was based on Merton's five modes of adaptation: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion. The survey items were constructed from probationary practices in the current literature and organization procedures, missions, and goals. These included services expected of

probation officers to assist offenders in completing probation such as: "I violate offenders who do not meet court guidelines" and "I will assign a drug screen to an offender if I believe they have used" (measuring conformity); "I will let an offender group payments in biweekly visits instead of weekly visits", "I will wait to violate an offender if I know they are unable to serve time", and "I make it a goal to come up with different ways to help offenders meet their probationary goals" (measuring innovation); "I choose not to drug screen unless I have been pressured by Management or Administration" (measuring retreatism); "I do not always follow the company and state guidelines as a probation officer" and "I will assign a drug screen just to meet quota" (measuring rebellion), and "I don't agree with everything but it's a job" (measuring ritualism). Where multiple items measured an adaptation, the scores were summed to create a composite measure. In total, the nine items were distributed along these five modes of adaptation, with three composite scales measuring conformity (two items), innovation (three items), and rebellion (two items); and the remaining two adaptations (ritualism and retreatism) each measured by a single item (noted above).

In addition to the scales measuring these key variables, I asked respondents about specific probation practices, training, and caseload characteristics. I asked directly whether or not their facility offered trainings on probationary practices, and if there were specific guidelines they had to follow as a probation officer. In addition, I asked respondents, "Which of the following best describes your use of drug screens?" with response choices of "I screen...the maximum amount, the minimum amount, somewhere in between, not sure." Because the transformation of probation from a rehabilitative practice towards a control-oriented model provided context for the research, and

probation facilities and officers rely on different models, I asked probation officers if they believed their probation facility was mostly control-oriented, mostly rehabilitative, not sure, or an equal amount of control and rehabilitative-oriented.

Other questions that were useful for understanding the research questions of this study were: “What types of tasks do you perform to manage daily strains?”; “What would you consider the most challenging part of working as probation officer?”; “What types of strains/barriers do your clients express?” These were left open-ended and allowed the respondent to provide additional information about probation strains that I may not have known to ask.

Probation officers also were asked questions about the characteristics of their offender caseload. These included: 1) caseload gender, 2) caseload race, 3) caseload age and 4) which gender they believed was harder to work with

Probation officer demographics included age (in years), gender, race/ethnicity, educational attainment, major or concentration of study, years working as a probation officer, religious affiliation, and political ideology. Educational attainment was measured by selecting one of the following as the highest education attained: Associates or trade school, Bachelor’s degree, Masters Level and Doctorate. I also measured participant’s college major or concentration of study. After recoding based on distribution of responses, majors were divided into three categories: Criminal Justice, Psychology/Sociology, and Other. Included in the “other” category were Human Resources and Business Administration. In addition, the time in which the respondents have worked as a probation officer was included. The question originally asked respondents to select between “less than 6 months”, “More than 6 months, but less than 1

year”, “More than 1 year, but less than 3 years”, and “More than 3 years”. Based on the distribution of responses, I merged respondents into two categories of “Less than 3 years” and “More than 3 years.

Religious affiliation included Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and other, as well as preference not to disclose and an option for not religious. Respondents were also asked, “On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate how strongly you hold your religious beliefs, where 1 is not at all religious and 10 is extremely religious.” Likewise, respondents were asked “In general, how would you describe your political views?” and options were conservative, moderate, liberal, or not sure.

ANALYSES

Using the SPSS v.21 software, I ran descriptive analyses on all probation officer demographics as well as probation officer’s offender caseload demographics; question pertaining to probation officer trainings and practices; and the key variables of interest—goals/strains and modes of adaptation. In addition to reliability analyses for all of the constructed scales, I performed a factor analysis to determine if the items measuring adaptations to probation officer strain were consistent empirically with Merton’s five theoretical modes of adaption. The test indicated which items loaded together.

I then ran several bivariate analyses using cross-tabs and independent samples t-tests to examine associations between variables of interest, demographic variables, and practices/training variables. Specifically, I examined the question “Do you think the goal of probation is offender completion?” (no, not sure, and yes) based on gender, race, education, major, employment duration, religious affiliation, and political views. I then examined the same set of variables cross tabulated with the questions “Would you

consider your facility more control oriented, more rehabilitative, and equal amount of control and rehabilitative or not sure?”

Next, I examined the bivariate correlations for the goals/strain scale, the question regarding whether the probation officers perceived the end goal of probation being offender completion, and each of the five modes of adaption. These correlations were used to determine the relationship between officer goals/strain and the way officers adapted to those strains through innovation, retreatism, rebellion, and ritualism, and to assess the extent to which Merton’s theoretical constructs apply to probation officer strains.

I performed several one-way ANOVA’s to compare the means for 1) goals/strain, and 2) the five modes of adaptation. The first one-way ANOVA compared means for each scale based on whether probation officers thought offender completion was the goal of probation (no, not sure, and yes). The second one-way ANOVA compared means for each scale based on whether officers perceived their facility as being control-oriented, rehabilitation-oriented, equal amounts of control and rehabilitation-oriented, and not sure.

The final analyses compared means for both goals/strains and the five modes of adaptations for all demographic (i.e., gender, race, education, major, employment duration, religious affiliation, and political views) and probation practices/training variables. These analyses were used to determine which officers experienced strain and which officers used a particular mode of adaptation.

RESULTS

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSES

PARTICIPANTS

Demographic results can be found in Table. 2. The sample size was 26 participants, and included seven men and eighteen women (one participant unknown). Ages ranged from 24-43 years ($\bar{x} = 29.72$, $SD = 4.46$). Over eighty percent of the participants were white. Likewise, over eighty percent held a Bachelor's degree in either Criminal Justice (39%) or Psychology/Sociology (31%). Other majors included Human Resources and Business Administration. Sixteen percent of individuals held a degree that was considered a Graduate or Professional degree.

Of religious affiliation, sixteen percent identified as Catholic, four percent Jewish, fifty-two percent Protestant, twelve percent Not Religious, and sixteen percent preferred Not to Disclose. Nearly half of the participants identified as Conservative (48%). Twenty-eight percent identified as Moderate, and twelve percent as Liberal. Sixty-eight percent of respondents have worked three or more years as a probation officer, and thirty-two percent have worked less than three years.

CASELOAD CHARACTERISTICS

As shown in Table 3, the majority of the offenders on participant's caseloads were: 1) a mixture of male and female offenders 2) black or African American and 3) between the ages of twenty-two and thirty years old. In addition, forty-six percent of the probation officers surveyed considered female offenders to be the most difficult to work with opposed to male offenders.

In addition, there were multiple open ended responses for the question, “What types of barriers or strains do your clients identify while on probation?” There were a total of 17 responses to the open ended question. Out of the 17, 12 responses included issues with financial resources. Several responses were “they can’t afford restitution or fines”, “can’t pay fines because they can’t find a job”, and “no income or job to pay fines.”

PROBATION OFFICER PRACTICES AND TRAINING

When looking at the amount of drug screening practices, over half of the respondents listed “in between the maximum and minimum amount” (65.4%). Eighty-one percent reported “yes” to the question: “Are there specific guidelines which you have to follow as a probation officer?” However, only thirty-one percent of respondents said “yes” when asked “Does your organization offer training on proper ways to practice as a probation officer?” Sixty-nine percent of the respondents identified either “no” or “not sure” if their company provided trainings. Over one-third of respondents thought their facility was “Mostly Control Oriented” (36%). More interestingly, out of the twenty-five responses, only two thought their facility was “Mostly Rehabilitative Oriented.”

PROBATION GOALS AND STRAINS

Forty-four percent of the respondents indicated that probation completion is the goal of probation; only sixteen percent responded “no.” However, forty percent reported they were “not sure” if probation completion was the goal of probation. If they selected no ($n= 4$), they were asked to explain what they thought was the end goal of probation. Several responses focused on controlling the population and the role of privatization or making a profit. Responses included the following statements: “To make money”, and

“I’m not sure, but I know it’s not so they will complete. Otherwise it would be easier to complete probationary goals.”

To follow-up, I asked a question about daily strains experienced by the probation officers in reaching these goals, and how they dealt with those strains. Of the twenty officers who responded to this question, fourteen included strains associated with lack of time to complete their daily responsibilities, and the workload they had to complete. Other responses were, “being able to know when someone is honest”, “the pressure and backlash from everyone”, and “having a clientele that does not trust or like you.” The most common response for maintaining stressors provided by half of the respondents was the need for time management and scheduling.

The means and standard deviations for the nine measures of probation goals and strains as well as the goals/strain scale are shown in Table 4. To begin, the higher the mean score the less strain that is perceived by the probation officer. This was based on the idea that the higher values (strongly agree=4 and agree=3) indicates the more a probation officer agrees with and abides by the stated goals/roles of probation. The question “Probation is a great alternative to jail” evidenced the highest mean score ($\bar{x} = 2.62$, $SD = .94$). Over sixty-one percent of officers agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Officers responded similarly to the statement: “Probation provides resources to help offenders complete probation goals.” With an average score of 2.19 ($SD = 1.17$), fifty percent of the officers agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. The remaining seven statements evidenced average scores between 1.23 to 1.96, although as indicated by the standard deviations, there was some variation around these scores. For example, the statement: “The goals I must meet as a probation officer are realistic” ($\bar{x} = 1.23$, $SD =$

1.24)) ranged from sixty-one percent who disagreed or strongly disagreed. Given the relatively low score on this item, officers experienced the most strain in their role when it came to their own goals as a probation officer. The sum of these nine items ranged from 6-31 with a mean score of 16.42 ($SD = 6.84$). The Cronbach Alpha for the scale was .876, which indicated high reliability.

PROBATION OFFICER MODES OF ADAPTAIONS

Measures of probation officer adaptations to strain are presented in Table 5. The highest means for the individual items were among the measures of conformity and ritualism. For example, over sixty percent of probation officers responded to the question “I violate offenders who do not meet court guidelines” as agree or strongly agree while only eight percent selected “disagree” for this question. Similar pattern of responses was evident for the second conformity item: “I will assign a drug screen to an offender if I believe they have used,” ($\bar{x} = 2.38$, $SD = .85$). For the statement “I do not agree with everything, but it’s a job” ($\bar{x} = 2.88$, $SD = .71$), which measured ritualism, nearly eighty percent of officers either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Items measuring innovation and retreatism evidenced slightly lower mean scores than conformity measures, and the distributions were more likely to reflect responses of “neutral” or “disagree.” Specifically, for the question “I make it a goal to come up with different ways of helping offenders meet their probationary goals,” over forty-two percent of officers selected “neutral” and over a quarter (26.9%) selected “disagree.” Nearly eight percent of officers strongly disagreed with the statement “I will wait to violate an offender if I know they are unable to serve time.” The mean score for the single item measuring retreatism was 2.04 ($SD = .60$). Here, the majority of responses

(76.9%) were “neutral.” Officers’ responses to the two items measuring rebellion evidenced the lowest mean scores. Thus, officers were least likely to report utilizing these practices, especially “I do not always follow company and state guidelines as probation officer.” Over thirty-eight percent of officers disagreed with this statement and another eleven percent strongly disagreed.

Based on Cronbach’s alpha levels, each adaptation scale evidenced acceptable reliability ranging from .596 (rebellion) to .783 (conformity). As further support of the scale construction, Table 6 presents the factor analysis results which returned two factors based on cut points at the .6 level. The items “I will let an offender group payments in biweekly visits instead of weekly visits,” “I will wait to violate an offender if I know they are unable to serve time,” and “I make it a goal to come up with different ways of helping offenders meet their probationary goals” loaded on Factor One. These are all identified as innovative practices or alternative means to probation goals, justifying grouping the multiple items into one measure. The items measuring conformity included “I violate offender who do not meet court guidelines,” and “I will assign a drug screen to an offender if I believe they have used,” also held together and loaded on Factor Two. The remaining items measuring officer adaptations did not clearly load on either factor (using a .6 cut point).

BIVARIATE ANALYSES

Cross-tabulations and chi-square analyses provided no discernable associations or statistically significant relationships between demographic, practices and training variables, and questions regarding the end goal of probation or facility orientation.

ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN GOALS/STRAIN AND ADAPTATIONS

Results from the correlation of adaptation and goals/strain indicate that the data follows Merton's theory found in Table 1. Correlation coefficients results indicated that there was a positive relationship between conformity and goals/strain. All other adaptations followed a negative relationship with goals/strains. Also, the innovative adaptation shared a significant relationship with the retreatism, $r = .448$ ($p < .10$), ritualism, $r = .442$ ($p < .10$) and conformity $r = -.431$ ($p < .10$). Also, innovation held a positive relationship with rebellion, $r = .423$ ($p < .10$)

COMPARISON OF GOALS/STRAINS AND ADAPTATION SCALE MEANS FOR SELECT VARIABLES

A one-way ANOVA analysis was used to compare the goals/strain scale as well as the adaptations to the variable measuring whether the probation officer perceived the end goal of probation being offender completion. There was a significant difference in the means between the goals/strain scale and the belief that the end goal of probation was offender completion, ($\bar{x} = 20.10$, $SD = 6.94$, $p < .030$) and those who do not ($\bar{x} = 11.25$, $SD = 5.32$). This indicates that probation officers who believed the end goal of probation was offender completion experienced less strain and a higher goals/strain score. Those who thought otherwise, that offender completion was not the end goal of probation, experienced increased strain and a lower goals/strain score. The innovation adaptation evidenced a higher mean score ($\bar{x} = 8.25$, $SD = 1.50$, $p < .066$) for those who did not believe the end goal of probation was offender completion compared to those who ($\bar{x} = 5.64$, $SD = 1.57$). Probation officers who indicated probation completion was the goal scored relatively higher on the conformity scale ($\bar{x} = 5.64$) and lower on the innovation (\bar{x}

=5.64), ritualism ($\bar{x} = 2.72$), retreatism ($\bar{x} = 1.91$), and rebellion ($\bar{x} = 3.55$). Results can be found on Table 8.

The second one-way ANOVA compared the goals/strain scale as well as the adaptations to the measure of probation officer orientation to their facility. The means of the goals/strain scale indicate that probation officers who believed their facility was more control oriented perceived more strain ($\bar{x} = 15.89$, $SD = 7.39$) than those who reported having a facility with a rehabilitative model ($\bar{x} = 24.50$, $SD = 2.12$). The results were similar to the adaptation conformity. Conformists indicated less strain in a rehabilitative setting ($\bar{x} = 5.50$, $SD = 3.53$) opposed to control oriented ($\bar{x} = 5.11$, $SD = 2.03$). The response “I believe my facility follows a control model” reached near significance with the adaptation retreatism ($\bar{x} = 1.00$, $SD = 1.41$, $p < .10$) opposed to rehabilitative ($\bar{x} = 2.11$, $SD = .60$) indicating that those who believed they worked in a control oriented setting displayed more retreatism behavior. The results were similar to the one-way ANOVA on probation completion in which strain/goals and conformity increased in one direction while innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion followed the opposite direction. Other results can be found on Table 9.

In the final set of one-way ANOVA's I compared the means of each scale (goals/strain and each adaptation) for the demographic as well as the trainings-related variables. In total I included political orientation, religion, race, gender, age, level of education, duration of employment, type of degree, awareness of facility trainings, and understanding of probationary guidelines. Significant mean differences are shown in Table 10. Political orientation evidenced statistically significant mean differences. Those who identify as moderate ($\bar{x} = 12.71$, $SD = 6.24$) and liberal ($\bar{x} = 10.33$, $SD = 4.16$)

perceive more strain than other political orientations. Liberals scored higher on the items measuring innovation ($\bar{x} = 8.66$, $SD = .577$, $p < .10$). This indicates that the more a person identifies as liberal the more innovative practices they use as a probation officer. Ritualism as an adaptation evidenced significant differences in means for political orientation as well, with similar patterns. That is, moderates ($\bar{x} = 3.29$, $SD = .756$, $p < .05$) and liberals ($\bar{x} = 3.33$, $SD = .577$) compared to conservatives were more likely to use ritualist behavior in their probation practices.

Probation officer's major presented significant mean differences when compared with rebellion ($\bar{x} = 4.63$, $SD = 1.19$, $p < .10$). Probation officer major was near significance when compared with innovation ($\bar{x} = 7.63$, $SD = 1.85$, $p = .129$) and retreatism ($\bar{x} = 2.38$, $SD = .518$, $p = .106$). The results indicate that probation officers who have a degree in psychology or sociology tend to practice more innovative, retreatist, and rebellion behavior.

Duration of employment also yielded significant results. When compared with the means of conformity ($\bar{x} = 5.47$, $SD = 1.55$, $p = .132$), those who have worked more than three years as a probation officer indicate using conformist type behavior in probation practices. Those who have worked less than three years as a probation officer indicate more innovation ($\bar{x} = 7.37$, $SD = 1.30$, $p = .143$) and rebellion behavior in their probation practices ($\bar{x} = 4.63$, $SD = 1.19$) than those working in the field longer. Similarly, the level of education generated significant mean differences with goals/strain ($\bar{x} = 24.75$, $SD = 5.06$, $p < .10$). Of the two possible choices "bachelors" or "graduate/professional" those who have the higher level of education report less strain.

The variable measuring if trainings were provided by the probation facility was significant when accounting for mean differences among the conformity adaptation ($\bar{x} = 6.33$, $SD = 1.41$, $p < .05$). This indicates that those who report their facility does not offer trainings rate higher in conformity. Mean differences in goals/strain indicate significance for “not sure” if my probation facility offers trainings ($\bar{x} = 12.22$, $SD = 5.40$). This suggests that those who are unsure if their probation facility offers trainings experience more strain than those who report “yes” ($\bar{x} = 17.50$) or “no” ($\bar{x} = 19.67$).

With regard to gender and officer adaptations, male officers score higher on the rebellion scale than female officers. There were no other differences between men and women. Other variables not included in Table 10 did not show statistical significance or near significance with the modes of adaptations and the goals/means scale.

DISCUSSION

A major goal of this research was to identify how probation officers perceive the goals of probation, and to determine whether confused or blurred goals produce officer strain, as defined by Merton’s Classic Strain Theory. If the guidelines and mission statements of a probation officer’s company do not match the way officers have learned and constructed their profession, then there is strain in the probation officer’s position and an inability to meet probation goals. How the probation officers adapt to these strains was also a major focus of this research. Merton defined adaptations to strain as innovation, rebellion, retreatism, and ritualism. Conformity resulted when there was no strain.

Theoretically, if a probation officer perceives the end goal of probation is offender completion and accept the means in meeting the goal, they would experience less strain in assisting offenders reach this goal than if a probation officer does not perceive the goal of probation as offender completion, or if they accept the goal but cannot achieve it. When this is the case, there is an increased rate of strain among probation officers. In addition, if the goal of offender completion is blurred, but as a probation officer it is your job to assist the offender, you must adapt your practices. The adaptation of probation officer practices provides clear indicators of role confusion and strain.

Within privatized probation, specifically, the end goal of probation becomes blurred. This is due to the incentive to violate offenders because a facility will then earn profit off of the offender's incapability of completing probation. As the new "debt collectors," privatized probation corporations have the right to warrant and imprison a person for nonpayment with little, if any, oversight. Due to the growing publicity on private probation companies and their practices, I wanted a better understanding of what probation officers really thought of offender completion. Officer responses indicated blurred perceptions of probation and probation practices. When asked "Do you think the goal of probation is offender completion?" two themes were identified. These included focus on controlling the population and the role of privatization or making a profit. More importantly, the role of privatized probation and its negative implications were clearly identified within these statements from officers regarding the goals: One responded, "To make money", and another, "I'm not sure, but I know it's not so they will complete. Otherwise it would be easier to complete probationary goals."

Forty-two percent of respondents indicated that they believed the end goal of probation is offender completion. Thirty-eight percent chose “not sure” when asked the question. Although a small percentage of respondents selected no (15.4%), it is important to understand the large amount of not sure. If a probation officers’ goals are clearly taught in trainings, provided in mission statements, and included in state guidelines, why are so many probation officers unsure?

Individual scale items measuring goals also demonstrated levels of strain. For example, the statement, “the goals I must meet as a probation officer are realistic” returned the highest levels of strain for officers. Strain among probation officers regarding their role influences the probation officer’s ability to perform their duties. The items in the goals/strain scale also measured the level of perceived strain felt towards offender’s success. Although officers, overall, believed that probation was a great alternative to jail, they did not believe it was easily obtainable for offenders to meet the goals of probation. Open-ended responses indicated that offenders identify economic strains which affect offender’s ability to complete probationary goals. These included financial strains such as the inability to pay restitution and fines, and lack of employment.

Over 46% of probation officers indicated they disagree or strongly disagree that probation helped provide resources for their offender’s completion. A question that arises is why probation officers think probation a great alternative if the offenders that are placed on probation are not assisted in completing probation. According to DeMichele (2014), mimetic isomorphism is modeled behavior which follows the organization's goals. Issues emerge when the goal of the organization is not clearly defined. For example, there is confusion about whether or not the probation officer is to offer services

and follow a social worker type model, a punishment/control model, or a treatment model. Perhaps a more control-oriented facility, much like the sample involved, has created a generation of probation officers who think probation is a good thing, but do not think that their role is to help offenders. Instead their role is to oversee, supervise and maintain control over their offenders.

The majority of the probation officers believed their facility was control-oriented. Although I am unable to determine which respondents came from the privatized probation facility and which came from the drug court facility, I can assume that the responses from the drug court facility are not control-oriented in nature. Drug courts revolve around meeting the client where they are and providing offenders with behavioral health resources, so it is unlikely that the probation officers there would be working in a control-oriented facility. Only two participants in the entire sample ($n = 26$) thought their facility practices followed a rehabilitative model. Transition from rehabilitative practices towards control oriented practices have been the standard. However, I did not anticipate the large number of responses indicating their facility was control oriented. I believe the nature of the community in which the sample was gathered played a large role in these findings. For example, the privatized company in which responses were gathered has a large influence throughout the Middle Tennessee region. It can be assumed that when a region's major focus in probation follows control oriented practices that the region, according to DeMichele (2014), will follow these practices as their norm. DeMichele uses the term normative isomorphism which explains the socialization that takes place within probation practice.

In addition, the findings indicated that there was a lack of trainings provided to probation officers. State and federal guidelines require officers to maintain a certain amount of training hours throughout their career. Over eighty percent of the officers surveyed they were aware of specific guidelines they had to follow/practice. However, only thirty percent of respondents indicated that their facility offered training on proper ways to practice as a probation officer; thirty-five percent indicated they were not sure. The use of not sure, after saying there are specific guidelines you have to follow raises alarm. How can a probation officer who knows there are guidelines that you have to follow “mandatory trainings” not know if their probation organization offers trainings for them? I assume that the use of “not sure” has been adapted as a way to avoid the question in fear of harming their organization’s reputation. Keep in mind that the privatized facility that was included in the sample was under heavy public scrutiny and legal ramifications precisely because of the practices used by the organization.

A key assumption was that those who worked in privatized probation were more likely to drug screen participants and follow an “us versus them” mentality. Results indicate that the category “mostly control-oriented” was the most common response at thirty-six percent. Although once again a large percentage of participants indicated they were “not sure,” the largest percentage indicated that their facility was more control-oriented. Finding that the largest group selected was a control model perspective was not surprising. The privatized facility that was screened practiced “control” model procedures. These included drug screening and use of monitoring devices. According to literature, a control oriented facility is associated with electronic monitoring and intensive

supervision, drug/urine testing, and increased control over offenders in the community (Mackenzie 2001).

As explained in the background, the issue of drug screening practices is often discussed in privatized probation. A majority of respondents indicated giving drug screens between the maximum and minimum amount (65.4%). It is important to remember that this “in the middle” becomes a predominant theme in the data collection. The use of “middle ground” becomes even more predominant when asking questions about individual performance or their organization. For example, the questions “My company is effective and meets the needs of its offenders”, and “Compromising with offenders’ needs is important in order to complete probationary goals” had more “not sure” than any other responses.

In multiple ways, the findings suggest that probation officers accept many of the standard goals and practices of probation, but experience strain when they either do not accept the goals or perceive difficulty in reaching those goals. Overall, the findings are consistent with Merton’s Classical strain theory to an extent, including the ways officers adapt to strain. However, determining which alternative means to reach goals officers used because of perceived strain, was difficult to classify.

Probation officers who believed that the goal of probation was offender completion and evidenced less strain, seemed to follow Merton’s conformist model. Conformists were more likely to have worked longer than three years as a probation officer. It is possible that probation officers who have worked a longer amount of time have either gained seniority and thus identify with the profession, and/or have become desensitized to the nature of probation. Conformist officers also were more likely to hold

graduate level degrees and less likely to report receiving trainings offered by their facility, which suggest the possibility of having supervisor/ administrative positions. Perhaps these individuals are not completely aware of offender strains due to the lack of one-on-one interaction.

Probation officers who had a degree in psychology or sociology perceived more strain than those who had a degree in criminal justice. The differences among the disciplines can be explained with normative isomorphism (DeMicheals 2014). The probation officers who were trained within the criminal justice field were more familiar with control in comparison to the psychology/sociology fields which hold more emphasis in rehabilitative/social work practices.

Probation officer training which was previously discussed was significantly correlated with perceived strain. Probation officers who indicated they were “not sure” on trainings offered by their facility indicated an increase in perceived strain. This offers support to the assumption that probation officers had a tendency to select the “not sure” category in fear of backlash or legal ramifications from their organization.

The probation officers who reported higher levels of strain were more likely to engage in innovative practices such as “I will let an offender group payments in biweekly visits, “I will wait to violate an offender if I know they are unable to serve time”, and “I make it a goal to come up with different ways of helping offenders meet their probationary goals.” Innovators were more likely to identify as liberals or moderates (versus conservatives), were more likely to be psychology and sociology undergraduate majors (versus criminal justice majors), and have worked less than three years as a probation officer. According to Merton’s theory innovators are ones who believe in the

goals of probation (offender completion), but no longer believe in the means of reaching that goal. As indicated, innovators perceive a significant level of strain, they understand that the way in which they are told to meet the goal is not possible, therefore they adapt and “innovate” other practices to meet this goal.

Those who did not believe in the goals of probation or the means to reaching those goals are identified by Merton as retreatists and rebels. The probation officers who followed these adaptations were also more likely to be psychology and sociology majors. Those who followed a rebellion adaptation were typically men. These probation officers did not care either way in regards to the goal of probation or the practices to meet the goals. Also the rebels, much like the innovators reported working less than three years as a probation officer. The last adaptation, ritualism, like the innovator’s background, were more liberal and moderate in terms of political orientation. Probation officers who were more likely to adapt to strain using a ritualist model believed in the practices of probation but did not believe that the goal of probation is offender completion. These officers were likely working for no other reason than to have a job or regardless of the end goal held strongly to the standard probation practices.

To follow Merton’s Theory of Adaptation, a probation officer either believes or does not believe in the goal. In addition, the probation officer either chooses to follow the “appropriate” means to meet the goal or “alternative” means. The acceptance/denial of goals and means paired with each adaptation are displayed in Table 1. In this research, probation officers displaying conformist behavior indicated they did believe in the goal of probation (offender completion) and followed standard probation practices to reach this. According to Merton’s theory innovators are those who believe in the goal, but due to

high strain, use innovative, or “alternative” means/practices to reach the goal. However, the current research found that those scoring highest on the measures of innovative practices did not believe in the goal of probation as offender completion. Rather than innovators, these officers demonstrate Merton’s adaptation of rebellion: they reject both the goals and standard means to reach the goals. In either case, those who scored highest on the use of “alternative” means also reported the most strain (and less conformity).

A critique of Merton’s Theory is the inability to determine why a person chooses one adaptation over another. Similarly, I am unable to say why a probation officer chooses an adaptation. As measured, the use of “alternative” means to reaching probation goals (however those are perceived officers) were difficult to disentangle. Innovation, rebellion, and retreatism shared similar relationships with goals/strains as well as officer characteristics. In addition, the factor analysis (Table 6) revealed a mixture of cross-loadings at lower cut points. Despite these uncertainties regarding modes of adaptations, I found several demographic indicators (political orientation, major, duration of employment, level of education, gender, and facility training practices) that showed statistical significance with each of the means/adaptation, and was able to clearly identify officer’s use of conformity and innovation/rebellion.

LIMITATIONS OF DATA

Due to the small sample of probation officers a convenience sample was used. The research is limited and may not be generalized to the larger population of probation officers in the U.S. In addition, due to confidentiality, there is no way to tell what data were gathered from the privatized probation facility and the non-privatized probation

facility. The sample size limited the types of analyses that could be used for the data. In addition, due to the number of respondents, the sample was demographically biased with over seventy percent being women and over eighty percent being white. While this may not be representative of all probation officers, at one of the organizations, the majority of probation officers were female, which is consistent with the data.

A theme that occurred throughout was the amount of respondents who identified “not sure” or “neutral” on questions. Did the nature of the questions as well as events taking place at data collection impact response selection? During the time of data collection, a large lawsuit was filed against one of the probation facilities. It can be inferred that this impacted response, but whether this was the case or not is unknown. Including the option of “not sure” proved problematic for analysis and definitive conclusions, but provided a possible response category for those who may not have responded to these questions otherwise.

Although the sample was small and the responses to several questions were limited, several issues that are discussed throughout the literature still presented themselves within the sample. The findings suggest there is need for clarification among mandatory probation officer trainings in Middle Tennessee. In addition, policies to ensure trainings are being provided by facilities for their staff are needed.

I must also acknowledge that what I found in this research may also reflect what I was looking for from the outset. In other words, my perceptions of probation and what I already knew about probation may have influenced my objectivity. I had several findings that I may not have found if I was not already looking. As a social scientist I

acknowledge this and strive for objectivity, but I am aware of potential bias in survey construction, interpretation of the results, and reporting.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research on the subject of probation officer practices depends on support from the facility. Furthermore, future research should be in collaboration with state and county level agencies. Due to the amount of obstacles this research faced, research in this topic needs support from agencies that have the authority to enter privatized and community probation centers. It is also suggested that local and state governments take probation officer practices, probation officer training, occupational strain, and offender success more seriously.

Due to several limitations this research experienced, future research should include clear comparison groups for private and non-private probation facilities. The ability to determine the amount of strain and practice differences between the two groups has the potential to improve future probation policy. In addition, more research is needed on the offenders who are treated in private versus non private probation facilities. The findings of this research barely uncovered the multitude of barriers offenders face in reaching probationary goals.

CONCLUSION

This study offered data on a group of probation officers, who although represent a small sample, experience common issues found in current literature. Although a small non-probability sample was used, major themes such as probation officer role, probation

officer strains, and probation officer trainings and practices have identified several issues. The issues described included: strain within the probation officer role, differing end goals of probation, and increased strain and the lack of support from facility. Probationary practices as indicated by Mackenzie (2001) can cause severely negative implications to offenders who enter the probationary system. The research provided evidence that offender completion in regards to some probation officers is not their focus. In addition, probation officers indicated use of alternative means to meet probationary goals. While an identifiable group of officers relied on conformity (i.e., less strain and followed approved practices), officers to varying degrees used Merton's adaptations of innovation, rebellion, ritualism, and retreatism. Although the research focused on probation officers' perceptions of strain and their adaptations to such strain, offenders who enter the probation system were also a focus. Offender success cannot be achieved if ones who are there to assist offenders are not themselves able to perform their duties. In conclusion, offender success in probation stems from probation officer's success that minimizes "us versus them" behavior and joins both the probation officer and offender in a common goal.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Probation Officer Strain and Adaptation Survey

The following survey asks questions related to your perceptions of probation and how you as a probation officer complete your daily tasks. More importantly a goal of this research is to identify perceived strain among probation officers. Strain among any profession can have negative impacts on physical and mental well-being. The probation officer profession deals with an increased amount of strain due to the clientele served as well as work load. The data you provide will be used to identify the perceived strain among Middle Tennessee's probation officers. The survey is completely voluntary. By completing the survey you are providing consent. **This survey is completely confidential and information on responses or those who choose to respond will not be provided to your employer.** If there are any questions concerning this research or your participation within the survey please contact Joshua Lester at Joshua.lester@mtsu.edu. Thank you for your participation.

1. The following are examples of possible scenarios you may face as a probation officer. For the following select which best describes your behavior by choosing one of the categories. (1 = strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree). Responses will not be shared with your facility.

	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. I violate offenders who do not meet court guidelines	1	2	3	4	5
2. I will let an offender group payments in biweekly visits instead of weekly visits	1	2	3	4	5
3. I will wait to violate an offender if I know they are unable to serve time	1	2	3	4	5
4. I make it a goal to come up with different ways of helping offenders meet their probationary goals	1	2	3	4	5
5. I do not always follow the company and state guidelines as a probation officer	1	2	3	4	5
6. I will assign a drug screen to an offender if I believe they have used	1	2	3	4	5
7. I choose not to drug screen unless I have been pressured by management/ administration	1	2	3	4	5
8. I will assign a drug screen just to meet "quota"	1	2	3	4	5
9. I do not agree with everything, but It's a job	1	2	3	4	5

2. For the following select which best describes your opinion by choosing one of the categories. (1 = strongly Agree, 2= agree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree). Responses will not be shared with your facility.

	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. Probation is a great alternative in regards to jail	1	2	3	4	5
2. Probation provides resources to help offenders complete probation goals	1	2	3	4	5
3. The probationary goals the offender must meet are easily attainable.	1	2	3	4	5
4. My probation company offers innovative and efficient community based solutions	1	2	3	4	5
5. My company is effective and meets the needs of its offenders	1	2	3	4	5
6. The goals I must meet as a probation officer are realistic	1	2	3	4	5
7. Working as a probation officer is difficult due to the goals the offenders must meet	1	2	3	4	5
8. Compromising with offender's needs is important in order to complete probationary goals	1	2	3	4	5
9. The guidelines/standards I am told to use as a probation officer differ from my personal morals/values	1	2	3	4	5

The following are questions pertaining to your position as a probation officer.

3. Do you think the goal of probation is offender completion?

___ Yes ___No

3a. If you answered no on question 8, what do you believe the goal of probation is?

4. If applicable, what kind of tasks do you perform daily to help manage strains in your profession?

5. What types of barriers or strains do your clients identify while on probation?

6. Overall, how many years have you worked as a probation officer?

Less than 6 months

More than 6 months, but less than 1 yr.

More than 1 year, but less than 3yrs

More than 3 yrs.

7. Is your caseload predominantly....

a.

Male

Female

Both

Unsure

b.

White

Black or African American

Hispanic or Latino/a

Other (Please Specify) _____

c.

18- 21

22-30

31-50

Over 50

8. Which would you consider more difficult to work with?

Male Offenders

Female Offenders

There is no difference in difficulty

9. Which of the following best describes your use of drug screens? I screen...

the maximum amount

the minimum amount

Not Sure Somewhere in between

10. Are there specific guidelines which you have to follow as a probation officer?

Yes No Not Sure

11. Does your organization offer training on proper ways to practice as a probation officer?

Yes No Not Sure

12. What would you consider the most challenging part of working as a probation officer?

_____.

13. Probation is often considered either being control oriented (e.g., surveillance of offenders) or rehabilitative (e.g., treatment of offenders). Which would you consider your organization?

Mostly Control oriented Mostly rehabilitative oriented
 Not Sure Equal amount of control and rehabilitative

In order to more fully understand people's responses to the previous questions, I need to know a few things about your background. Responses are confidential, your information will not be directly linked to your responses in any way.

1. What is your current age? ____

2. How do you identify?

Male ____ Female ____

Other ____

3a. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?

Associates or trade school Masters level

Bachelor's Degree Doctorate

3b. What was your major or concentration of study: _____

4. What is your race or ethnicity? (Check all that apply.)

- White Black or African American
 American Indian /Alaska Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 Asian Hispanic or Latino/a
Other (Please Specify) _____

5. Which best defines your religious affiliation?

- Catholic Jewish
 Protestant Other (Please Specify)
 Not religious Prefer not to disclose

6. On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate how strongly you hold your religious beliefs, where 1 is not at all religious and 10 is extremely religious.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. In general, how would you describe your political views? (Check one.)

- Very Conservative Conservative
 Moderate Moderate
 Liberal Very Liberal
 Unsure

Thank you for your participation!

If you have any other comments or questions you would like to share, feel free to email the researcher, Joshua Lester at jll6s@mtmail.mtsu.edu. Your email will not be tied in any way to your responses to the survey.

APPENDIX B – TABLES

Table 1: Examples of Probation Officer Modes of Adaptation			
<u>Adaptation</u>	<u>Goals</u>	<u>Means</u>	<u>Example</u>
Conformity	+	+	“I violate offenders who do not meet court guidelines”, “I will assign a drug screen if I believe they have used”
Innovation	+	-	“I will wait to violate an offender if I know they are unable to serve time”, “I make it a goal to come up with different ways to help offenders meet probationary goals.”
Ritualism	-	+	“I do not agree with everything, but it’s a job.”
Retreatism	-	-	“I choose not to drug screen unless I have been pressured by management/administration.”
Rebellion	+/-	+/-	“I do not follow the company or state guidelines as a probation officer”, “I will assign a drug screen just to meet quota.”

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics		
		(% or \bar{x} (SD))
		(n=25)
Age		
	\bar{x} (SD)	29.72 (4.46)
	Range (Age in years)	24-43
Gender		
	Male	28.0
	Female	72.0
Race		
	White	84.0
	Black/African American	12.0
	Hispanic	4.0
Educational Attainment		
	Bachelor's Degree	84.0
	Graduate or Professional Degree	16.0
Major or Concentration		
	Criminal Justice	38.5
	Psychology/Sociology	30.8
	Other	30.8
Employment Duration		
	Less than three years	32.0
	More than 3 years	68.0
Political View		
	Conservative	48.0
	Moderate	28.0
	Liberal	12.0
Religious Affiliation		
	Catholic	16.0
	Jewish	4.0
	Protestant	52.0
	Not Religious	12.0
	Prefer not to disclose	16.0
Religiosity Scale		
	\bar{x} (SD)	6.45 (2.54)
	Range (1-10)	

Table 2, continued

Goal is Offender		
Completion	No	16.0
	Not Sure	40.0
	Yes	44.0
Use of Drug Screening	Maximum	7.7
	Minimum	15.4
	Somewhere in Between	65.4
	Not Sure	11.5
Aware of Probation		
Guidelines	No	15.4
	Not Sure	3.8
	Yes	80.8
Probation Facility Offers		
Continued Training	No	34.6
	Not Sure	34.6
	Yes	30.8
Probation Facility		
Orientation	Control	36.0
	Rehabilitation	8.0
	Not Sure	32.0
	Equal Amount	24.0

*One probation officer did not complete the questions on demographics.

Table 3. Caseload Characteristics

		<u>(% or \bar{x} (SD))</u>
		(n=26)
Caseload Gender	Male	23.1
	Female	3.8
	Both Male and Female	73.1
Caseload Age	22-30	50.0
	31-50	23.1
	Over 50	3.8
	Unsure	23.1
Caseload Race	White	26.9
	Black/African American	50.0
	Hispanic	7.7
	Other/Unsure	15.4
Considered More Difficult to Supervise	Male	11.5
	Female	46.2
	No Difference in Difficulty	42.3

Table 4. Indicators of Probation Officer's Perceived Strain

	<u>Mean</u> <u>(SD)</u>	<u>SA</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>%</u> <u>N</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>SD</u>
Probation is a great alternative in regards to jail.*	2.62 (.94)	15.4	46.2	23.1	4	0
Probation provides resources to help offenders complete probation goals.	2.19 (1.17)	11.5	38.5	11.5	34.6	3.8
The probationary goals the offender must meet are easily attainable.	1.85 (1.22)	3.8	38.5	11.5	30.8	15.4
My probationary company offers innovative and efficient community based solution.	1.85 (1.12)	7.7	19.2	34.6	26.9	11.5
My company is effective and meets the needs of its offenders	1.85 (1.12)	7.7	19.2	34.6	26.9	11.5
The goals I must meet as a probation officer are realistic.	1.23 (1.24)	3.8	15.4	19.2	23.1	38.5
Working as a probation officer is difficult due to the goals the offenders must meet. **	1.54 (1.10)	15.4	42.3	19.2	19.2	3.8
Compromising with offender's needs is important in order to complete probationary goals.	1.88 (.86)	0	26.9	38.5	30.8	3.8
The guidelines/standards I am told to use as probation officer differ from my personal morals/values.**	1.42 (.86)	11.5	46.2	30.8	11.5	0
Do you think the goal of probation is offender completion?***	1.96 (.93)					
Total Goals/Strain Score	16.42 (6.84)					
Range	6.00- 31.00					

Cronbach's $\alpha = .876$

*All Items ranged from 4 (strongly agree) to 0 (strongly disagree); SA-strongly agree, A- agree, N- neither, D- disagree, SD- strongly disagree.

** Reverse Coded

*** Categories and coding were no =1, not sure=2, and yes=3.

Table 5. Modes of Adaptation

				<u>%</u>			
	<u>Range</u>	<u>Mean</u> <u>(SD)</u>	<u>SA</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>SD</u>
Conformity ($\alpha=.783$)							
*I violate offenders who do not meet court guidelines.	1-4	2.73 (.78)	11.5	57.7	23.1	7.7	0
I will assign a drug screen to an offender if I believe they have used.	1-4	2.38 (.85)	0	57.7	26.9	11.5	0
Total		5.12 (1.48)					
Innovation ($\alpha=.68$)							
I will let an offender group payments in biweekly visits instead of weekly visits.	1-3	2.28 (.71)	0	57.7	26.9	11.5	0
I will wait to violate an offender if I know they are unable to serve time.	0-3	2.08 (.93)	0	38.5	38.5	15.4	7.7
I make it a goal to come up with different ways of helping offenders meet their probationary goals.	1-4	2.08 (.84)	3.8	26.9	42.3	26.9	0
Total		6.64 (1.82)					
Ritualism							
I do not agree with everything, but it's a job.	2-4	2.88 (.71)	19.2	50.0	30.8	0	0
Retreatism							
I choose not to drug screen unless I have been pressured by management/administration.	0-3	2.04 (.60)	15.4	76.9	3.8	3.8	
Rebellion ($\alpha=.596$)							
I do not always follow the company and state guidelines as a probation officer.	0-3	1.58 (.95)	0	19.2	30.8	38.5	11.5
I will assign a drug screen just to meet "quota".	0-3	2.11 (.82)	0	30.8	57.7	3.8	7.7
Total		3.69 (1.49)					

*All Items ranged from 4 (strongly agree) to 0 (strongly disagree); SA-strongly agree, A- agree, N- neither, D- disagree, SD- strongly disagree

Table 6. Results of Factor Analysis for Probation Officer Modes of Adaptation

	Component		
	Factor 1 (Innovative)	Factor 2 (Conformity)	Factor 3
I violate offenders who do not meet court guidelines	-.117	.792	.308
I will let an offender group payments in biweekly visits instead of weekly visits	.691	.076	.339
I will wait to violate an offender if I know they are unable to serve time	.777	-1.00	-1.57
I make it a goal to come up with different ways of helping offenders meet their probationary goals	.722	-.382	.275
I do not always follow the company and state guidelines as a probation officer	.558	.111	-.685
I will assign a drug screen to an offender if I believe they have used	-.400	.818	.042
I choose not to drug screen unless I have been pressured by management/administration	.441	.049	.425
I will assign a drug screen just to meet quota	.537	.681	-.394
I do not agree with everything but it's a job	.606	.447	.244

Table 7. Pearson Correlation: Goals/Strains Scales and Merton's Modes of Adaptation

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Goals/Strains (1) ^a						
2. Goals/Strains (2) ^b	.996** .000	1				
3. Conformity	.201 .325	.244 .239	1			
4. Innovation	-.474* .017	-.493* .014	-.363 [†] .074	1		
5. Ritualism	-.623** .001	-.608** .001	.165 .420	.470* .018	1	
6. Retreatism	-.333 .096	-.334 .103	-.099 .631	.403* .046	.343 .086	1
7. Rebellion	-.095 .644	-.102 .626	-.078 .704	.382 [†] .060	.103 .617	.266 .189

[†] $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed)

^a Includes nine items from scale

^b Includes nine items from scale plus an additional question on probation completion

**Table 8. Mean Comparisons of Goals/Strains and Modes of Adaptation Scales:
Probation Completion
(One-way Anova)**

	Is Probation Completion the Goal of Probation?		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Goals/Means Scale	20.10* (6.94)	11.25 (5.32)	14.00 (1.72)
Conformity	5.64 (1.75)	4.50 (1.00)	4.90 (1.29)
Innovation	5.64 (1.57)	8.25* (1.50)	6.90 (1.91)
Ritualism	2.72 [†] (.65)	3.25 (.50)	3.00 (.82)
Retreatsim	1.91 (.83)	2.25 (.50)	2.10 (.32)
Rebellion	3.55 (1.69)	3.75 (1.50)	3.80 (1.48)

[†] $p < .10$, * $p < .05$

**Table 9. Mean Comparisons of Goals/Strains and Modes of Adaptation Scales:
Facility Orientation
(One-way ANOVA)**

	Probation Orientation of Officer Facility			
	<u>Control- Oriented</u>	<u>Rehabilitative</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Both Control- Oriented and Rehabilitative</u>
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Goals/Strains Scale	15.89 (7.39)	24.50 (2.12)	14.50 (6.00)	18.17 (7.11)
Conformity	5.11 (2.03)	5.50 (3.54)	4.89 (.83)	5.50 (.58)
Innovation	7.22* (2.12)	4.00 (.00)	6.50 (1.31)	6.17 (1.83)
Ritualism	2.89 (.60)	2.50 (.71)	2.75 (.89)	3.00 (.63)
Retreatsim	2.11 (.60)	1.00 [†] (1.41)	2.13 (.35)	2.17 (.41)
Rebellion	3.78 (1.99)	3.00 (1.41)	4.25 (1.16)	3.17 (1.16)

[†] $p < .10$, * $p < .05$

Table 10. Summary of Key Findings: Goals/Strains, Adaptations, and Selected Variables (One-way Anova)

A. <u>Political Orientation</u>			
	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Conservative</u>
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Goals/Means Scale	10.33* (4.16)	12.71 (6.24)	18.33 (5.30)
Conformity	5.00 (0.00)	4.29 (1.60)	5.67 (1.61)
Innovation	8.66* (.577)	7.43 (1.81)	5.54 (1.63)
Ritualism	3.33* (.577)	3.29 (.755)	2.58 (.515)
Retreatsim	2.33 (.577)	2.14 (.378)	1.83 (.718)
Rebellion	3.03 (8.30)	2.90 (5.39)	2.20 (4.46)
B. <u>Major/Field of Study</u>			
	<u>Criminal Justice</u>	<u>Sociology/ Psychology</u>	<u>Other</u>
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Goals/Means Scale	17.20 (5.45)	15.50 (9.07)	16.38 (6.67)
Conformity	5.40 (1.51)	4.75 [†] (1.49)	5.13 (1.55)
Innovation	6.20 (1.55)	4.75 [†] (1.49)	5.13 (1.55)
Ritualism	2.70 (.67)	3.12 (.83)	2.88 (.64)
Retreatsim	2.00 (.47)	2.37 (.52)	1.75 (.71)
Rebellion	3.60 (1.71)	4.62* (1.19)	2.88 (.99)

Table 10, continued

C. Duration of Employment		
	<u>Less than 3 years</u>	<u>More than 3</u>
		<u>years</u>
	Mean	Mean
	(SD)	(SD)
Goals/Means	14.88	16.88
Scale	(7.24)	(6.88)
Conformity	4.50 [†]	5.47
	(1.19)	(1.54)
Innovation	7.37 [†]	6.31
	(1.30)	(2.02)
Ritualism	3.00	2.88
	(1.07)	(.49)
Retreatsim	2.13	2.00
	(.35)	(.71)
Rebellion	4.63*	3.24
	(1.89)	(1.48)

D. Level of Education/Degree		
	<u>Bachelors</u>	<u>Graduate/ Professional</u>
	Mean	Mean
	(SD)	(SD)
Goals/Means	15.14	24.75*
Scale	(6.08)	(5.06)
Conformity	5.19	5.00
	(1.32)	(2.44)
Innovation	6.62	6.33
	(1.80)	(2.52)
Ritualism	2.86	2.75
	(.73)	(.50)
Retreatsim	2.10	1.75
	(.44)	(1.26)
Rebellion	3.81	3.25
	(1.60)	(.96)

Table 10, continued

	E. Is Training Offered at Facility?		
	<u>Yes</u> Mean (SD)	<u>No</u> Mean (SD)	<u>Not Sure</u> Mean (SD)
Goals/Means Scale	17.50 (6.19)	19.66 (7.12)	12.22* (5.40)
Conformity	4.38 (1.06)	6.33* (1.41)	4.56 (1.13)
Innovation	6.75 (1.75)	6.13 (1.89)	7.00 (1.94)
Ritualism	2.75 (.89)	2.89 (.60)	3.00 (.71)
Retreatsim	2.12 (.35)	1.89 (.93)	2.11 (.33)
Rebellion	3.75 (1.91)	4.00 (1.32)	3.33 (1.32)

	F. Officer Gender	
	<u>Male</u> Mean (SD)	<u>Female</u> Mean (SD)
Goals/Means Scale	16.43 (6.45)	16.78 (7.17)
Conformity	4.71 (1.89)	5.33 (1.33)
Innovation	6.14 (1.35)	6.76 (2.02)
Ritualism	2.57 (.79)	2.94 (.64)
Retreatsim	1.86 (.38)	2.11 (.68)
Rebellion	4.43* (1.13)	3.44 (1.58)

† $p < .10$, * $p < .05$

APPENDIX C – INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



3/3/2016

Investigator(s): Meredith Dye
Department: Sociology
Investigator(s) Email: Meredith.dye@mtsu.edu

Protocol Title: "Alternative Modes of Adaptation: Strain Among Probation Officers "

Protocol Number: 16-2171

Dear Investigator(s),

The MTSU Institutional Review Board, or a representative of the IRB, has reviewed the research proposal identified above. The MTSU IRB or its representative has determined that the study poses minimal risk to participants and qualifies for an expedited review under 45 CFR 46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110, and you have satisfactorily addressed all of the points brought up during the review.

Approval is granted for one (1) year from the date of this letter for 150 participants.

Please note that any unanticipated harms to participants or adverse events must be reported to the Office of Compliance at (615) 494-8918. Any change to the protocol must be submitted to the IRB before implementing this change.

You will need to submit an end-of-project form to the Office of Compliance upon completion of your research located on the IRB website. Complete research means that you have finished collecting and analyzing data. Should you not finish your research within the one (1) year period, you must submit a Progress Report and request a continuation prior to the expiration date. Please allow time for review and requested revisions. Failure to submit a Progress Report and request for continuation will automatically result in cancellation of your research study. Therefore, you will not be able to use any data and/or collect any data. Your study expires **Expiration date- 1 year from approval.**

According to MTSU Policy, a researcher is defined as anyone who works with data or has contact with participants. Anyone meeting this definition needs to be listed on the protocol and needs to complete the required training. If you add researchers to an approved project, please forward an updated list of researchers to the Office of Compliance before they begin to work on the project.

All research materials must be retained by the PI or faculty advisor (if the PI is a student) for at least three (3) years after study completion and then destroyed in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity.

Sincerely,

Institutional Review Board
Middle Tennessee State University