ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE AT THE FRONT LINES OF PROBATION – AGENTS' AND SUPERVISORS' PERSPECTIVES

by

Victoria Lauren Goldberg

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Director

Department Chairperson

Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

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by

Victoria Lauren Goldberg
Bachelor of Art
Clark University, 2011

Chairperson: Faye S. Taxman, Professor
Department of Criminology, Law and Society

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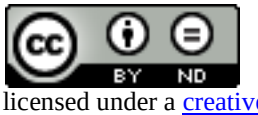
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my family for pushing me to be my best and supporting me all the way. And also to Leah, for being the best four-legged friend a girl could have.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS OR SYMBOLS

Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services ..... DPSCS
Field Supervisor 1 ..... FS1
Field Supervisor 2 ..... FS2

ABSTRACT

ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE AT THE FRONT LINES OF PROBATION – AGENTS' AND SUPERVISORS' PERSPECTIVES

Victoria Lauren Goldberg, M.A.

George Mason University, 2013

Thesis Director: Dr. Faye S. Taxman

This thesis compares the perceptions of mid-level managers and frontline staff in a mid-Atlantic state's parole and probation department. Specifically, this paper looks at staff perceptions of the organization's culture as well as distributive justice and procedural justice. Prior research rarely considers differences between frontline staff and frontline management. It is important to explore these differences because if staff and their managers are not in agreement about issues such as culture, they can hinder the goals and mission of the organization. In turn, this disconnect may undermine everyday practice and organizational performance. This thesis compares the average scores of these two groups on three different scales and then uses a series of linear regressions to determine what demographic factors predict organizational culture, distributive and procedural justice. The findings indicate that staff have similar perspectives, regardless of job titles, on organizational culture; they find the culture to be hierarchical-structural.

There are no statistically significant differences in staff's perceptions of distributive justice, though regressions analyses found that race influence their perception of equity in the organization. Finally, middle managers and frontline staff differ on perceptions of procedural justice, with middle managers reporting that the organization is more procedurally fair than frontline staff. Limitations and future research are also explored.

INTRODUCTION

Mid-level managers are often cast as the "gatekeepers" of an organization's policy. They are in charge of disseminating policy changes as well as enforcing policies and procedures to line staff. They educate staff on the mission, vision, and goals of an organization and can increase staff buy-in to these ideas. There is relatively little research on mid-level managers and their role in organizations as compared to frontline staff; there is even less research on mid-level managers in probation departments. This paper will discuss two classes of employees – middle managers and frontline staff. Frontline staff provide direct services to clients (in this case probationers) and middle managers are in the senior staff that manages the frontline workers. Two job titles are collapsed into the distinction of "middle managers" and three are aggregated into the "frontline staff" designation. The middle manager label was given to employees with the job title Field Supervisor 1 and 2 (FS1 and FS2) and Agent 1, Agent 2, and Senior Agents were designated at frontline staff.

Organizational justice issues are important in the workplace because they can affect job performance and satisfaction. When employees feel that they are putting more into their job than they are getting in return or that they are not rewarded fairly for their efforts, they are likely to feel that the organization does not respect them. This can result

in a decline in organizational matters such as organizational commitment and performance (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Lind & Tyler, 1988).

In a similar vein, organizational culture can influence an organization's effectiveness. In this paper, organizational culture is defined as a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that are shared by members of an organization. If senior staff (in this case middle managers) have negative opinions of a policy, those opinions can get passed down to the lower level staff they are in charge of; line staff perceptions can easily be colored by their bosses' perceptions. The way in which an organization operates can be affected by a culture that does not support the values an organization is trying to maintain or establish.

This paper will compare the perceptions of middle managers and frontline staff on constructs of justice and organizational culture. These issues have a direct impact on how well the work is done in an organization and can affect employee stress, retention and performance (San Park & Kim, 2009; Lambert et al., 2007; Zimmerman et al, 1993). Comparing frontline and managerial perceptions is important because middle managers (field supervisors) are promoted from within. Additionally, if middle managers and frontline staff differ greatly on their perceptions of issues such as culture, this may impede the success of the organization in meeting its goals, affect how frontline workers do their jobs, and create a disconnect between frontline staff and their direct superiors. In the case of the department of community corrections that this study focuses on, field supervisors no longer carry a caseload and instead supervise field agents' day-to-day work. Because managers have been in the organization for longer periods of time than

frontline staff, they *define* the culture. Newer staff rely on management and senior staff for all information about the organization; an organizational "guide map" gets passed on and shared throughout the various levels of the organization (Wilson & Elman, 1990). In addition, line staff perceptions of justice can be considered to be not only evaluations of the organization as a whole, but are also evaluations of their direct supervisors (in this case, field supervisors) as supervisors are responsible for promotions and evaluations. In the case of the department of community supervision focused on in this paper, evaluations from the FS1s can lead to promotion or keep an agent at a lower position for an indefinite period. As managers, FS1s have a hand in promotion and punishment, whereas line staff are subject to their decisions.

The research question that results from this is *how do mid-level probation and parole managers perceive justice and organizational culture issues as compared to other employees?* In this study, I hypothesize that (1) middle managers (FS1s) will have similar perceptions about organizational culture to front line staff. This would be due to the fact that middle managers are promoted from frontline staff. When they move up, they bring with them the cultural ideals that were once taught to them by their superiors; culture is transmitted almost cyclically. However, (2a) middle managers (FS1s) will differ in opinion on justice issues from front line staff and (2b) middle managers (FS1s) will identify that there is more distributive and procedural fairness in the organization than front line staff. This hypothesis results from the idea that though middle managers are subject to the decisions of their superiors, they have more freedom to make decisions that will affect frontline staff while frontline staff are subject to decision at all levels of the

organization. For example, a manager is given a policy to implement and they can choose how they wish to implement to some extent and then hold their staff to that expectation. Staff are expected to follow the policy in the way that their supervisor instructs with limited input.

OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The following overview is designed to introduce and explain the variables that are of importance to this study. There will be a brief overview of the roles of middle managers in organizations in general, followed by a closer look at their role in probation settings. Currently, there is a mix of positive and negative reviews of the roles of managers, though there is a shift recently that emphasizes their utility in an organization. Huy (2002) identifies four areas where middle managers make major contributions. Most of the literature looks at middle managers in corporate and private organizations, this overview will help illustrate the roles and functions of middle managers which are similar to managers in a probation setting. Because there is limited research on probation managers, the piece by Rudes (2012) is accented as an example of where the probation literature eventually needs to go; closer examination of these managers.

This section is followed by a general overview of organizational culture how culture effects employees of criminal justice organizations. Again there is limited research on culture and probation departments specifically, the broader criminal justice literature is examined to understand potential issues. In general, culture is found to affect outcomes from service providers (see Glisson,1996), which can be connected directly to probation as probation officers also have direct contact with clients who they give assessments to and direct towards services. Glisson and colleagues (Glisson & James,

2002; Nugent & Glisson, 1999) have found that service providers (juvenile justice agents) tended to fall back on their old, established habits and norms (instead of following newly implemented standardized assessments) when it came to custody placement. Probation officers share this struggle to try and keep from falling back on the older norms in light of policy changes. For example, there has been a shift towards standardized risk assessments that place offenders on a level of supervision based on their answers in the assessment. When officers are used to using their discretion about where to place an offender and whether or not to move them up or down, it may be easy to fall back on old habits in place of the standard assessments.

Finally, distributive and procedural justice are examined and there are brief discussions of their definitions and the role they play in organizational outcomes followed by their role in criminal justice agencies. Again, since there are few studies on the probation issues, the larger criminal justice literature was examined. I acknowledge that the police literature and the institutional corrections literature are describing phenomenon that are particular to those specific jobs, but to get an idea about what these constructs look like in criminal justice agencies is important; though they are not the same discipline, they are similar enough that some comparisons can be made. Police officers, correctional officers, and probation officers are all social control agents with incredibly stressful jobs, working with offenders at different points on the road of the criminal justice system.

Middle Managers

The many roles of middle managers

Middle managers are a distinct level of management that, “connects an organization's strategic and operational levels through mediation, negotiation, and interpretation (Floyd & Wooldridge, 1997) and are an undervalued lynchpin in the strategy process, particularly in planned radical change (Huy, 2001, 2002),” (Baloghun & Johnson, 2004, p. 523). There is a variety of competing perspectives in the literature on middle managers including the validity of the frontline managers’ positions. What does exist is a paradox in the literature in regards to the effectiveness of middle managers in numerous settings. Some studies cast these managers as useless or undervalued (Huy, 2001; Kanter, 1982), unnecessary (Cameron et al., 1991), or as a hindrance to effective policy implementation (Guth & MacMillan, 1986) while others see middle managers as innovative (Huy, 2002) and “change intermediaries” (Balogun, 2003). Corporate/private settings are where most of this research is done, not public settings such as a probation department. While there may be some similarities, it is important to keep in mind that they are very different types of organizations and so the utility of middle managers may not well developed in the literature at the moment.

In addition to the perception that middle managers have a useless position, middle managers are losing their jobs with downsizing and corporate restructuring in the private sector. There is a good deal of research on middle managers that pertains to how they are affected by restructuring (Caulkin, 1995; Guest & Peccei, 1992; Hallier and Lyon, 1996; Hecksher, 1995; Herriot et al., 1994; Thomas & Dunkerly, 1999; Wheatley, 1992). Most of this research positions managers as a dying breed as organizations have found ways to cut inefficiencies and redundancies. While this doesn’t seem to be the case in probation

(at least right now), it is important to acknowledge that many scholars see the position of mid-level managers as disappearing; this may affect the future of middle managers in probation if the trend transcends into the public sector.

Despite the fact the future for middle managers is unclear (see Peters, 1992), most recently there has been a movement to show how managers can be used effectively during organizational change (Huy, 2002). Even though they are not typically the ones making policy changes, they are tasked with more a translational role such as informing general staff about decisions and how they affect the organization. They are also in charge of managing and monitoring staff performance; performance may reflect the effectiveness of policy changes. The current literature is moving to identify areas where middle managers are affective in organizations.

Quy Nguyen Huy (2002) identified four main areas where middle managers make major contributions to companies trying to make change: middle managers often have good entrepreneurial ideas, their networks run deep because they tend to work their way up from frontline positions, they stay in tune to employees' emotional needs during organizational change, and they keep the organization from falling into “extreme inertia” or “extreme chaos” during change. These contributions are very important to policy implementation in a public organization because they are qualities that can help ensure proper implementation. In vertically spread organizations, senior management may not be present as often and can be seen as “ghosts in sense making” of policy (Balogun & Johnson, 2004). It is up to the middle management to interpret and execute policy in place of the absent senior management.

Some scholars view middle managers as the intermediary between executive level officials, street-level workers, and consumers. Others say that they actually create more "space" between executives and frontline staff (Floyd & Wooldridge, 1994). Depending on the organizational structure, a policy usually comes from the top and works its way down, through the lower levels of management, ultimately being disseminated to the lowest level workers who rarely hear about changes directly from senior management but instead get their information from mid-level management. Current literature discusses the efficacy of this model as mixed. On one hand, Riccucci (2005) found that middle managers were critical to helping reform policies but much less effective on the frontline policy delivery of welfare reform in the US. Others have found that managers have a small impact on the actions of workers (Brehm & Gates, 1997). While still others found that they "seem" to be playing an important role (Brewer, 2005). In many different types of organizations, middle managers are known as the "implementers" (Floyd & Wooldridge, 1994). This means they have responsibilities such as monitoring the performance of lower level workers and correcting behaviors that fall out of line with protocol. While the literature on middle managers in the criminal justice system is limited, their role closely parallels middle managers in other types of public organizations such as social services and child welfare agencies as they are all involved with managing frontline service providers.

Although it is important to understand the changing nature of the role of middle managers in an organization, there is less research on how middle managers construct their own identities in the workplace. Thomas and Dunkerley (1999) interviewed middle

managers in both public and private organizations and found that managers felt a greater sense of job satisfaction and empowerment over their work, they were also experiencing greater pressure and stress as a result of intensified workloads due to downsizing. Using the same interviews, Thomas and Linstead (2002) found that middle managers constantly have to recreate their identities as their roles shift and organizations restructure. In addition, middle managers are continually reframing themselves and their jobs through discourse to legitimize their positions and roles. For example, in their interviews with managers, the authors found that managers would position themselves as experts in their organizations due to their tenure and their technical expertise and background as way to frame themselves as different from other employees. Many of these managers were actually unsure of their role in the organization, especially after organizational change and restructuring, so they used frames such as "the expert" to ground their position in the organization. It is clear that while the position of "middle manager" has been in flux for many years, the individuals who have these jobs are also experiencing a dissonance between what an organization says they should be doing and what they actually do.

Middle Managers in Probation Settings

While an extensive literature base on middle managers in corrections settings does not exist, we do know they play a key role in organizational change. Rudes (2012) addressed the impact of how middle managers frame change. She completed an ethnographic study of correctional officers in California over a three-year period. Using participant observation and informal interviews, Rudes found that the way that middle

managers interpret policy changes is vital to the ground-level workers. Managers shape the way they interpret the organization's goals as well as their own personal goals. "Data here suggest that while middle managers are often overlooked, their role in policy interpretation may be crucial for understanding subsequent success or failure of policy" (Rudes, 2012, p. 23). Rudes underscores the importance of middle managers in policy change using the officers' own words. Ethnographic studies can get at topics and issues that would otherwise go unfound if researchers simply give subjects surveys.

This study will compare the perceptions of mid-level managers and frontline staff on three organizational constructs: organizational culture, distributive justice and procedural justice. This comparison will serve to show the differences in perceptions, if any, between the typical frontline staff members and their immediate supervisors on measures of basic organizational concepts. It is important to look at culture because it is ever present in every organization; it shapes the attitudes, ethics, morals, and practices of every organization. Comprehension of justice issues is also important because it makes staff feel good to know they are being treated and rewarded fairly and they are more likely to conform to organizational rules and authority. The happiness of staff is important because it can affect turnover, productivity, and willingness to work hard for an organization. The concept of justice is ubiquitous throughout society, so it makes sense that people want to feel like they are treated fairly at the place where they spend the majority of their time - their workplace. Researchers can use numerous constructs to look at how employees feel about their organization, but these three were chosen to show a small a broad but small snapshot of employee perceptions.

Culture

Overview of Culture

Organizational culture is a concept that has been debated and researched for decades. There are many definitions, methodologies of study, and descriptions of the phenomena. Cooke and Szumal (1993) argue that culture can be defined as the normative beliefs and shared expectations in an organizational unit. Edgar Schein (1990, p.111) has a highly cited piece entitled *Organizational Culture*, where he defines culture as,

> "(a) a pattern of basic assumptions, (b) invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, (c) as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, (d) that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore (e) is to be taught to new members as the (f) correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems."

That being said, Schein is cautious about defining culture because organizations themselves are "ambiguous" and you cannot define an organizations' culture based on the phenomena at the surface; it has to be empirically determined (Schein, 1990). This paper uses the definition as operationalized by Cameron and Quinn (2005) and Denison and Mishra (1995). Organizational culture is defined here as *a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that are shared by members of an organization.*

One can study culture using both qualitative and quantitative methods, though there is some debate about which is best or if it is superior to use both to get an accurate picture (Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv, & Sanders, 1990). Culture is a muddy concept to study because while most scholars agree that it is universally present in organizations, there is less agreement on how it should be measured. Some feel that you cannot use a

scale to measure an ambiguous concept such as culture and that it must be studied using observations. Scholars have conducted numerous case study ethnographies (see Jaques, 1951; Martin, 2001; Rohlen, 1974; Schein, 1985). Other scholars use quantitative scales that measure normative behaviors and expectations within an organization.

Scholars have linked organizational culture and job performance (Denison, 1990; Kotter and Heskett, 1992; Lee & Yu, 2004). The type of culture that is present in an organization can affect organizational outcomes such as employee commitment and retention. This link is criticized because of the difficulty in operationalizing the construct of culture and the fact that it is difficult to separate from the construct of climate (Denison, 1996; Legge, 1994). An example of researchers solving this issue are Kotter and Heskett (1992), who operationalized culture while studying culture and performance in corporations. They found that firms who have "adaptive values" (a willingness to change) were more likely to have above average organizational performance over long periods.

Organizational culture can affect all aspects of an organization. Kilman et al. (1985) noted that organizational culture has such an effect on the success of a business because it is so ubiquitous. A mixed methods study by Denison and Mishra (1995) found that there are four traits that are positively related to organizational performance: involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission. The authors used a case study of five firms as well as a survey of various CEOs to come to the conclusion that when organizational culture is operationalized, it can be linked to perceptions of organizational performance. More recently, Lee and Yu (2004) examined organizational culture and

performance in Singaporean companies. In their literature review, they acknowledge that there has been little previous research on perceptions of culture and performance outcomes (Reichers & Schneider, 1990). Lee and Yu utilized a Q-sort to have participants sort a set of 54 value statements according to the extent they felt they were characteristic of their organization (e.g. being competitive, being rule oriented, being flexible, and emphasis on quality). A Q-sort is a series of statements that participants are given and asked to rank according to whatever researchers are interested in looking at. In this case, participants were asked to rank statements about the organization they worked for, rating how well those statements matched their organization. Those rankings were then turned into typologies of the different organization, which the authors used to define each organization's culture. They used various performance indicators based on the type of industry of each organization (for example, in a business firm they looked at profit). After creating various culture models based on the Q-sort results, the authors found that there was a noticeable set of cultural dimensions identified across a set of organizations. They had mixed results on whether these organizational constructs correlated to organizational performance; a correlation was found in only a few cases and the authors suggest that even more research in this area is necessary, however this paper has shown how the field has evolved to start concretely defining organizational culture using quantitative methods. Most of these studies are set in private organizations and as Rainey and colleagues (1976) point out there are a number of differences between public and private organizations. It is important to look specifically at organizational culture in the

context of public organizations, especially in criminal justice organizations, because it is such a pervasive concept in every type of organization.

The literature emphasizes the importance of employees clearly understanding their organization's goals, mission, and vision (Locke & Latham, 2002; Wright, 2004). In order for staff to complete their jobs correctly, they need to know what the expectations are from the organization and how their position fits with the organization's overarching goals and mission. However, this can be difficult when policies are continually changing and the larger organization itself is unclear on its mission, vision, goals, and so on. These are challenges that organizations may face if they have recently undergone a structural reorganization. An organization cannot be expected to operate correctly and efficiently if there is confusion about the direction an organization is going. This confusion can lead to role ambiguity and an organizational culture that is not ready or unwilling to change. Chun and Rainey (2005) used the *2000 National Partnership for Reinventing Government Survey* of federal employees to analyze goal ambiguity and indicators of performance outcomes with federal employees. They found that lack of motivation, competing obligations, and complicated policies contributed to goal ambiguity in federal agencies.

Culture in Criminal Justice Organizations

There is an enormous amount of literature on organizational culture. While it would take volumes to catalogue it all (see Denison, 1996; House et. al., 2004; O'Reilly et. al., 1991l Schein, 2006; Wilkins & Ouchi, 1983), for the purpose of this paper it is

more important to focus on research that involves organizational culture in criminal justice organizations because we are interested in learning about the cultures of social organizations and specifically criminal justice agencies. In general, literature on organizational culture of service providers has found that culture can affect service outcomes (Glisson, 1996; Glisson & James, 2002; Nugent & Glisson, 1999). For example, Glisson and associates have done research in child welfare and juvenile justice organizations and have found that decisions, such as custodial placement, were often made based on organizational norms and not necessarily on what the results of standardized assessments advocated. Standardized assessments are important because they analyze and identify whatever is being looked at in a consistent way. These results can be reproduced by anyone and this leads to consistent findings that can then be used to make a determination. In one study, the authors examined caseworkers who were taught how to do psychological assessments on their clients to help recommend residential placement and mental health services. The authors found that staff followed the cultural norms (relying on labels the children already had such as “drug abuser”) of the organization instead of learning to rely on the new assessments (Martin et al., 1998). These decisions – whether or not to follow assessments or one’s own experiences – are similar to ones that probation officers and other justice professionals make. Whether or not to revoke someone’s probation because of a dirty urine screen or what level of probation they should be put on are all decisions that officers regularly need to make. The norms of an office can dictate whether that probation officer follows the “business as usual” attitude of the office or relies more heavily on assessments to make decisions.

Much of the research on culture in criminal justice settings is specific to institutional corrections (Cullen et al., 1989; Hepburn & Knepper, 1993; Jurik, 1985; Stojkovic & Farkas, 2003) and police departments (See Chan, 1997; Crank, 2004; Westmarland, 2001; Young, 1991). For example, Rudes, Lerch, and Taxman (2011) studied a work release facility that was part of a state correctional agency, examining the ramifications of implementing new policies among frontline workers in specific organizational cultures. Using a triangulated approach of surveys, interviews, and observations, the authors found that staff had low levels of support for the organization and the changes it was undergoing. Survey results showed that staff members saw, "supervisors as unfocused on specific performance and outcomes, supervisors as unaware of the organization's future direction, the organization as closed to innovation and ideas, and themselves as unwilling to take risks in their job" (Rudes, Lerch, & Taxman, 2011, p.477). These survey findings were corroborated with interviews and observations that showed staff to be unattached from the organization and aloof or oblivious to the organization's broader mission and goals.

Within the literature, some debate revolves around whether goal ambiguity has any effect on job performance. Sabatier and Mazmanian (1979) point out that the more specific the policy, the more effective it will be implemented. Specific policies make it less likely that employees will interpret them in different ways or that managers will disseminate the policies differently to their officers. On the flip side of this is that those specific policies will create an inability for responsivity between different locales (Chun & Rainey, 2005; Lerner & Wanat, 1983). It is important for employees of criminal justice

organizations to understand policies clearly. If they do not follow policy, they may be creating issues of public safety. For example, probation officers in a rural area with a predominately-poor white population face different challenges than those in densely populated urban cities; they interpret policies from their context, which can have different outcomes. If an organization is set on having their policies followed by all their offices (even though it may be impossible for those offices to comply completely due to resources or services available, lack of need, etc.) the result may be unnecessary consistency. Organizational culture can influence an organization's effectiveness. For example, if senior staff have negative opinions of a policy, those opinions can get passed along to lower level staff they are in charge of. In this way, line staff perceptions can easily be colored by their bosses' perceptions. The way in which an organization operates can be radically affected by cultures that don't support the values an organization is trying to maintain or establish. Other issues that organizations need to be conscious of are issues of justice within their organization, specifically perceptions of procedural and distributive justice.

Procedural and Distributive Justice

Issues around justice and fairness are pervasive in our everyday lives and matters of justice are embedded throughout our society. Whether it is two siblings arguing over who got the bigger piece of cake or an employee feeling disgruntled because a coworker received a pay raise they felt wasn't deserve, the desire to be treated fair is universal in daily life. Thus, organizational justice issues are incredibly important to researchers studying fairness in an organization. Employees want to feel that they are being treated

and rewarded fairly and in equal proportion to the work they are putting in to a job. There are two main concepts of organizational justice – procedural justice and distributive justice. In this paper, procedural justice is defined as *the perceived fairness of the means that are used to make decisions* and distributive justice is defined as *the distribution of the conditions and goods, which affect individual well-being* (Sweeney & McFarlin, 1997).

According to a meta-analysis of 190 studies conducted by Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) on the role of justice in organizations, early studies of justice began with Adams' theory of equity in the early 1960s (1963, 1965). Adams' theory was conceptualized for many different aspects of human interaction; the foundation of his theory as it pertains to organizations is as follows: employees will try to maintain equality between their inputs (what they bring to a job, their workload) and the outputs they receive (compensation, promotions, praise) against the perceived inputs and outputs of others (Adams, 1965). Below are brief reviews on the literature on distributive and procedural justice and then a review of how these topics have been studied in criminal justice settings.

Overview of Procedural Justice

As stated above, procedural justice has to do with the process or methods in which outcomes are made. In other words, the means to the end (Greenberg, 1990). Examples of this include the way in which pay or promotions are decided (Greenberg, 1987; Lind & Tyler, 1988). According the Leventhal's (1980) early conceptualization of procedural justice, there are six rules to ensure more "fair" outcomes: consistency

(distribution of resources should be consistent across people and time), bias-suppression (self-interests of decision-makers should be suppressed during the distribution), accuracy (resources are distributed based on accurate information), correctability (the ability to change decisions that are deemed unfair), representativeness (the needs, values, and outlooks of all the parties should be recognized), and ethicality (the distribution of resources must be compatible with the moral and ethical values of the perceiver). When an employee feels that an organization is acting unfairly towards them, they are likely to see that entire organization as unjust. In addition, procedurally just organizations make employees feel important and valuable (Tyler, 1994; Tyler & Degoey, 1996).

Procedural justice focuses on fairness in process and not the outcomes, thus, there are not many studies that show a correlation between procedural justice and quality of work. Much of the research is mixed as far as whether procedural justice effects work quality (Gilliland, 1994; Kanfer et al., 1987; Konovsky & Cropanzano, 1991). In their meta-analysis, Cohen-Charash and Spector observed that overall, studies found that work performance is strongly related to perceptions of procedural justice and hardly related to perceptions of distributive justice (2001). These results of this study are perhaps the strongest argument for the importance of examining procedural justice perceptions in terms of work quality. The authors posit that it is possible that when an outcome is deemed unfair, employees look at the procedure to measure its fairness as well (see Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996). In addition, procedural justice affects performance through its effect on attitudes (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Lind & Tyler, 1988; McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992; Moorman, Niehoff, & Organ, 1993). For example, if an

employee feels that they are not being treated fairly in terms of receiving equal pay for equal work, they may see the organization as unjust and as a result not perform their job to the best of their ability or to the level of satisfaction that an organization expects.

Overview of Distributive Justice

Research on distributive justice is historically rooted in studies of pay equity (Cowherd & Levine, 1992; Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Goodman, 1974; Lawlor, 1971; Weick, 1966). Folger & Konovsky (1989) surveyed frontline staff at a privately owned manufacturing plant in the US to examine how distributive justice would be more strongly related to pay satisfaction than procedural justice. They found that perceptions of distributive justice are analogous with satisfaction regarding ones own outcomes, such as pay satisfaction; however procedural justice does make a significant contribution to pay satisfaction. The authors note that this is similar to Tyler, Rasinski, and McGraw (1985) who found that both types of justice contributed to employee satisfaction, though distributive justice contributed twice as much to satisfaction in Tyler et. al.

Distributive justice may also refer to rewards such as pay, promotions, shift assignments, verbal praise, benefits, etc. (Martin & Bennett, 1996; Mueller, Iverson, & Jo, 1999; Tremblay, Sire, & Balkin, 2000). Similarly to procedural justice, the conceptualization of distributive justice also began with Adams' work on equity (1963, 1965). Distributive justice was the predecessor to procedural justice, and early works can be found by Crosby (1976) and Deutsch (1975, 1985). Primarily organizational justice studies have focused on the fairness of the distribution of resources, especially pay equity

(as mentioned above). The reason for this focus is illustrated in Lawlor's 1977 article, *Reward Systems,* where rewards were found to have a powerful effect on job performance, satisfaction, and effectiveness. Rewards are important because they shape behaviors, they increase self-esteem and job satisfaction, and they help retain and attract staff.

Procedural and Distributive Justice and Criminal Justice Organizations

While there is minimal literature on distributive and procedural justice issues in probation departments, there are numerous studies that focus on institutional correctional staff and police. To give a frame in which to think about justice issues in probation departments, literature on other types of control agents can be analyzed. As said previously, social control agents differ in job type but have similar basic characteristics. For example, Patterson (1992) found that probation officers and police officers share similar patterns of job stress. The roles that agents of social control play are demanding and highly stressful. In their study on rule adherence among agents of social control (law enforcement officers and soldiers), Tyler, Callahan, and Frost (2007) point to the importance of effectively regulating the behavior of these agents. In their analysis of procedural justice in these groups, they found that when they controlled for distributive justice, the most important factor was the quality of the interpersonal treatment participants experienced from their supervisors. In other words participants, rated their organization as just if they were treated fairly, respectfully, and with dignity by their superiors. These results align with the work of Taxman and Gordon (2009) in a study of

correctional officers in prison. They found that quality leadership can have a large impact on employees' sense of procedural justice.

Taxman and Gordon (2009) provide a notable examination of organizational justice issues among correctional officers who work with adult prisoners. The survey results from this study show that perceptions of equity can significantly affect work environment. For example, the authors found that a positive work environment is more likely to be present when employees feel that there is a moderate to high sense of equity. In turn, this can influence things such as acceptance of change and commitment to the organization. Moreover, both justice dimensions led in prediction of job stress and organizational commitment. This study illustrates the need for administrators to support organizational justice ideals within their institutions.

Lamberts' research on institutional correctional staff and issues of organizational justice (see Lambert, 2003; Lambert, Hogan, & Griffin, 2002, 2007). Lambert and colleagues (2007) found that distributive justice had an impact on job stress while procedural justice did not; respondents felt more stress when they felt that outcomes were not fair. An example of this is an employee feeling that their workload is more difficult than their fellow employees, though they are given the same pay, benefits, and so on, can cause job-related frustration and anger. On the other hand, procedural justice had a direct impact on job satisfaction, which supports Lambert's prior research (Lambert, 2003). Workers are more likely to feel satisfied with their job if they feel they are being treated fairly. Finally, both justice concepts influenced organizational commitment. Staff are

more likely to feel committed to their job/the organization if they feel that they are not only being treated fairly but rewarded sufficiently as well.

Summary

Perceptions of fairness and equity are important factors contributing to employee satisfaction. The literature shows that perceptions of both procedural and distributive justice contribute to whether or not an employee feels committed to an organization, whether they feel stressed out about their job, and whether their performance is of quality. Additionally, organizational culture penetrates all aspects of how an organization runs, as it is composed of the collective values, visions, morals, and norms of employees. Each of these concepts have major implications for an organization, whether public or private. Social control organizations, such as probation offices, need to examine culture and justice issues because they may contribute to improving client outcomes. For example, if staff feel that their organization is too controlling and would react harshly to suggestions of change or mistakes, staff may feel stressed about doing something wrong or unwilling to propose new ideas that can end up improving the organization. Cultures that do not encourage flexibility and growth can stifle workplace innovation (Kanter, 1983). Staff satisfaction can lead to better outcomes between frontline employees and their direct managers, ultimately contributing to relationships between frontline staff and their clientele. If staff are stressed, that they are being treated unfairly or not justly rewarded for their efforts, they are likely to slack or not do their job satisfactorily. This may ultimately lead to public safety issues such as probationers not being supervised correctly. Without outcome data, many of these connections between justice and culture and organizational outcomes cannot be made, but they are important to acknowledge because these issues are ubiquitous in almost every organization. They put in context why

it is important to look at the processes of an organization as well as staff perceptions. If justice issues are present, the result may be poor supervision of offender; if we want to avoid this, we need to recognize it as a possible outcome and examine the processes that are contributing to it. This paper will look at the perceptions of these issues by both middle managers and frontline staff. This comparison is important because, while frontline staff delivers services, middle managers are in charge of making sure that staff is following organizational protocols correctly, safely, and in a manner which is aligned with policy. In addition, because probation officers are seen as important public safety officers, it is important that they are invested in doing their jobs well. For example by correctly supervising their clients. If officers do not effectively supervise the probationers they are in charge of, offenders may recidivate or have difficulty successfully completing their probation requirements.

METHOD

This study is part of a comprehensive examination of organizational issues within the state probation and parole department in a mid-Atlantic state. The overall study measures organizational issues among frontline staff, supervisors, and administrators. The current study focuses on mid-level supervisors. In this organization they are classified as Field Supervisors (levels 1 and 2). Field supervisors are in charge of the field agents; monitoring their cases and making sure staff are educated on and adhere to policy. The current paper evaluates the following hypotheses:

(1) Middle managers (FS1s) will have similar perceptions about organizational culture to front line staff.

(2) Middle managers (FS1s) will differ in opinion on justice issues from front line staff.

(3) Middle managers (FS1s) will perceive that there is more distributive and procedural fairness in the organization than front line staff.

These hypotheses will also look at the effects of demographic characteristics such as gender, age, level of education, and region.

Study site: A Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services – From Probation and Parole to Community Corrections

In 2011, a mid-Atlantic state's department of Public Safety and Correctional Services decided to address public safety throughout the organization by addressing the inconsistencies across the various organizational units in their department. The main issues revolved around differing mission statements, poor communication between and among agencies, inflexible bureaucratic operations and outdated data systems. The resulting restructuring had three main objectives:

Regional Integration: *A regionally based DPSCS across three areas of the state – North, Central and South*

Finding Efficiencies: *Better-served offenders flow through DPSCS system efficiently, utilizing fewer resources*

Improving Reentry: *Leveraging a new Offender Case Management System, DPSCS operational shift improves offender rehabilitation process*

The integration brings together three of the DPSCS divisions (the Division of Corrections, the Division of Parole and Probation and the Division of Pretrial, Detention and Services), under the umbrella of Regional Directors who report to a Deputy Secretary for Operations. Though the organization reported no job loss, they have done some major restructuring. Figure 1 illustrates the new organizational structure and figure 2 is a detailed chart of the chain of command in community corrections (Note: DPSCS refers to probation officers as "agents"). Staff reports to a regional director (which there are 3 of, one for each region) and those directors are in charge of both community corrections and correctional operations (presentencing, jail staff, etc.)

One of the main goals in the restructuring was to reduce redundancy (personal communication with the organization). Services should be more integrated; everyone

reports to their regional director who can allocate resources more efficiently as they see necessary as illustrated in Figure 1. By improving communication and flattening the organizational structure, the organization desires to create a more efficient reentry process. Furthermore, by integrating services, there will be an increase ease in the flow of records between the institutional corrections side of the department and the community corrections side. An example of this is the computer program that they adapted that is accessible to all members of the organization, increasing the ability and ease of information sharing. When an offender passes from institutionalization to probation, their files are shared within that one computer system so that probation agents can see everything that correctional staff put in it.

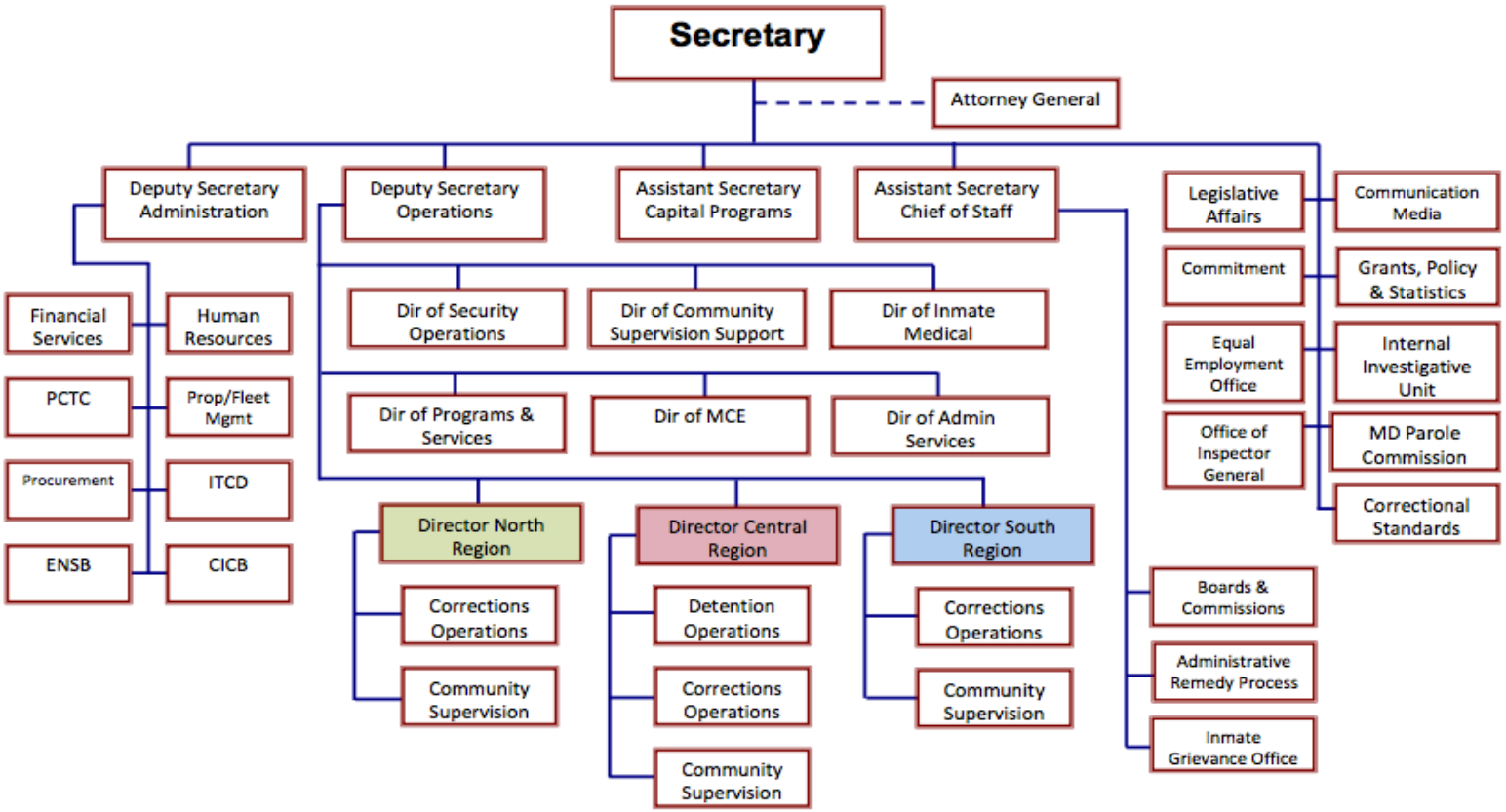

Figure 1 Organization Chart for the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

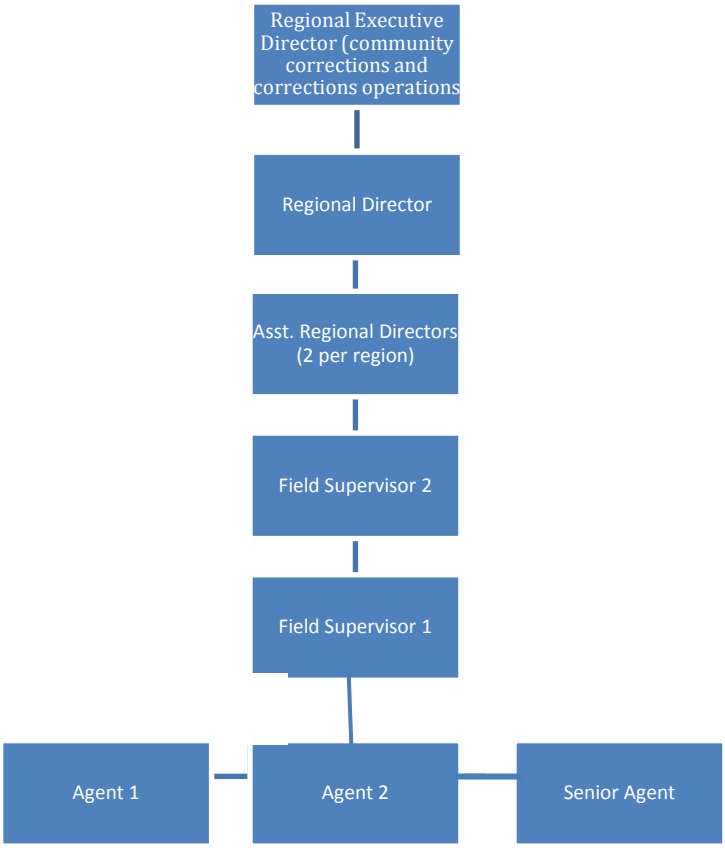

Figure 2Organizational Structure of Community Corrections

Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis in the study is the staff in the department of community corrections; their job titles are Field Supervisor 1, Field Supervisor 2, Agent 1, Agent 2, and Senior Agent (frontline staff). These staff positions have been aggregated into two categories – middle managers (FS1 and FS2) and frontline staff (Agents 1 and 2 and Senior Agents). Agents 1 and 2 and Senior Agents were grouped together because they are all staff that has direct contact with offenders. Field Supervisor 1 and 2 was combined because they are the next level above Senior Agents, and their responsibilities are to directly supervise the field staff.

Survey Procedures

This study involves a survey of all probation and parole staff throughout the community corrections branch of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. In January 2013, a survey was emailed to all staff members at MDPSCS along with a letter from the primary investigator of this project, requesting participation from all staff (N=1200). The email informed staff that George Mason University would be conducting a survey to learn about how different evidence-based practices are used within community supervision processes and practices. There was emphasis placed on the fact that this survey was being conducted by independent researchers and that information would not be shared with supervisors or anyone else is the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. It was signed by the principle investigator (Dr. Faye Taxman) and her contact information was provided.

The average length of time to take the survey was 30 minutes. Initial examination of response rates revealed a low rate of return and thus three follow up reminder emails were sent from MDPSCS leadership, encouraging staff to participate. In late March 2013, the survey closed with 134 surveys completed (11.17%). The survey website revealed that the survey was viewed 640 times and started 301, indicating that staff had dropped out after viewing the survey or soon after beginning it.

Surveys were created in collaboration with representatives from the Department of Community Supervision Support. The purpose of these surveys is to get a baseline measure of various organizational factors that affect the performance of the agency. As previously stated, this paper only discusses the preliminary research to a much larger organizational intervention project. The purpose of the larger project is collaboratively design organizational strategies for improvement and to provide techniques to teach middle managers to become better agents of change within the organization. George Mason University is working in collaboration with the Criminal Justice Institute, who are functioning as consultants for this project. CJI will develop a written intervention plan, focused on two specific types of supervisor trainings. The goal is to implement two types of interventions in various offices to assess the impact of each intervention strategy.

This paper looks at three of the measures – distributive and procedural justices and organizational culture - from the organizational survey. Measures are obtained from various sources, including *Taking the Measure of Work* (Fields, 2002) and the *National Criminal Justice Treatment Practices Survey Manual* (Taxman et al., 2007). Various validated organizational measures were compiled for the representatives to look over and

pick which ones were most relevant to their interests as well as the interests of this research project. See Appendix A for samples of each measure used in this paper. Survey instruments included distributive and procedural justice, attitudes towards rehabilitation and punishment, perceived person-organization fit, supportive and non-controlling supervision, organizational commitment, and cynicism for change.

Measures

Appendix A offers complete versions of all of the following scales. It should be noted that the definitions included on those scales were not created by this researcher, but were a part of the formal version of the scale.

Procedural Justice. A 12-item scale was used to measure procedural justice. The original scale was taken from Sweeney and McFarlin (1997) and modified for this study. The responses to the scale were on a 5-point Likert scale (*strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*). The variable of procedural justice has a mean of 2.73 (*SD*=.76).

Distributive Justice. An 11-item scale was used to measure distributive justice. Again, this scale was taken from Sweeney and McFarlin and modified for this study. Similarly to the procedural justice scale, participants were asked to rank responses on a 5-point Likert scale (*strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*). The variable of distributive justice has a mean of 2.52 (*SD* =.62).

Organizational Culture. Organizational culture was measured with a 12-item scale. This scale was adopted from Cameron and Quinn (2005) and Denison and Mishra (1995). This scale measured 4 types of organizational cultures: cohesion-involvement, hierarchy-consistency, performance-achievement, and innovation-adaptability. Based on

the responses, the organization is categorized into an organizational culture type. The mean of this variable is 2.41 (*SD*=.89). The organizational type that this organization scored the highest in is hierarchy-consistency, with a mean of 2.72 (*SD* = 1.08). Three other types of organizational cultures were measured as subscales of the larger organizational culture scale; cohesion-involvement (2.53, *SD*=1.14), performance-achievement (2.43, *SD*=1.07), and innovation adaptability (2.03, *SD*=.92)

Control Variables. A number of control variables were examined including age of the agent in years, region (north, south, central, sex (male, female), highest level of education (High School, Associate Degree, BA/BS, Some Graduate Studies, MBA/Masters, JD, PhD/EdD, Other), race (White, People of Color [POC]); and collapsed employee title (middle managers and frontline staff). There was no means replacement done on the control variables. There were other control variables in the survey but they were not used in this analysis because of poor response patterns.

To overcome the small sample size, means replacement was use to fill in missing data for respondents that answered at least 2/3 of the questions for each scale. This process involves identifying participants that answered most of the questions on a particular scale. When they are identified, the questions that they didn't answer are replaced with the mean answer for that question. For example, if someone answered 10 out of 12 questions, the two questions they didn't answer would be filled in with the mean scores of those questions. This brought to response rates up by an average of 7.67 (*SD*=3.06).

ANALYSIS

Sample Descriptive Statistics

Demographic characteristics and a breakdown of the independent (demographic information, job title) and dependent variables (organizational scales of culture, procedural justice, and distributive justice) are available in Table 1. The sample consists of 134 probation agents of various backgrounds. Without information about the entire organization, I cannot generalize about how this compares to the larger population in this organization. The majority (62.5%) of respondents were women. Most respondents were white (71.43%). Those who didn't identify as either white were compiled into the people of color (POC) variable. The average age was 44.23, with a minimum of 25 and a maximum of 67 (*SD*=11.20).

Table 1: Independent Variables

Variable	Code	Middle Managers (N)	Frontline Staff (N)	Population (N)	%
Job Title					
Middle Managers	1				27.62
Frontline Staff	0				72.38
Race					
White	1	14	40	54	53.47
POC	0	14	33	47	46.53
Sex					
			49	75	
Female	1	14			62.50
Male	0	15	24	45	37.50
Age		47.27	42.28	44.23 (SD=11.20)	
Highest Level of Education					
High School	1	0	2	2	1.92
Associate Degree	2	0	0	0	0
BA/BS	3	11	44	55	52.89
Some graduate studies	4	7	16	23	22.12
MBA/Masters	5	10	12	22	21.15
JD	6	0	0	0	0
PhD/EdD	7	0	1	1	.96
MD	8	0	0	0	0
Other	9	0	1	1	.96

Table 2 is a breakdown of the sample by job title, with Senior Agents having the largest proportion of the responses (52.4%). A star(*) next to FS1 and FS2 denotes a management level position. The reason the response rate may be higher for senior agents can be found during informal conversations with frontline staff. Senior agents are the ones who usually have specialized or “boutique” caseloads of either offenders under the

strictest level of supervision (VPI) or sex offenders. These caseloads are much smaller (approximately 25) than that of those who supervise offenders under general supervision (anywhere from 90-200) and thus they may have more time to do supplementary work, such as taking a survey.

Table 2: Employee Job Title

Employee Title	N (missing = 29)	Percent	Valid Percent
FS1	20	6.6	19
FS2	9	3	8.6
Senior Agent	54	17.9	52.4
Agent 1	9	3	8.6
Agent 1	13	4.3	12.4
Total	N= 105	34.8	100

Response rate was not equally distributed across regions. As Table 3 illustrates, the northern region had the lowest response rate (23.7% of valid responses) while the other two regions had rates in the high 30s. Upon further discussion with administrative staff, no conclusions can be made as to why this was (eg some regions have higher caseloads than others).

Table 3: Representation by Region

Region	N (missing=20)	Percent	Valid Percent
Central Region	42	14	36.8
Northern Region	27	9	23.7

Southern Region	45	15	39.5
Total	N=114	38	100

Table 4 refers to tenure with the organization. Even though the average age is 44.23, most participants responded that they were either new to the job and hadn't been vested yet (<6 years on the job) (n=51) or had been on the job for 25+ years (n=26). Compared to the average age of participants, this seems odd as people have usually been working at a job for 10-15 years by the time they reach their 40s. Table 4 also shows that tenure with the organization ranged from less than a year to well over 40 years, with the average tenure with DPSCS being about 14 years.

Table 4: Tenure with the Organization

Tenure with the org (years)	**N (missing=0)**	**Valid Percent**
<1	1	.01
1-3	32	24.2
4-6	16	11.4
7-9	18	14.3
10-13	15	10.7
14-17	7	5
18-21	9	6.4
22-24	12	8.5
25+	24	18.6
Total	N=134	100

All officers have at least a high school education; most staff have at least a Bachelor's degree (47.5%) with many staff having either started or completed graduate level work of many kinds (41.8%). It is surprising to see that the highest level of education for 7 staff members was high school, based on the policy of the organization to prioritize hiring of college graduates. Those who only have a high school education may have been hired before the policy was put in place (a bachelor's degree with 30 credit hours in the social, behavioral or correctional sciences and 21 years of age).

Hypothesis 1: Organizational culture.

This hypothesis aims to compare the perceptions of organizational culture between frontline staff and mid-level managers.

Hypothesis 1: Middle managers (FS1s) will have similar perceptions about organizational culture to front line staff.

Hypothesis 1 involves running an ANOVA to compare the mean scores of frontline staff and middle managers. Results from the analysis of all of the scales are show in Table 5. Comparisons of frontline staff (n=76) and middle managers (n= 29) show that there is no significant difference in the means on the culture scale. Frontline staff have a mean score of 2.27 and middle managers' mean was 2.49. There was no significant effect of job title (middle managers and frontline workers) on perceptions of organizational culture in MDPSCS [$F(1,99)=1.539$, $p=.218$]. In addition, when both groups' responses took into account the subscales, they both most highly related to the label of their organization as hierarchical-structural. This means that the culture is stable

and internally focused. These types of culture tend to emphasize consistency, formal policies and procedures, and efficiency. Structures and decision-making practices in these types of cultures tend to be more rigid and controlled. This makes sense because this organization is public and very bureaucratic. Because the means were not significantly different, hypothesis one is supported.

Table 5: Scale Means by Job Title

Variable	M	SD	ANOVA (Item x Job Title)
Organizational Culture			F(1,99)=1.539, p=.218
Entire Sample	2.41	0.89	
Middle Managers	2.49	1.09	
Frontline Staff	2.27	2.26	
Procedural Justice			
Entire Sample	2.73	0.76	F(1,102)=5.409, p=.022
Middle Managers	3.00	0.90	
Frontline Staff	2.61	0.72	
Distributive Justice			
Entire Sample	2.52	0.62	F(1,101)=.781, p=.379
Middle Managers	2.57	0.72	
Frontline Staff	2.45	0.55	

Hypothesis 2: Issues of Justice

This hypothesis examines officers' perceptions of procedural justice and distributive justice within the organization (not with clients, but among the agents in the organization).

Hypothesis 2a: Middle managers (FS1s) will differ in opinion on justice issues from front line staff.

Hypothesis 2b: Middle managers (FS1s) will feel that there is more distributive and procedural fairness in the organization than front line staff.

The ANOVA for Hypothesis 2 can also be found in Table 5. Means were calculated to assess the fairness of procedures and outcomes in the organization. There is no statistical difference between the means of frontline workers (2.45) and middle managers (2.57) on the distributive justice scale [$F(1,101)=.781$, $p=.379$].

The only significant variable that was measured was staff perceptions on procedural justice. Middle managers reported a mean of 3.00 which is statistically significant compared to frontline workers (2.61) [$F(1,102)=5.409$, $p=.022$]. In other words, frontline workers see significantly less procedural justice in their organization as compared to managers.

A correlation table was run to see if any of the variables were highly correlated with each other. Table 6 shows that perceptions of procedural justice and job title were highly correlated at the $p<.01$ level and race and gender, race and perceptions of distributive justice, race and perceptions of procedural justice, distributive justice and organizational culture, procedural justice and organizational culture, and procedural justice and distributive justice were correlated at the $p<.05$ level. It is important to keep in mind that many of the variables that are being measured are dichotomous nominal variables; they have been assigned values of “0” and “1.” This means that the correlations between variables of this nature are not as meaningful as correlations between continuous or ordinal variables. In this case, the correlations between age and any of the scale variables are the important ones to note. In fact, there is a positive correlation between

distributive justice and the organizational culture scale (.428) and procedural justice and both the organizational culture scale (.639) and the distributive justice scale (.583).

Table 6: Correlation Table

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
1. Race	X	-0.279**	-0.043	-0.121	-0.012	-0.131	-0.330**	-0.241**
2. Gender		X	-0.175	0.020	-0.097	0.157	0.158	0.057
3. Job Title			X	0.176	0.188	0.121	0.087	-0.224*
4. Highest Level of Education				X	0.043	-0.039	-0.030	-0.048
5. Age (years)					X	0.133	0.099	0.095
6. Org Culture(scale)						X	0.428**	0.639**
7. Distributive Justice(scale)							X	0.583**
8. Procedural Justice(scale)								X

** Correlation is significant at .05 level
* Correlation is significant at .01 level

Organizational Culture: The Relationship between Demographics and Perceptions of Organizational Culture

Three linear regression models were used to see if there were any confounding variables that could better explain the results of the ANOVAs of each dependent variable. For each scale, there were 3 models: one that just included job title, one that added in race, gender, and age, and the last one added in highest level of education. Other models were run to include variable such as tenure with the organization, tenure in current position, and region of employment because low response rates (N=17) prevented us from including those models.

The overall linear regression model for perceptions of organizational culture was not significant ($p=.084$, $r^2=.107$). Additionally, neither of models 1 or 2 were significant either as seen in Table 7.

Table 7: Perceptions of Organizational Culture Regression

	Model 1					Model 2					Model 3				
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	2.297	0.100		22.870	.000	1.712	0.401		4.270	0.000	2.087	0.496		4.207	.000
Job Title	0.338	0.208	0.171	1.625	.108	0.368	0.216	0.186	1.701	0.093	0.402	0.217	.203.	1.851	0.068
Race						-0.102	0.182	-0.061	-0.558	0.578	-0.132	0.183	-0.079	-0.722	0.472
Gender						0.322	0.189	0.189	1.709	0.091	0.302	0.189	0.178	1.602	0.113
Age (years)						0.010	0.008	0.137	1.304	0.196	0.011	0.008	0.142	1.356	0.179
Highest level of education											-0.099	0.078	-0.135	-1.274	0.206

N= 90

Model 1 R^2= .029 (p=.108)

Model 2 R^2=.090 (p=.088)

Model 3 R^2=.107 (p=.084)

Procedural Justice: The Relationship between Demographics and Perceptions of Procedural Justice

The overall linear regression model for perceptions of procedural justice was significant ($p=.020$, $r^2=.141$) as were the other two models that had fewer independent variables. Model 1 explained the least amount of variance of the perceived procedural justice variable ($p=.006$, $r^2=.082$), explaining less than 8%. There was a statistically significant and inverse relationship between job title and perceptions of procedural justice. Because many of the independent variables are ordinal, the regression has to be interpreted differently than if they were continuous. In this case, middle managers scored higher on the procedural justice scale relative to frontline staff. For every 1 unit "increase" in procedural justice scale, job title "decreased" by a logged value of .275 (see Table 8). Job title obviously doesn't decrease, but what this statement is saying is that as job title moved from middle managers to frontline staff, favorable perceptions of procedural justice decreased. No other variables were significant in this model.

Table 8: Perceptions of Procedural Justice Regression

	Model 1					Model 2					Model 3				
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	2.621	0.086		30.500	.000	2.515	0.340		7.389	.000	2.687	0.427		6.288	.000
Job Title	0.498	0.176	0.286	2.835	.006*	0.463	0.183	0.266	2.525	0.013**	0.478	0.185	0.275	2.580	0.012**
Race						-0.284	0.156	-0.191	-1.817	0.073	-0.298	0.158	-0.200	-1.885	0.063
Gender						0.116	0.161	0.077	0.721	0.473	0.107	0.163	0.071	0.659	0.512
Age (years)						0.004	0.007	0.068	0.668	0.506	0.005	0.007	0.070	0.688	0.493
Highest level of education											-0.045	0.067	-0.069	-0.670	0.505

N= 92
*p<.01
**p<.05

Model 1 R^2= .082 (p=.006)
Model 2 R^2=.137 (p=.011)
Model 3 R^2=.141 (p=.020)

Distributive Justice: The Relationship between Demographics and Perceptions of Distributive Justice

The overall linear regression for the perceptions of distributive justice model was statistically significant ($p=.011$, $r^2=.157$). Model 2 (which includes job title and demographics but not education level) was found to be significant as well ($p=.005$, $r^2=.157$) (see Table 9). As was the case with the perceptions of procedural justice models, these models explain about 15% of the variance of the dependent variable (in this case distributive justice). There was a statistically significant inverse relationship between perceptions of distributive justice and race in both models. For every one unit decrease in the distributive justice scale, race was increased by a logged value of .381 (where white = 1, POC = 0). As race changed from nonwhite to white, perceptions of distributive justice decreased. There were no other significant relationships found in this set of models.

Table 9: Perceptions of Distributive Justice Regression

	Model 1					Model 2					Model 3				
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	2.450	0.072		34.159	.000	2.306	0.271		8.513	.000	2.274	0.341		6.670	.000
Job Title	0.164	0.147	0.117	1.121	0.265	0.103	0.146	0.073	0.705	0.482	0.100	0.148	0.071	0.677	0.500
Race						-0.381	0.124	-0.318	-3.066	0.003*	-0.378	0.126	-0.316	-3.000	0.004*
Gender						0.114	0.129	0.093	0.884	0.379	0.115	0.130	0.095	0.890	0.376
Age (years)						0.007	0.005	0.126	1.257	0.212	0.007	0.005	0.126	1.244	0.217
Highest level of education											0.008	0.054	0.016	0.157	0.876

N= 92
*p<.01

Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
R^2= .014 (p=.265)	R^2=.157 (p=.005)	R^2=.157 (p=.011)

DISCUSSION

Overall, the results presented offer some evidence that an employee's title in an organization plays some role in perceptions of justice within a probation department. The results suggest that perceptions of procedural justice are significantly different between frontline staff and middle managers; middle managers perceived higher levels of procedural justice than frontline staff. I found that minority employees reported lower perceptions of procedural justice as compared to Caucasian employees. This aligns with research that shows that race is important in the social context of an organization (Ibarra, 1995; McDonald, Lin & Ao, 2009; Riordan & Shore, 1997) and specifically in matters of procedural justice (Wesolowski & Mossholder, 1997). Perceptions of organizational and culture and distributive justice remained consistent between the two groups.

There is very little research about how these issues work out in a state probation department. In addition, there is very little focus on the perceptions of middle managers, even though they are responsible for crucial tasks in an organization such as policy translation and managing the frontline staff. Middle managers tend to be directly promoted from frontline staff. As such, one could surmise that an organization's culture is passed on to frontline workers from middle level management. When frontline staff are promoted, they bring with them the cultural ideals that they were socialized in to and so the cycle continues. The findings from this study adds some nuance to previous literature

about organizational culture and justice issues in criminal justice organizations as well as how mid-level management and frontline staff differ.

As stated above, the only significant finding was staff perceptions with procedural justice. Some issues that were measured in the scale were staff's ability to make changes within the organization, fairness of disciplinary actions and promotions, and staff performance evaluations. Mid-level managers perceived a statistically significantly higher (3.00) level of procedural justice as compared to frontline workers (2.61) (p=.022). There are numerous possible explanations for this. Middle managers have higher levels of autonomy in the organization and they have the ability to disseminate policy and practice as more or less how they like in addition to being in control of performance reviews for frontline staff. From data collected in prior focus groups with staff of various levels in this organization (from Dr. Portillo, personal communication), many managers do things how they would like to do them and interpret policies in their own ways without repercussion. An example of this is report writing. Everyone has their own writing style, though reports are usually supposed to be uniform in content and style, especially at a large governmental organization. However, agents reported in the focus groups that report writing expectations differ from office to office and even manager to manager. A task as simple as writing up a standard report can be confusing for frontline staff, especially when there is little consistency even between the managers themselves. Even though the reports are short, agents reported that they have been verbally reprimanded for writing the report differently than the managers expect. It is easy to see why managers would see that the process is more fair than frontline workers, as these

managers are in charge of the process to a degree that frontline workers are subject to them.

Staff at all levels in this organization identified that the organizational culture was hierarchical-structural. This is an accurate reflection of how this organization works (see Figure 2 on page 65 for a review) with the secretary on top and the various executives below him and all the way down to frontline staff. This follows in the definition of hierarchical-structural organizations, which are characterized by having multiple entities all subordinate to a single other entity. As seen in Figure 2, each level of agent has a superior agent or manager to report to. All staff report to their Executive Regional Director (one in each region) who reports to the Secretary of Public Safety & Correctional Services. There is a distinct chain of command that staff must follow and a strict bureaucratic order to the way the organization is run. In other words, staff have accurately perceived the way the culture works in their organization. This is important because it can be used as a foundation for managers to motivate in retain employees. With everyone being on the same page about how the organization works, it may be easier to make adjustments and identify issues within policy, structure, etc. that everyone understands – both at the frontline and the management levels. There were no differences between the responses of frontline supervisors and mid-level managers, leading one to believe that the cultural identity of this organization is strong and consistent. In addition it supports the idea that the cultural perceptions in this organization can be seen as cyclical – frontline staff learning from their managers and then bringing those perceptions with them once they are promoted to then teach the staff below them and so on. This

finding of consistent cultural perceptions is similar to the research done by Ioan Durnescu in Romania. In his article on probation practices in Romania, Durnescu found that despite probation officers having different educational backgrounds (in Romania you need a degree in Psychology, Social Work, Law, Sociology, or Pedagogy to be a probation officer), they shared similar methods in how they handled offenders. He concluded that organizational norms help create common "skill sets," regardless of staff background. In this case, employees at all levels identify the same cultural identity for their organization (Durnescu, 2013). Applying this finding to this case, we can see that no matter a staff's position at the frontline (manager or staff) they also share cultural norms and perceptions.

Staff concur about issues of distributive justice. Both levels of staff indicate that there are only moderate-to-moderate low issues of distributive justice in the organization. Agents perceive that they are rewarded for their efforts fairly and that they are rated fairly by their supervisors. However, in the linear regression, race appears to play a role in perceptions of distributive justice. Minority staff perceive higher levels of distributive justice within DPSCS than did Caucasian staff. This completely contradicts many of the interactions that researchers have had with staff in focus groups, where some African American staff expressed that they are not promoted equally compared to their white peers, speculating that perhaps it was because of their race.

In the larger survey, there were open-ended questions regarding areas where staff would like to see changes in the organization. One respondent wrote that there was too much "reverse racism" and that promotions should be given out more fairly. What that staff member was actually referring to is that white staff are treated unequally (lesser) to

staff of color. Although a very large portion of the staff are minorities (especially African American), many are in frontline or low-level manager positions; there are no staff of color in positions of executive authority in any of the regions. The results of the regression, coupled with the one response to the survey opens a door to many questions about how race plays a role in this organization – both in terms of promotions and perceptions of culture issues. As stated before, race does play a role in the social aspects of an organization. These questions cannot be answered by this data alone, but they should be explored in future studies.

The overall distributive justice finding seems to contradict focus group findings with staff at all levels, where one of their biggest complaints, next to high caseloads, is that they are not fairly compensated for their work. More exploration is needed about why there is a contradiction between what staff says in person and what they say in the survey. One explanation as to why these results seem to contradict themselves may be that in the focus groups the staff is complaining about justice, not equality as far as compensation. There was not any discussion in the focus groups about being paid equal to their colleagues; the discussion focused on equal pay for equal work. In other words, the staff felt that they were putting more into their jobs than they were getting back in compensation. This aligns with Adams' work on equity (1963, 1965) where his basic tenant involves peoples' desire to be rewarded equally to the amount of work they are putting in to something. This organization has been under a pay freeze for a few years, and staff express annoyance that their pay is "so bad." However, these complaints are contrary to the survey results. The survey shows that staff rate this organization as having

moderate levels of distributive justice. While this is not high, it is also not incredibly low; in other words, staff don't feel that there are low levels of distributive justice in this organization. One explanation for this is that while staff may desire pay raises and an increase in tangible rewards, because they are on a pay freeze these rewards are not as tangible as they would be if this was not the case. Staff commented in the focus groups that even if they do get a promotion that included a pay raise, it would be so small that by the time taxes are taken out it will not even matter. Taxman and Gordon (2009) have pointed out that staff perceptions on being rewarded fairly can contribute to a positive organizational environment, job stress, and organizational commitment. While there were no outcome measures in this study that looked at job stress or organizational commitment, focus groups with staff indicate that there is a very high level of job stress with very little tangible reward. More research needs to be done to look at exactly how staff are rewarded and how that may relate to job stress and organizational outcomes.

Study Weaknesses and Limitations

As in any study, there are multiple weaknesses in this study that may be addressed in future research. The findings for this study are based on low response rates to the organization-wide survey. Of the 1,200 employees that were sent the link to the survey (at least 4 times), only 134 filled out enough of it to count their response as valid (11% response rate). Though the survey was 14 scales, 11 open ended questions and a handful of demographic questions, the scales were deliberately chosen by the researchers because they answered many of the questions that were being examined in the larger study. The

survey website timed that the average time to complete the survey was 31 minutes, only one minute longer than the email from the primary investigator stated in the information letter. The investigators felt this was a reasonable length of time to ask staff to devote to the survey, though later meetings with staff indicated that they did not even have the half an hour in their day to give to the survey. Other feedback from staff indicated that high-level staff (managers and executives) felt that the questions on the survey did not pertain to them because they did not see clients.

The largest number of staff completing the survey identified as Senior Agents, the highest ranked level of frontline worker. In another conversation with staff after the survey was administered, researchers discussed with mid-level management why that may be. Many staff said that the reason Senior Agents had the highest amount of participation was that they tend to have the specialized case loads. Because they have specialized caseloads, they have smaller caseloads. Managers stated that they were the ones who were most likely to have the greatest amount of free time to complete the survey. Even so, this researcher feels that it is the motivation and time management skills that lend these agents to being high performers that led them to have the time to fill out the survey on top of their other work.

Researchers were constrained by the original design of the overall study. One of the most successful ways of conducting survey research is to use the Dillman approach called the Total Design Method (TDM) (Dillman, 1978). In the modern version of TDM (as identified by Thorpe et. al, 2009) there are five principles: “a respondent-friendly questionnaire, use of four contacts by first-class mail, with an additional ‘special’ contact

(e.g. certified mail, telephone call), use of return envelopes with real first-class stamps, personalized correspondence, and a token financial incentive that is sent with the survey request" (Thorpe et. al, 2009). While this was an online survey, some of these strategies could have been used (especially incentives) if the study design had allowed.

In the future tests need to be done using personnel data to see whether these results are representative of the population of the organization. Researchers have not yet obtained official records on the demographic breakdown of the entire organization. While the response rate was low, this is typical of many research papers. Cohen (1962) reported that over half of the published studies he looked at were inadequately powered. Researchers should always strive to obtain the largest and most representative sample possible, even though that can prove challenging.

Future Research

The next steps beyond this study will be to continue to look at additional comparisons between frontline supervisors and mid-level managers using the other scales collected for the larger project. There is a great deal of research centered on frontline staff but very little of middle managers. The research on mangers in probation departments is almost non-existent. As previously highlighted, middle managers are key players; especially in public organizations were they are in charge of front line staff. Past studies have shown the importance of organizational justice issues within all types of organizations and these concepts need to be studied further in probation and parole offices. Future research needs to begin to identify the specific roles that middle managers play in probation settings. Frontline staff have the important task of managing offenders but middle managers are there to watch over frontline staff. It would be interesting to identify the specific roles that middle managers play in these organizations – mentor, disseminator of policy, policy enforcer, or possibly other roles that we have yet to discover.

In addition, future research must work to increase the response rates and sample size. Cook, Heath, & Thompson (2000) found that online surveys had a similar response rate to mail-in surveys (about 35%). In addition, the price, accessibility, and ease of delivery and reply make online surveys an appealing alternative to administering them in person or as mail-in. The issues of low response rates, lack of generalizability, and issues with validity and reliability are all possible problems with online surveys, though still need to be examined more closely (Sills & Song, 2002).

Also this study did not use any incentives for agents to take our survey. Cook, Heath, & Thompson (2000) found that when incentives were provided for those participating in online surveys, the result was actually lower response rates. The authors hypothesize that this is because the surveys that offered incentives were usually longer or more tedious than surveys that did not. Though no incentive was offered to take the survey, researchers thought that there would be buy-in from staff who participated in previous focus groups who would then encourage their coworkers to participate. However, as Cook et al. (2000) point out, incentives may not have even mattered in this case. Overall, the ease of using online surveys outweighs the chance that the sample ended up being so small. It would be interesting to randomly sample this organization and use paper and pencil in person surveys, and to compare response rates and possibly include incentives.

More use of more focus group or other types of qualitative data would be tremendously helpful when interpreting survey results. Five months before the surveys were sent out, focus groups were held with staff at the front line and middle manager levels in all three regions. The scales that were chosen for this paper and the larger research project were based off of resulting themes from the focus groups. Future papers should take a more balanced account of the results from these focus groups to corroborate or contradict survey results, creating a more complete survey of staff perceptions. While focus group data was beyond the scope of this paper, coming papers should take both methods and data into account.

APPENDIX A

Tell us about Your Organization (Organizational Culture)

Definitions
Innovation-Adaptability is defined as cultures that are flexible and externally focused. These types of culture tend to emphasize risk-taking, experimentation, and flexibility in response to change. Freedom to try new things and creativity tend to be stronger in adaptable cultures.
Performance-Achievement is defined as cultures that are stable and externally focused. These types of culture tend to emphasize a clear purpose and direction, shared vision of the future, and high demands and expectations. Competitiveness, aggression, and goal achievement tend to be stronger in achievement cultures.
Hierarchy-consistency is defined as cultures that are stable and internally focused. These types of culture tend to emphasize consistency, formal policies and procedures, and efficiency. Structures and decision-making practices tend to be more rigid and controlled.
Cohesion-involvement is defined as cultures that are flexible and internally focused. These types of culture tend to emphasize cooperation, coordination, and participation in decision-making. Trust and commitment tend to be strong in team-based cultures.

Please respond to the following statements in terms of the degree to which they accurately reflect what you are trying to promote in your organization.
(from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree)

In my organization…

	Strongly disagree				**Strongly agree**
a. Most people staff have input into decisions that affect them	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
b. Cooperation and coordination is actively encouraged across departments, units, and jobs	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
c. The management style emphasizes teamwork	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐		

				4 ☐	5 ☐
d. There is a high level of agreement about the way we do things in terms of rules, policies, and procedures	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
e. Our approach to doing our work is very consistent and predictable	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
f. The management style emphasize following procedures and facilitating efficient processes	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
g. We have a clear long-term purpose and direction	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
h. There is a shared version of what this organization will be like in the future	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
i. The management style emphasizes hard-driving competitiveness, high demands, and success	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
j. People are willing to stick their necks out and take risks to be innovative	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
k. The management style emphasizes trying new approaches and experimentation	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
l. Things change very easily and quickly – this organization is very responsive to situations that require change	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐

Employment Issues (Procedural Justice A-M; Distributive Justice N-X)

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement about your organization?
(from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree)

		Strongly disagree				**Strongly agree**
a.	I am not sure what determines how I can get a promotion in this organization	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
b.	I am told promptly when there is a change in policy, rules, or regulations that affects me	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
c.	It's really not possible to change things around here	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
d.	There are adequate procedures to get my performance rating reconsidered if necessary	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
e.	I understand the performance system being used in this organization	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
f.	When changes are made in this organization, the employees usually lose out in the end	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
g.	Affirmative action policies have helped advance the employment opportunity in this organization	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
h.	In general, disciplinary actions taken in the organization are fair and justified	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
i.	I am not afraid to "blow the whistle" on things I find wrong in the organization	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐

j.	If I were subject to an involuntary personnel action, I believe my agency would adequately inform me of my grievance and appeal rights	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
k.	I am aware of the specific steps I must take to have a personnel action taken against me reconsidered	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
l.	The procedures used to evaluate my performance have been fair and objective	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
m.	In the past, I have been aware of what standards have been used to evaluate my performance	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
n.	Promotions or unscheduled pay increases here usually depend on how well a person performs on is/her job	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
o.	Under the present system, financial rewards are seldom related to employee performance	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
p.	There is a tendency for supervisors here to give the same performance ratings regardless of how well people perform their jobs	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
q.	Under the present system, supervisors here get a few tangible rewards for excellent performance	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
r.	Performance appraisals do influence personnel actions taken in this organization	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
s.	My supervisor evaluates my performance on things not related to my job	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐		

					4 ☐	5 ☐
t.	I will be demoted or removed from my position if I perform my job poorly	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
u.	My performance rating presents a fair and accurate picture of my actual job performance	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
v.	I will be promoted or given a better job if I perform especially well	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
w.	My own hard work will lead to recognition as a good performer	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
x.	I will get a cash reward or unscheduled pay increase if I perform especially well	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Victoria Lauren Goldberg graduated from Windsor High School, Windsor, Connecticut, in 2007. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a minor in Sociology magna cum laude with Honors from Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts in 2011. She is employed at the Center for Advancing Correctional Excellence! (ACE!) in Fairfax, VA where she works on numerous projects looking at challenges to reentry, probation, and organizational change. She will continue on to pursue her Doctorate in Criminology, Law and Society at George Mason University upon completion of her Masters.