Reconstructing The Center: The Institutional Logics of a Structural Intervention for a Post Incarceration Community

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Abstract
The United States currently has the largest prison population in the world. Every week, over 10,000 people are released from US state and federal prisons back into their communities, and two thirds of these will likely be rearrested within three years of their release from prison. People released from incarceration face more significant barriers to successful engagement in the community than when they entered prison. Scholars have noted the lack of effective services for this population, leading to recidivism rates of about 70%. This study examines the ways innovative and effective practices can be implemented for people released from incarceration. It examines the factors that shape innovations at a community center (The Center for Carceral Communities, University of Pennsylvania) serving people with a history of incarceration. Observation and participant observation of public events were utilized to examine the implementation of innovation. Publicly available discussions, speeches, and interviews with public figures, Center brochures, field notes, and reflexivity journals were analyzed. A grounded theory approach, informed by sensitizing concepts drawn from the Theory of Institutional Logics was utilized to analyze the data, and explore the manner in which internal and external organizational factors shape innovation. The results indicate that the carceral field is shaped by competing logics, whereby multiple institutional fields, actors, social movements, and frames of understanding interact and result in opportunities to resist institutionally normative processes. These then allow innovative practices to emerge, flourish and establish themselves in the carceral institutional field.

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RECONSTRUCTING THE CENTER: THE INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS OF A STRUCTURAL INTERVENTION
FOR A POST INCARCERATION COMMUNITY

A Dissertation

Presented to

The School of Social Policy and Practice
University of Pennsylvania
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In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor in Clinical Social Work

by

Alison Neff

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Keywords: institutionalism, institutional logics, innovation, organizations, reentry
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Abstract

The United States currently has the largest prison population in the world. Every week, over 10,000 people are released from US state and federal prisons back into their communities, and two thirds of these will likely be rearrested within three years of their release from prison. People released from incarceration face more significant barriers to successful engagement in the community than when they entered prison. Scholars have noted the lack of effective services for this population, leading to recidivism rates of about 70%. This study examines the ways innovative and effective practices can be implemented for people released from incarceration. It examines the factors that shape innovations at a community center (The Center for Carceral Communities, University of Pennsylvania) serving people with a history of incarceration. Observation and participant observation of public events were utilized to examine the implementation of innovation. Publicly available discussions, speeches, and interviews with public figures, Center brochures, field notes, and reflexivity journals were analyzed. A grounded theory approach, informed by sensitizing concepts drawn from the Theory of Institutional Logics was utilized to analyze the data, and explore the manner in which internal and external organizational factors shape innovation. The results indicate that the carceral field is shaped by competing logics, whereby multiple institutional fields, actors, social movements, and frames of understanding interact and result in opportunities to resist institutionally normative processes. These then allow innovative practices to emerge, flourish and establish themselves in the carceral institutional field.
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my dissertation work to the community at The Center for Carceral Communities. I am so grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the incredible work happening there, and for the trust and friendship this community has extended to me. A heartfelt thank you to TJ, Annike, Kurt, Emily, Jym, Carnell, D’Quan, Rodney, Reese, John, Alphonso, Richard, Deanna, Christian, and many others. I deeply respect and value each of you, and am constantly inspired by your courage and determination. You guys really are the best.

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INTRODUCTION

Mass Incarceration and the Prison Industrial Complex

The United States currently has the largest prison population in the world. The US Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that as of the end of 2014, the US held over 1.5 million people in state and federal custody. This reflects an incarceration rate of 716 per every 100,000 adults in the US, the highest per-capita incarceration rate in the world. While the US represents only about 4.4% of the world’s population, it holds 22% of the world’s prison population. This phenomenon is often referred to as “mass incarceration.” As a result of the “war on drugs” and “tough on crime” laws that were adopted during the 1980s, US prisons are currently filled with predominantly non-violent offenders. In fact, while crime rates have declined since the early 1990s, incarceration rates have continued to climb. In addition to those held in federal, state, and local prisons, the US correctional system supervises over 5.3 million people through probation or parole, resulting in a total correctional system population of 6.8 million, around 1 in 36 US adults. Incarceration in the US disproportionally affects men of color: 1 in 15 African American men and 1 in 36 Hispanic men are incarcerated, compared to 1 in 105 white men. In Philadelphia alone, more than 30,000 African American men are absent from their homes and communities as a result of incarceration. The numbers of incarcerated women have grown significantly, increasing more than eight times from 1980 (12,300) to 2002 (183,271). African American women, the fastest growing prison population, are also disproportionately impacted, with incarceration rates four times that of white women (US Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2016).

Thanks to the work of scholars like Michelle Alexander, author of The New Jim Crow, and social movements like Black Lives Matter, phrases like “mass incarceration” and “prison
industrial complex” have begun to take root in the American lexicon and consciousness (Alexander, 2010). The term “prison industrial complex,” first used by activist Angela Davis and later popularized by Michelle Alexander, refers to the intersecting economic, political, and social interests of the government, police, courts, probation offices, bail companies, and, perhaps most significantly, the private companies (including many large corporations) that profit from mass incarceration through clothing, feeding, and transporting inmates, construction of prisons, prison labor, security and surveillance, as well as running private prisons (Davis, 2003). This concept, derived from the phrase “military industrial complex,” first described by Sociologist C. Wright Mills in his 1956 book The Power Elite, and later popularized by President Dwight D. Eisenhower after his use of the term in his farewell address in 1961, provides a framework for understanding and analyzing the rapid expansion of the prison population in the US (Mills, 1956; Eisenhower, 1961). Essentially, it argues that expansion of the incarceration system is incentivized and encouraged by this network of financially interested parties, apart from any actual demand or need for this infrastructure (Thompson, 2012). In fact, even when crime rates drop (thereby reducing the need for arrest and incarceration), because private prison contracts frequently require governments to keep their facilities at maximum capacity, communities are forced to continue to funnel people into these prisons, despite the lack of actual need (Cohen, 2015). In addition to these profit-driven contract practices, private prisons pose an increasingly powerful. The two largest for-profit prison companies, GEO and Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), which currently pull in a combined $3.3 billion annually in revenue, have spent nearly $25 million on lobbying efforts and an additional $10 million in contributions towards political candidates since 1989. Though CCA claims on its website that they do not lobby on policies that affect the reasons for
incarceration or duration of sentences, they have indirectly supported many policies that have led to the incarceration of more Americans for longer terms, and have advised their shareholders that changes to these policies would result in a reduction of profits (Cohen, 2015). Advocates estimate that the various entities that comprise the Prison Industrial Complex are collectively the second largest employer in the US currently.

**Reentry**

Every week, over 10,000 people are released from US state and federal prisons back into their communities – that’s over 650,000 people per year – and two thirds of these will likely be rearrested within three years of their release from prison (US Bureau of Justice). Despite a rhetoric of rehabilitation, many people who leave prison face more significant barriers to successful engagement in the community than when they entered prison – high rates of trauma / PTSD and other mental illness, homelessness, substance abuse, weakened or lost social supports, limited education / literacy, and barriers to employment as a result of criminal records. Every year, thousands of these men and women return home to Philadelphia after serving time in federal, state, or local prison or jail. The city estimates that around 300,000 residents – one-fifth of the city’s population – has a criminal record. Given these staggeringly high numbers of people either actively reentering, living under probation / parole surveillance, or negotiating histories of incarceration, it is not surprising that multiple city and private agencies have emerged in Philadelphia to provide reentry services (Babay, 2014). And while there is a demonstrated need for these kinds of services, with recidivism rates lingering around 70%, questions have understandably arisen about the efficacy of these programs, and growing suspicions that the reentry industry has become little more than another for-profit cog on the prison industrial complex wheel are justified.
The Center

The Center for Carceral Communities, which opened in April of 2015, is an initiative of the School of Social Policy & Practice at the University of Pennsylvania that works collaboratively with neighborhoods in West Philadelphia to help people with a history of incarceration re-engage with the community. Through private funding, the Center provides free, evidence-based psychosocial services that address the mental health, educational, housing, advocacy, and healthcare challenges confronting those returning to the community. The Center seeks to reverse the community-to-prison pipeline by helping participants harness their strengths to become leaders in the community. Specifically, The Center intervenes with people with histories of incarceration through operation of a center in the West Philadelphia campus of the Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) where psychosocial and educational services are provided to students at CCP with a history of incarceration; establishing a pipeline from CCP to bachelor degree programs (and beyond) in area colleges; implementing evidence-based treatment protocols, such as group interventions based on cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and motivational interviewing (MI); solution-focused individual sessions; and intensive case management for community members who have been referred by the courts, clinicians, and other agencies; partnering with initiatives such as diversionary courts and CCP’s reentry program to provide psychosocial services to formerly incarcerated clients; mobilizing Penn’s resources and connections to the community; and incorporating a research-practice protocol that implements evidence-based treatments and translates research into practice at The Center, and establishes performance standards for increasing employment by reducing mental health symptoms, substance use, risky behaviors, criminal activity, and re-incarceration.
Importance for Clinical Social Work

The existence of a significant gap between research and the application of this knowledge in human services direct practice settings is well documented. Multiple reports by bodies such as the Surgeon General, the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), and the President’s New Freedom Commission on Mental Health Intervention Development and Deployment emphasize this critical problem: we have considerable knowledge of effective mental and behavioral health interventions, but are not, as a field, consistently implementing these interventions (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase & Friedman, 2005). Estimates suggest that organizations’ attempts to implement change are unsuccessful as much as two-thirds of the time (Burnes, 2004). The reasons for this gap are not entirely well understood – research suggests that multiple factors across various levels of service delivery are at play, including the external organizational environment (policies, managed care influences, the market), the internal organizational environment (client variables, constraints on time and resources for practitioners, inadequate training, and the lack of organizational infrastructure and support for implementation of innovative practices), and factors related to the quality of the intervention itself (Ferlie & Shortell, 2001; Glasgow, Lichtenstein & Marcus, 2003). Arguing that the results of intervention research do not seamlessly translate to effective practice, Damschroder et al. (2009) emphasize the need to understand the mechanisms of effective implementation in real-world settings. This research seeks to respond to this call by examining external and internal organizational factors, as well as intervention associated variables in identifying how innovation is implemented in an agency – the various factors that both impede and support the implementation of evidence-based and innovative practices, and strategies for replicating this in other settings.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Institutionalism

Institutional theory, a well-known theoretical perspective in sociological theory and organizational studies emphasizing the influence of institutional myths, legitimacy, and isomorphism in the development of formal structures in an organization, provides a relevant framework for analyzing the barriers human service organizations face to creating innovative change. The core assumption of institutional theory is that the norms and behaviors of a given organization are shaped by the norms, rules and values of its external institutional environment (DiMaggio, 1982; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Fligstein, 1985, 1990; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Zucker, 1977, 1983, 1988). Early innovations in a given field reach a level of legitimization over time where failure to conform to them is viewed as irrational or even negligent, resulting in an “institutional myth” that pressures (or legally mandates, in some instances) new organizations to adopt these same structures even when they do not increase efficiency. Institutional theory posits that organizations are driven more by a desire for legitimacy within this external environment than by efficiency towards achieving goals, as institutional legitimacy helps increase access to resources and ensure the survival of organizations. These pressures are often so great that organizations will conform even when the requirements to achieve legitimacy directly compromise or undermine their efficiency, frequently resulting in highly similar organizations within a particular field, whether through imitation or independent development within a similar environmental context (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). This process can create a kind of homogenization among organizations within a given field, a phenomenon referred to as isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).
Mimetic Isomorphism

DiMaggio & Powell (1983) expanded Meyer & Rowan’s (1977) attention to isomorphism on the societal level to focus on isomorphism in the organizational field, hypothesizing three primary mechanisms through which institutional isomorphism occurs. The first, mimetic isomorphism, describes a process of organizations imitating the actions, structures, and norms of other established, successful organizations within a field (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Organizations may be motivated to do this as a result of ambiguity in the institutional environment or unclear goals within the organization – in these contexts, when organizations face circumstances in which the best course of action is uncertain, they may imitate the behavior of a “legitimate” organization, even without the knowledge of the organization being mimicked (Mizruchi & Fein, 1999). The goal of this behavior is to increase the organization’s own legitimacy through imitation of an organization perceived as having greater institutional legitimacy. Uncertainty, whether internal or external, is understood as a powerful force in encouraging imitation of organizations perceived as holding more legitimacy, whether or not these organizations being mimicked are truly more successful or efficient (Galaskiewicz & Wasserman, 1989). As non-profit organizations are often less driven by market considerations, their missions tend to be more in flux, their goals less clear, and their methods for achieving their goals unresolved. Subsequently, these organizations experience a greater vulnerability to mimetic pressures (Leiter, 2005). Leiter (2005) hypothesizes that organizations faced with uncertainty are at an increased likelihood to emulate not only the actions, but also the structures and norms of more successful organizations within the same institutional field. Enhancing legitimacy, and in turn their access to limited and often competitive resources, is
particularly essential for non-profit organizations – another driver in the increased susceptibility of these groups to mimetic pressures (Edwards et al., 2009).

**Normative Isomorphism**

The second mechanism, normative isomorphism, occurs when professionals in an industry share particular methods of practice among themselves (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This is based on the concept of professionalism, described as members in a particular field collectively defining appropriate ways to behave. Individuals within a profession exhibit certain norms and behaviors that are associated with their occupation – subsequently, others within that field are more likely to adopt these homogenous traits in an effort to appear legitimate. Normative pressures may be transferred to students, employees, and managers through educational institutions or professional networks, including workshops, seminars, conferences, and publications (Galaskiewicz & Wasserman, 1989). These professional networks typically serve as the primary means by which not only information is relayed throughout a professional community, but also how institutional norms and behaviors are disseminated (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Galaskiewicz, 1985). Additionally, professional groups also often function as social networks, enhancing the efficacy of these groups as a mechanism for normative isomorphism. As with mimetic isomorphism, a sense of uncertainty increases the inclination to create closer networks and look to these professional networks for clues about how to behave (Galaskiewicz, 1985). The result of this is a pool of similar professionals who interchange between various professional roles in different organizations within their field, taking with them and transferring to each organization their professional norms and behaviors (Galaskiewicz & Wasserman, 1989). This process undermines the potential for variations to these norms, and facilitates even greater isomorphism between organizations within a field (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).
Coercive Isomorphism

Coercive isomorphism, the third mechanism of organizational isomorphism, occurs when organizations are compelled to adopt certain rules or structures based on the regulation of their field, the industry, the courts, financial reporting requirements, or other organizations on which the organization is dependent (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Unlike mimetic and normative isomorphism, which are often the result of less deliberate processes, the decision to conform to coercive pressures is a conscious one (Oliver, 1991). These pressures are the result of power dynamics, which come in various forms, including pressures of varying degrees of formality, directness, and from different kinds of entities (Edwards et al., 2009). They are more likely to be found in more highly institutionalized environments where governments, professional bodies, and credentialing associations have created specific rules and standards that organizations are obligated to comply with (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Coercive pressures also typically include some sort of ongoing oversight to ensure that organizations are acting in accordance with these mandates, resulting in sanctions – loss of resources, accreditation, legitimacy – if requirements are not met (Washington & Patterson, 2011). As with mimetic pressures, non-profit organizations experience an increased degree of vulnerability to coercive pressures in comparison to other kinds of organizations. Non-profits are frequently dependent on government support and other stakeholders for resources, forcing them to operate within a more politically controlled environment. These organizations are at a greater likelihood to conform to various forms of coercive pressures in order to maintain legitimacy, compete for resources, and ultimately, to survive.
Institutional Logics

Following the macro isomorphism theorizing of Meyer and Rowan (1977) on society and Dimaggio and Powell (1983) on organizations, organizational theorists developed a new approach to institutional analysis with the introduction of the concept of institutional logics. These scholars critique the top-down orientation of institutionalism, and explore the role of human agency in resisting institutional forces. Institutional logics responds to institutionalism by examining the various ways that institutional-level and individual processes interact in order to create space for change and innovation within organizations. Thornton and Ocasio defined institutional logics as “the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality” (1999, p. 804). The institutional logics approach shares with these institutionalism theories an interest in the ways that cultural rules and cognitive structures mold organizational structures; however, it departs in its lack of focus on isomorphism. Instead, attention is paid to the effects of differentiated institutional logics (or belief systems) on individuals and organizations in various contexts, such as markets, industries, and groups of similar organizations. In contrast to the top-down, unidirectional orientation of isomorphism, this theory posits that institutional logics shape what is thought of as reasonable, mindful behavior, and likewise, individual and organizational actors have a role in influencing and even changing these institutional logics (Thornton, 2004).

The term institutional logics, first used by Alford and Friedland (1985), identifies three competing institutional orders – capitalism, state bureaucracy, and political democracy – each with different practices and beliefs that impact the way that individuals engage with political
problems. They use this concept to enunciate the inconsistent, often contrasting practices and beliefs intrinsic in these institutions, and further expand it to explore the interconnectedness of individuals, organizations, and society. They argue that each of these institutional orders has a core logic that influences its organizing principles and creates a vocabulary of purpose, and subsequently an identity, for social actors. In this way, institutional logics links the identities and actions of social actors to the values and beliefs of the institutional order. These social actors (individuals, groups, organizations) in turn expand upon and utilize these practices and vocabularies to advance their own interests. By providing social actors with these cultural resources, the central logics in each of the core institutions of society, which has been expanded to include families, religion, and professions in addition to the previously named capitalist market, bureaucratic state, and political democracy, not only limit action by individuals, but also offer sources of agency and change. (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Thornton, 2004).

Five Key Principles of Institutional Logics

Thornton and Ocasio (2008) describe five key principles that further enunciate the framework of institutional logics: embedded agency, society as an inter-institutional system, the material and cultural foundations of institutions, institutions at multiple levels, and historical contingency. Embedded agency, conceivably the core assumption within the theory of institutional logics, refers to the idea that the interests, identities, values, and assumptions of individuals and organizations are embedded within the dominant institutional logics. This suggests that institutional logics not only shape these aspects of the actors, but also that the actors themselves have inserted (and in fact continue to insert) their orientations into the logics of the institution. The institutional structure offers both a framework to facilitate the actions of
individual and organizational players, as well as provides some level of constrained choice to these actors. This recognition of the dynamic process between institutions and individuals separates the institutional logics approach from other perspectives that have focused more solely on either the power of the institution or, conversely, the motivations of individuals as the primary driving force. Ultimately, embedded agency understands that decisions and outcomes within an institution are a result of interactions between the actors and the institutions, as actors continually transmit their values to the institution. In this way, embedded agency acknowledges the multidirectional relationship of influence on logics between institutions and individuals / organizations. The principle of society as an inter-institutional system argues that the societies in which individuals exist are fundamentally comprised of a diverse range of institutions (primarily families, the market, religion, and government, and the competing logics of these institutions play out in various ways to influence a given context. For example, a school may be influenced by the institutional logics of the market, the professional logics of the educational field, the values of families and religion, etc. Institutional orders are theorized to have foundations that consist of and are shaped by the interactions between both material and cultural characteristics, the third principle of institutional logics. Cultural forces, for example, such as family and religion, are understood as having a significant impact on the material or economic realm through direct participation in the market, both through production and consumption (Becker, 1976). Likewise, the economic sphere is influenced by cultural and social forces, and this ongoing exchange between cultural and material forces informs the development of institutions over time. As noted, the various institutions that comprise a society exist on multiple levels – from family to high level government – and institutional logics may develop at each of these different levels of institutions. This meta-theoretical approach
facilitates the possibility for researchers and theorists to explore a large range of mechanisms of institutional logics at multiple levels of institutional society. Historical contingency reflects the assumption that institutions at all levels are additionally influenced by the historical contexts and events around them, and that the nature of institutions can change significantly over time as historical contexts change (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008).

**Institutional entrepreneurs and change.**

Institutional entrepreneurship refers to the “activities of actors who have an interest in particular institutional arrangements and who leverage resources to create new institutions or to transform existing ones” (Maguire, Hardy, & Lawrence, 2004: 657). Institutional entrepreneurs are the individual people (or actors) who are responsible for either developing new institutions, or for creating change within existing institutions (Hardy & Maguire, 2008). According to DiMaggio (1988), new institutions arise when actors are adequately organized and resourced to recognize the opportunity to advance their own interests and values. Theorists have debated the degree of power and causality that can be attributed to specific actors, with some arguing that institutional entrepreneurs can be extremely instrumental in effecting change, while others credit multiple factors of change processes (Hardy & Maguire, 2008).

**Embedded agency.**

The concept of embedded agency presents a bit of a paradox for theorists. How can actors visualize and advocate for new practices when they are embedded within an institutional field, and subsequently exposed to all of the isomorphic forces contained therein (Hardy & Maguire, 2008)? As theorists have previously argued, actors who are genuinely embedded in institutions experience a constrained ability to think creatively and are not likely to generate new ideas about ways to practice differently (Maguire, 2007). One perspective is that key
actors, while possessing the resources and ability to work on behalf of change, are unlikely to devise new ideas. This is a result of both their embeddedness in the current institutional arrangements, as well as the likelihood that they benefit from these arrangements, reducing their motivation for change (Maguire, 2007). Conversely, the actors who are most likely to envision and advocate for change are often situated at the periphery of an institutional field, and are subsequently less institutionally privileged, making it more difficult for them to effectively work towards the innovation they imagine. Multiple factors are needed— including both the presence of key embedded actors, as well as certain factors within the institutional field, to trigger the process of institutional entrepreneurship.

\textbf{Social movements.}

The study of social movements provides another way of understanding the forces behind and processes that lead to institutional change, highlighting the agency of actors and the role of strategy in challenging dominant institutional orders (Walker, 2012). A broadly defined concept, social movements can be used to understand both the ways that “organized constituencies... make claims on organizations from outside of established channels of influence”, as well as “the ways that organizational change-agents mobilize resources, frame issues, and capitalize on opportunities made possible by the specific configuration of power and authority within an organization’s ‘internal polity’” (Walker, 2012, p. 2). In other words, social movement studies explore the ways in which groups “coalesce to make claims for or against certain practices or actors in order to create or resist new institutional arrangements or transform existing ones” (Schneiberg & Lounsbury, 2008, p. 649). Institutional fields respond to external pressures posed by social movements, supporting the efforts of embedded agents within these fields, and ultimately, reshaping the logics of a given institution or organization.
Political factors and climates may work to either restrict or enable a movement’s ability to mobilize resources, in turn affecting their opportunity to successfully promote the wider adoption of their framing of the issues (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996).

**Sanctuary Model**

The Sanctuary Model, developed in Philadelphia in the early 1980s by a team of clinicians led by Dr. Sandra Bloom, is a theory-based, trauma-informed approach for creating clinical and organizational change within the human services system. It promotes safety and recovery from adversity through the development of trauma-informed communities. The process of becoming a Sanctuary community, which occurs over time, includes the development of structures, processes, and behaviors (for staff, clients, families of clients, and the community) that can help counteract the many negative effects of trauma. Essentially, Sanctuary is the organizational protocol that is an innovative response to institutional norms and rituals of hierarchical decision-making processes in agencies. While there is some evidence (Sanctuary was given the distinction of “evidence-supported” in 2010, though it is not yet considered “evidence-based”) which suggests that agencies that successfully implement the Sanctuary Model experience many improved outcomes (decreased staff turnover, use of coercive measures, critical incidents, client and staff injuries, and greater client and staff satisfaction), the process is also complex and often full of conflict in the beginning stages as agency staff establish basic agreements about values, philosophies, and decision-making processes (Bloom & Sreedhar, 2008).

The Sanctuary Model, which has a theoretical basis in both systems theory and trauma theory, is comprised of multiple components and dimensions, many of which are geared towards addressing the dynamics, relationships, and processes among staff in human service
agencies (Panzer & Bloom, 2003). These include, but are not limited to, goals of flattening hierarchy, giving voice to multiple perspectives, and achieving group consensus/shared governance (Bloom, 2000; Madsen, Blitz, McCorkle, & Panzer, 2003; Panzer & Bloom, 2003).

The model’s focus on human services staff (vs. clients only) is reflective of the basic premise of Sanctuary, that the therapeutic environment is a critical factor in the recovery process (Rivard, Bloom, Abramovitz, Pasquale, Duncan, McCorkle & Gelman, 2003). While the successful implementation of some aspects of the Sanctuary Model can be measured through the assessment of concrete indicators (decreased staff turnover, decreased use of coercive measures, decreased critical incidents, and decreased client and staff injuries), the Sanctuary Institute also evaluates agencies for successful implementation of the model through interviews and focus groups exploring client and staff experiences and satisfaction.

A theme that emerges from multiple case studies and papers is the gradual, often long-term nature of the implementation of Sanctuary, largely due to the significant cultural change that is needed within agencies (Madsen, Blitz, McCorkle, & Panzer, 2003). One important aspect of this culture change is the goal of flattening hierarchy, which often requires leaders to relinquish some of their power in favor of shared governance. This can be particularly challenging in some settings, and can contribute to the failure of Sanctuary when these hierarchies are too rigid and resistant to change (Bills & Bloom, 2000). Another significant aspect of this culture change relates to acknowledging and addressing often sensitive and painful dynamics of race, class, and cultural diversity among staff (Madsen et al., 2003; McCorkle & Peacock, 2005). One article refers to these issues as “the elephants in the room” and goes on to describe the process of using Sanctuary as a tool to facilitate difficult but important conversations about racism and classism among staff in a residential treatment
facility (McCorkle & Peacock, 2005, p. 127). These issues related to diversity tie in to two key goals of Sanctuary: giving voice to multiple perspectives and shared governance. When staff members are marginalized, their voices are not heard, and when they do not participate fully in shared governance, a Sanctuary community cannot exist (Madsen et al., 2003; McCorkle & Peacock, 2005). Sanctuary also seeks to cultivate awareness and sensitivity to staff members’ experiences with trauma through the development of a trauma-informed, nonviolent culture in which staff acknowledge their own traumatic histories, as well as the traumatic histories of others (Bloom, 2000; Madsen et al., 2003). This is particularly relevant in the context of conflict, which in terms of the Sanctuary Model, is seen as a resource and is managed with emotional intelligence and open communication (Bills & Bloom, 2000; Madsen et al., 2003).
AIMS

The aims of this study are to examine processes shaping innovation in an agency in the reentry field and the manner in which these innovations influence outcomes for clients. Specifically, I seek to:

1. Apply concepts from the field of institutionalism and institutional logics in organizational theory to processes at the center
2. Examine how these concepts (from aim 1) were complicated by the particular factors at play in the center
3. Examine how the innovative practices at the center shaped client outcomes
RECONSTRUCTING THE CENTER

METHODS

Observation and participant observation of public events were utilized to explore factors facilitating innovation at The Center for Carceral Communities, SP2, University of Pennsylvania, in West Philadelphia, where this investigator works (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I utilized a triangulated data collection process, which drew on multiple sources of data, including: 10 public interviews, field notes from 15 public events, transcriptions of 7 pieces of video footage, and observation of 25 weeks of daily Center operations. In terms of analysis, a grounded theory approach, informed by sensitizing concepts, was utilized to code notes. Collection of data was terminated when saturation was reached from each form of data source (Draucker, Martsolf, Ross, & Rusk, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The qualitative software QSR N6 was used to code and analyze the data. This created a reservoir of information that constitutes a rich data source, allowing for deep, in-depth analysis. I used reflexive journals to analyze observations and personal responses to events and processes after gaining some distance from them in order to account for personal biases and spur of the moment generalizations (Ortlipp, 2008; Richardson, 2000).

Since I am using theoretical concepts to develop a conceptual framework of analysis, and then allowing the data to add to that framework, the use of sensitizing concepts coupled with a grounded theory framework is the most appropriate approach. The sensitizing concepts drawn from the theoretical literature on institutionalism and institutional logics include institutional norms, embedded actors, and social movements. In the three sections analyzed (factors that shape innovation, innovative practices, and outcomes), there were eight primary themes and 20 tertiary themes that emerged. These will be enunciated in the results section.
Using the site of the center allows me to really delve into the mechanisms at play. The strengths of a case study are that they illustrate complex and complicated processes that otherwise would not have been able to be examined if this particular case was part of a larger population that was being studied. Since I am studying innovative practice and the way it pays out and impacts clients and is implemented a case study of the center allows me the best method to delve deeply into the factors that facilitate implementation, as well as those that pose barriers to it. Since it is a qualitative case study, the study allows for the generation of new theory around innovation and implementation of innovation in the reentry field.

The use of public data ensures two things: 1. That vulnerable human subjects were not exploited in this research, and 2: Innovation was not just an internal perception within the organization, but was externally visible in public events and processes. This strengthens the principles of social justice in the research and increases the robustness of observations of innovation. This research is exempt from IRB review as I am not including human subjects, am not collecting identifying information, and am only examining public events and publicly available information. An IRB exemption was granted.
RESEARCH FINDINGS

There are three main sections: factors shaping innovation, innovative practices, and outcomes. The three primary codes, which were drawn from the sensitizing concepts and validated in the data, are: 1. embedded actors in institutional fields, 2. leveraged resources, and 3. social movements. Four tertiary themes emerged in factors shaping innovation: 1. finance (funder), 2. academia (Penn, CCP), 3. judicial system (Judges), 4. business (partners); three tertiary themes emerged in leveraging resources: 1. Wall Street, 2. universities, 3. business partners; and three tertiary themes emerged in social movements: 1. established frames, 2. utilized political opportunity structure, 3. utilized mobilization structures and contentious repertoires. Under innovative practices at the center, there are three primary themes: 1. Groups, 2. Advocacy, and 3. integrated network of services. Two tertiary themes emerged in Advocacy: 1. internal advocacy with inclusion in management processes, and 2. external advocacy in courts, campaigns. Three tertiary themes emerged in Integrated Network of Services: 1. partnership with CCP, 2. partnership with MENTOR, 3. partnership with Quaker City Coffee. There are two primary themes in outcomes: 1. client outcomes, and 2. structural outcomes. Three tertiary outcomes emerged from client outcomes: 1. significantly reduced reincarceration, 2. reintegration with families/communities, and 3. meeting education and employment goals. Two tertiary themes emerged in structural outcomes: 1. participating and shaping a successful DA’s race, and 2. re-establishing the salience of confidentiality in diversion, education, and probation settings.
Institutional Logics of an Innovative Agency

Embedded Agency

As highlighted in the literature review, analyzing the roles of embedded actors is key to understanding the process of institutional change, in this case in the reentry field in Philadelphia. Scholars of embedded agency have described the fundamental conundrum of change in institutional fields: if actors are embedded in the institutional field, they are unlikely to have the capacity to think innovatively outside of the parameters provided by that institution; and conversely, if the actors are not embedded in the field, they likely lack the institutional credibility and resources to effectively act upon their potentially more visionary ideas. Essentially, actors are often either too embedded, or not embedded enough, to effect meaningful change. However, in certain situations, it is possible for actors to be embedded, and also to bring innovative, outside thinking to bear. This is most likely to occur when actors are embedded within multiple institutions with differing logics, and as a result, bring those contradictory ideological perspectives to challenge and contradict the norms of the institutional field. Characteristics of individual actors, such as entrepreneurial orientations and personal histories of marginalization provide insight into their increased empathy for others who are marginalized, and subsequent motivation to leverage their relative privilege to mobilize resources for innovative change. There are several agents in the reentry field in Philadelphia who have demonstrated this in the case of the development of The Center.

Embedded Agent: Toorjo (TJ) Ghose, PhD

“An unlikely but effective partnership.”

An analysis of the role of arguably the most important embedded agent in the development of The Center, The Center’s founder and University of Pennsylvania Assistant
Professor Toorjo Ghose, PhD, provides an example of these processes of embedded agency and institutional entrepreneurship. Through his clinical practice and academic work (both teaching and research areas in sex work, substance use, HIV, and homelessness), Dr. Ghose has been embedded in the reentry field in Philadelphia long before opening The Center. He describes first being mentored by one of the leading figures in incarceration research in Philadelphia, Temple University’s Jeffrey Draine, and has since maintained both personal and professional connections with several other key players in Philadelphia’s reentry scene. Having taught in the school of Social Policy and Practice at Penn for almost 10 years, Dr. Ghose notes that many of his former students now hold positions in various organizations, including heads of agencies, within Philadelphia’s reentry network.

Despite this level of embeddedness within the reentry field, as a tenured professor, Dr. Ghose is equally embedded in academia, and subsequently has access to the many resources contained therein. These include intellectual resources, such as innovative research and discourses, the credibility and political sway that come with an affiliation with an Ivy League school, and the potential to leverage financial resources through the institution. Dr. Ghose’s dual embeddedness in these very different networks uniquely positioned him to act as an institutional entrepreneur in the reentry field, ultimately resulting in opening a new agency for the Philadelphia reentry community. During public talks at Center events, Dr. Ghose has described the process of developing The Center, and indicates that it came together as a result of multiple factors, including timing on a personal level, as well as the political climate around incarceration and reentry, both nationally and locally in Philadelphia. He notes that he had just achieved tenure, and had subsequently begun to consider how to next focus his energies. During this time, he was contacted by Penn’s development office about a successful Wall Street
businessman and Wharton School of Business alumnus who was a potential donor to the school, and asked whether he would be interested in meeting with him. The development office described the potential donor as reluctant to give to Penn despite many attempts to engage him, noting that historically he had instead given to another alma mater; however, they suggested that he may be receptive to an innovative idea. Dr. Ghose took the meeting and pitched the concept of a new center in the community for people returning home from prison. The potential donor, who would later become The Center’s primary funder, Richard Mashaal, expressed immediate interest in supporting the idea, and an “unlikely but effective partnership” between the two was born (“Unique Partners,” n.d.). Despite Dr. Ghose’s initial skepticism about the private sector’s role in effecting social change, he noted that “working with a visionary like Richard really changed [his] thinking” about this (“Unique Partners,” n.d.).

**Embedded Agent: Richard Mashaal**

“I wanted to help in a way where I could be personally involved.”

Richard Mashaal is the founder and CEO of Senvest Partners, an international hedge fund, as well as the initial and primary funder for The Center in Philadelphia. Mashaal completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School of Business in the 1980s, his MBA from the University of Chicago, and currently works on Wall Street and commutes between New York City and Montreal, Canada. Mashaal might at first appear an unlikely benefactor for such a project – why would a Canadian businessman, who is embedded in the Wall Street institutional setting, choose to participate in a community initiative to fight mass incarceration in West Philadelphia? In fact, why would his embeddedness in Wall Street not instead instruct him to invest in one of the many for-profit businesses that constitute the massively lucrative prison industrial complex? The answer is
layered, lying in his embeddedness in multiple formal institutional settings, his personal life experiences that have provided him with a unique lens, and his entrepreneurial nature. Mashaal was born to an affluent Jewish family in Iraq. Though his family was economically privileged, he describes experiencing religious and racial discrimination and unstable political conditions in Baghdad where he and his family lived, ultimately forcing them to immigrate to Montreal, Canada. He notes that they continued to face discrimination in Montreal, though not to the degree that had threatened their safety and forced them to flee Baghdad. Mashaal notes that these experiences left him with some sense of being an outsider, and increased his empathy for others who are left out of mainstream society in various ways. This contributed to his decision to pursue philanthropy, further embedding him in an institutional setting with contradictory logics to that of profit-driven Wall Street.

In addition to the significance of Mashaal’s personal history and the influence of his connections to charitable networks, his Canadian lens, with which he views and interprets social conditions in the United States, is also highly relevant. Mashaal describes a lasting sense of shock over the extreme disparities of wealth he observed in West Philadelphia during his time at Penn in the 1980s: “During my time in West Philadelphia, I was struck by a dichotomy that exists in the U.S. cities, where certain areas are stuck in a cycle of poverty” (“Unique Partners,” n.d.). Canada’s comparatively socialized society with a larger safety net and less glaringly obvious wealth inequalities did not prepare him for the extreme poverty he would witness in West Philadelphia, and perhaps increased his sensitivity to these conditions beyond what many of his peers may have experienced. Additionally, as a Canadian citizen, mass incarceration is culturally unfamiliar to Mashaal in the way that it is to Americans, where even those who are most affected by the historically unprecedented rate at which we incarcerate
our own citizens have, in many ways, grown accustomed to this as a fact of life. Mashaal’s orientation as a philanthropist, his lingering sense of outrage at the intense poverty that exists in such immediate proximity to an Ivy League university, and his entrepreneurial prowess found a unique synergy when he sat down with University of Pennsylvania’s Dr. Ghose:

   Just like I pick a CEO to bet on when I’m starting a company or investing in one, I look for the individuals who are going to succeed. Dr. Ghose has the track record and the enthusiasm to galvanize others to the cause. He has the knowledge, and all of Penn’s resources behind him, so all that adds up to a great outcome. (“Unique Partners,” n.d.)

   Mashaal has said that he has made his career off of “betting on the underdog,” indicating that the best ideas are often those that are initially undervalued. He explains that he has invested in many fledgling companies over the years, and is now eager to put energy into this new venture. Mashaal notes that he wants to “help in a way where [he] can be personally involved,” and lends not only funding to the initiative, but also his business expertise and connections to other resources (“Unique Partners,” n.d.). “Helping former prisoners become contributing members of the community doesn’t just help them—it helps their children, their neighborhood, and our society as a whole—what better investment can there be?” (“Unique Partners,” n.d.).

**Embedded Agent: Tara Timberman**

“It’s our shared belief in the work that we do, and the fact that we believe that we can change the system within the system.”

Tara Timberman is the founder and coordinator of the Reentry Support Project (RSP) at The Community College of Philadelphia (CCP), where she is a full-time tenured faculty member. Per public talks about RSP, Ms. Timberman has described that “the goal of RSP at CCP is to
provide students with criminal records with access to resources that can help them be academically successful, and also successful with community reintegration and careers.”

Timberman’s program positions her uniquely as a fully embedded member of both the community college and reentry institutional fields, and she works diligently to build bridges between the federal and college resources available to community college students (Pell Grants for tuition, loans, and campus resources) and members of the reentry community who have not historically been offered many pathways to college. She notes that her dedication to this work is rooted in her recognition of the role that education played in shaping her own life and deterring her from the kinds of legal problems that her students face, an experience that is likely not shared by most academics. During a Center event on April 6th, 2017, she describes:

A lot of people talk about being saved by other things, whether it’s their families, or maybe it’s a higher power. But for me, college was what really helped me to change my life and my focus, because I was headed down the path that would have put me in the same place of many of the people we work with now. Throughout college I met the mentors and peers who helped me see what I could achieve, and gave me goals that I didn’t think would be possible for me to fulfill. So now I feel like I have a responsibility to give back to the community and let the community see that these opportunities are there for them as well. There are people to support them, even if families aren’t engaged or if they feel that the criminal justice system is working against them. There are those of us who are committed to the work and are going to provide them with the best possible services that we can – and also change the system for others who are going to be coming through.
Timberman and Dr. Ghose began their collaboration early on in the development of The Center, and ultimately RSP and The Center have become critical partners. The Center provides psychosocial support in the form of weekly groups, case management, and crisis intervention for RSP students. Likewise, the RSP program is an essential part of the educational pipeline for Center clients who want to pursue formal higher education. Additionally, when The Center was looking for office space, Timberman creatively suggested that the program rent unused space in CCP West’s campus, providing an accessible and convenient home base in West Philadelphia.

Regarding the collaboration, Timberman notes: “Though our partnership with The Center, we are able to provide wrap-around supports with a focus on psychosocial support, and for these folks coming home from incarceration, these structures are important in helping them transition and achieve long-term goals.” She further elaborates on the importance of not only working collaboratively to provide concrete services, but also utilizing the opportunities for close contact with various aspects of the incarceration system to influence, change, and ultimately humanize it:

It’s our shared belief in the work that we do, and the fact that we believe that we can change the system within the system. We don’t just have to stand on the outskirts and express all of our concerns. Some of us, who are very fortunate, like at The Center and the RSP, to actually go into these systems and affect change. And not just change the people we work with, but also changing the people who are overseeing their custody, or who are making decisions about their futures through the court system. It’s a slow process, but I think our passion, and I think our experience, has the ability to influence those who maybe a decade or two ago would have been very much not supportive of this work. It has the ability to make them see that maybe there’s another way to
address criminal justice issues. Maybe the people that we work with, even if someone ends up having to be incarcerated, that we can still treat them humanely and provide them with the kinds of resources that might help them achieve those goals for themselves. And that ultimately benefits the city, their communities, their families. And that passion we have to really give that opportunity to people drives us to work collaboratively.

Timberman’s efforts to change the orientation of the system are perhaps most evident in the development of Future Forward, a collaborative initiative between the District Attorney’s office and the RSP at CCP. Future Forward is a pre-trial felony diversion pilot program that offers qualifying candidates who have been charged with their first non-violent felony offenses with the opportunity to complete college credits in lieu of prosecution. The program, which is the first of its kind in the country, “is designed to increase access to educational opportunities and reduce recidivism” (“Philadelphia District Attorney,” 2015). Participating students are provided with psychosocial support through RSP’s collaboration with The Center.

**Embedded Agent: Judge Lisa Rau**

“I had hope, but no tools to offer.”

Honorable Lisa M. Rau is currently a Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas civil court judge, and is also (along with Judge Michael Erdos) a founding judge of the MENTOR program (Mentors Empowering Now to Overcome Recidivism), an initiative of the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania. The MENTOR program “seeks to interrupt the cycle of recidivism by providing a holistic and supportive reentry experience through mentoring and case management, thereby reducing recidivism rates” (MENTOR, n.d.). Judge Rau was first elected in 2001 and quickly developed a reputation as “one of Philadelphia’s most controversial judges,” known for
“refusing to believe sworn testimony from police officers and for throwing out key evidence” (Denvir, 2014). The Inquirer notes that this is a highly uncommon practice among Philadelphia’s criminal court judges, resulting in frequent critiques and attacks by her detractors. Former District Attorney (DA) Lynne Abraham accused Judge Rau of “institutional bias against police officers” and launched a highly public campaign designed to “embarrass” her, explaining that public embarrassment is sometimes the only way “to get [judges] to do the right thing” (Denvir, 2014). Abraham noted to the Daily News, “Judge Rau and others, they show no safe haven for any citizen in the city” (Denvir, 2014). Supporters of Judge Rau (and more broadly of police and DA oversight) came to her defense, and accused Abraham of attempting to “instill fear in judges like Rau who dared to cross her and question police” (Denvir, 2014). Judge Rau was soon after transferred to the civil courts, and though the administrative judge who approved the move denied this, many believed that it was a politically motivated punishment for her controversial decisions and general resistance towards the previously unchallenged power of the police and DA’s office. David Rudovsky, a civil rights lawyer, wrote to the Inquirer in 2003: “One can only hope that the transfer of Judge Rau was not forced by the district attorney and that our judges continue to act like judges and not prosecutors” (Denvir, 2014). In reference to a 1995 scandal in which five Philadelphia police officers were convicted of multiple counts of egregious misconduct, including lying in court, Rudovsky commented, “It is telling that the officers who lied later admitted that they did so with the assurance that prosecutors and judges would rarely disbelieve their testimony” (Denvir, 2014). In 2008, in response to a controversial acquittal of a defendant following Judge Rau’s expressed suspicion of police testimony, attorney David Webber wrote a letter to the editor of the Inquirer supporting the decision:
The defendant may actually have committed the crime, but he goes free because the prosecutor’s evidence was simply not adequate to convict. In a police state, such an outcome is unthinkable. The war on drugs no doubt moves us closer every day to having a police state, but Rau’s ruling means that we are not there yet. (Denvir, 2014)

Judge Rau’s persistent intolerance for police and prosecutorial misconduct in the face of public and political pressure likely traces back to her work as a civil rights and public interest attorney. After completing law school at Stanford, Rau worked for the Public Interest Law Center for several years and then as a labor lawyer, where she fought for the rights of women to become fire fighters in Philadelphia. She is married to Lawrence Krasner, a renowned defense and civil rights attorney, who is known for suing police and defending protestors of police misconduct, such as members of Black Lives Matter. Her awareness of the many systemic injustices and structural barriers defendants face led her to The MENTOR program, which is described as “a carrot, not a stick,” is a 12 to 18 month “court-based program, coordinated by Judge Michael Erdos and Judge Lisa Rau, that matches individuals serving county sentences with volunteer mentors” (Roberts, 2014). In addition to contact with their community mentors, voluntary participants of the program, who must be between the ages of 18 and 30 and meet other eligibility requirements, appear in front of Judge Erdos for status hearings on a monthly basis to “discuss challenges and accomplishments” (MENTOR, n.d.). While MENTOR is not technically a diversion program because its participants have already been convicted (in fact, participation is contingent on pleading guilty in front of Judge Erdos), it has a diversionary component, as those who successfully complete the program receive a reduction in their probation sentences of up to 18 months, reducing their overall time under court supervision.
MENTOR is described as the “brainchild” of Judges Rau and Erdos, “both of whom were frustrated with seeing many of the same faces return to their courtrooms time and time again” (Abraham, 2016). Judge Rau noted, “I had hope, but no tools to offer” (Roberts, 2014). According to the program coordinator, Carly Friedman, the judges were looking for a solution to a problem:

They wanted to do something in order to interrupt that cycle of recidivism they were seeing all too often, so they put together a working group of an array of people from the court system and contacts in the community to come up with a blueprint for what is now the MENTOR program. (Abraham, 2016)

In addition to the supportive services provided by the program itself, MENTOR also “empowers its participants to take advantage of additional resources provided through a network of community-based partner organizations,” such as psychosocial services through The Center, which is now a partner organization (MENTOR, n.d.). Judge Rau publicly expressed her enthusiasm for the work The Center is doing at its opening event on November 9th, 2016, stating, “I think this is the most exciting thing happening in reentry in Philadelphia.”

Embedded Agent: Bob Logue

“With every cup you drink, you're changing someone's life.”

Bob Logue is President and a part owner of Quaker City Coffee (QCC), a new coffee company in Philadelphia that employs people with criminal records. Per QCC’s website, the business is described as “a profit-sharing company, focused on job creation for formerly incarcerated individuals, also known as returning citizens. Job creation and a positive impact on
our community are our top goals” (QCC, n.d.). QCC describes its goal of providing not just jobs for returning citizens, but meaningful, sustainable careers. Their vision:

Returning citizens working in sales, account management, e-commerce, billing, shipping, accounting, human resources, community relations, marketing and product quality control will have the opportunity to be included in a profit sharing plan, and to share their input regarding company policy and direction. (QCC, n.d.)

QCC is a for-profit company, and they receive tax incentives for hiring people who were formerly incarcerated. Logue describes his business strategy as simple: “We believe the best way to achieve these goals is to provide excellent products and service at a fair price.” He notes that the company provides a straightforward way for the community to become involved in supporting reentry efforts: “With every cup you drink, you're changing someone's life” (QCC, n.d.).

Logue’s unique perspective on business – that it can do something meaningful beyond earning profits – and his path to joining the Philadelphia reentry community through opening QCC is a multifaceted one. A native Philadelphian, he currently co-owns two local coffee shops, is a partner in the highly successful coffee, chicken, and donut shops Federal Donuts, and in January, opened Rooster Soup Company, a center-city diner that donates its profits to a Philadelphia homeless support organization, Broad Street Ministries – making it the “first for-profit restaurant of its kind to donate 100% of its profits to a non-profit organization” (Malandra, 2017). These increasingly philanthropic ventures had cemented his local reputation as an “experienced specialty coffee and hospitality entrepreneur” prior to opening QCC, lending an immediate credibility to the venture, a particularly important component of a new business
that is openly building its entire workforce with convicted felons (Bryman, 2017). He has a background working in construction and maintains his position as a Quality Assurance Inspector for the Philadelphia Housing Authority, making him a fixture among subsidized housing units in many of the city’s most impoverished neighborhoods. Logue has noted that these intimate experiences inside the homes of some of Philadelphia’s poorest citizens has made an impression on him, increasing his understanding of the kinds of structural barriers many people face. His entrepreneurial experience in the coffee world and deepening concern over systematic social injustices converged in 2015 during a Community College of Philadelphia Reentry Support Project awards ceremony (Logue’s wife is an instructor in the program, and Federal Donuts had donated refreshments for the event) when Christian Dennis, an RSP student, gave the keynote speech. “A lightbulb went off when I heard Christian speak,” Logue said.

I wondered what it was that we could do that could bring the communities of Philadelphia together on an economic level. You have this wonderful, sort of creative, high-energy economy going on in certain neighborhoods, and then literally, a block away, you have a lot of poverty and an economy that is almost solely based on the drug game. Our thought was: How can we bridge that gap? (Philadelphia Reentry Reporting Collaborative, 2017)

Logue’s genuine respect for the intelligence and savvy required to navigate the high-risk environment of street-level drug dealing is evident in his reflections on the transferrable skills he recognizes that many returning citizens possess. From his perspective, drug dealers are “entrepreneurs, just on the wrong side of the law. They have a tremendous amount of experience with sales and business management. It’s just that their ‘previous experience’
landed them in jail.” (Philadelphia Reentry Reporting Collaborative, 2017). “So, it’s looking at the fact that these guys are already business people, they’re already marketing, they’re already understanding of sales, distribution, packaging, all this other sort of stuff” (Bryman, 2017).

Despite his confidence in his employees’ abilities, Logue is aware of the reality that returning citizens face multiple psychosocial stressors that can ultimately put them at risk for recidivism:

> The reality for us as a company is in recognizing that our employees have been exposed to a really, really difficult lifestyle up to this point, and it’s going to continue until we’re really able to bring them in. A big part of what we’re doing with this company is providing a network of services for our employees, and we’re not just speaking about it as if it’s a nice idea. (Bryman, 2017)

The Center has partnered with QCC to become a critical aspect of that network of services, including a member of The Center’s community who QCC is in the process of hiring as a peer support counselor for their staff. Logue shares that the company’s next hire, a member of The Center who is currently pursuing a degree in Behavioral Health at CCP, will help establish and run the company’s staff social services (Bryman, 2017).

Logue’s hope is that in addition to growing a successful business and creating jobs, that QCC will become a model other businesses will follow; however, for now, he is eager to simply engage Philadelphians in the uncomplicated act of buying coffee:

> I think we’re going to strike a chord with the local business community, institutions, universities and government operations, where we can simply say to them, ‘Look, we know that you’re concerned about creating jobs. ‘You talk about it, you’d love to create jobs for guys that recently got out of jail. You know that it’s the right thing to do for the community,
but the reality is that your company’s not prepared to handle the situation. We are. So just buy our coffee, and you will create jobs by default” (Bryman, 2017).

**Embedded Agent: Christian Dennis**

“Now I’m selling coffee, not coke.”

Christian Dennis functions as a key player in the innovative work that is happening in the Philadelphia reentry community, and is uniquely positioned to do so based on his embeddedness in multiple settings – perhaps most importantly, the culture of the streets of Philadelphia. Dennis, who was born and raised in Philadelphia, has a history of incarceration for five years, is working towards an Associate’s degree in business as a student in the Reentry Support Project at Community College of Philadelphia, is a partner in Quaker City Coffee (formally the head of Operations, Staffing, and Training), and is a community member and leader at The Center. He is also a married father of six children, the eldest of whom recently earned admission to one of Philadelphia’s top public high schools. Dennis’ personal experiences with incarceration and his intimate understanding of the struggles associated with successful reentry, combined with his entrepreneurial skills (which had previously been applied to the illegal drug trade) and rapidly developing public speaking abilities, have enabled him to leverage legitimacy and resources in multiple settings. Logue, co-owner of QCC, discusses his reliance on Dennis to guide the company’s engagement with the reentry community, specifically with the returning citizens they hope to hire, and Dennis has become an important bridge between these two worlds.

Dennis, now 35, describes the moment when he knew that he had to find a different path in life – when a prosecutor offered him a plea deal of 25 to 50 years for a murder he did not commit:
I wasn’t 25 yet. I looked at my mom, and said: ‘I’m not even 25 yet! How can I do 25 years? I kinda just promised myself: If I get out of this, like, there gotta be a lot of major changes in my life. (Philadelphia Reentry Reporting Collaborative, 2017)

Dennis was found not-guilty in 2006, but acknowledges that despite his motivation, building an entirely different kind of life is far from easy. “Having that record, man, it’s just like that black stain on your shirt, you just can’t get it out” (Philadelphia Reentry Reporting Collaborative, 2017). He notes that after struggling to maintain stable legal employment, he turned back to the streets, and was arrested once more for drug-related offenses before being released in 2010, at which time he vowed to never return (Philadelphia Reentry Reporting Collaborative, 2017). He enrolled in college classes at CCP in 2015, and met Logue shortly afterwards. In an interview with local radio station 100.3, he explains:

I went back to CCP in 2015 after trying to find a job...just trying get life together for me, children, fiancée. Met my partner Bobby Logue who is co-owner of Federal Donuts and had two other coffee shops, and he brought me in on the idea of creating a coffee company around hiring ex-offenders – guys coming home from jail – and giving them a career instead of a job. So we threw around the idea for about 2 years, and about two months ago we launched officially.

Dennis hopes that QCC can provide other returning citizens with an opportunity that wasn’t available to him when he was struggling through his own reentry. He describes his and the company’s goals in his 100.3 radio interview:

We don’t want to just offer like a job. I’ve been through the agony of coming home, somebody giving me a job, and then I’m still stuck in the cycle of the streets. I might need housing or mental health. Like these guys coming home from jail, they need help.
And in order to rebuild these families, I want to be more intertwined with their life. Not just a job, but a community.

In reference to his QCC partners, Dennis reflects:

We don’t even talk about the past. We talk about the future. And that’s how I see Quaker City Coffee, for other convicted felons coming home. I don’t care what you did. What do you want to do? What do you want to do for your daughter? What do you want to do for your mom? If those are the questions that you have in your head, like I did, wanting to change my kids’ life, wanting to break that cycle – those are the guys I want. (Philadelphia Reentry Reporting Collaborative, 2017)

He has big dreams for the company and hopes that it will inspire other companies to follow suit and consider including people who are formerly incarcerated in their workforces. “I see this going global and being a model in every city, from Chicago to New York to L.A. We want to show other companies that you don’t have to be scared of guys getting out of jail...ex-offenders. But if you are, support our company! We’ll hire them!” (Philadelphia Reentry Reporting Collaborative, 2017).

During his Philadelphia 100.3 radio interview, Dennis reflects on what QCC and the opportunity to be a part of something generative has meant to him:

I’m just tired of the violence. I’ve got kids. I talk about my legacy and how my kids will view me, and if I can leave Quaker City as that, that would be great. I just want to give back. I destroyed the community in my neighborhood for so long, I just want to leave my legacy where my kids can be proud of me.

During the 2017 Reentry Support Project end of semester ceremony, he quipped: “Now I’m selling coffee, not coke.”
Embedded Agency Summary

TJ Ghose, Richard Mashaal, Tara Timberman, Lisa Rau, Bob Logue, and Christian Dennis have materialized as key embedded actors in the Philadelphia reentry institutional field. As they are each simultaneously embedded in a diverse range of institutional settings (Ivy League academia, Wall Street, Community College, public interest / civil rights law, the restaurant / hospitality industry, and the illegal drug trade / streets of Philadelphia), they bring enormously diverse and impactful innovative thought to the reentry field. Analysis of these actors reveals how their histories, which include narratives of personal marginalization and other opportunities to develop intimate understandings of the systemic forces that are marginalizing others, entrepreneurial characteristics, and access to critical resources, have resulted in their emergence as key players in the innovative change that is taking place in Philadelphia’s reentry setting.

Leveraging Institutional Resources

Each of the embedded actors involved in the development and success of The Center have contributed not only their personal resources, but have also accessed significant resources through the institutions they are a part of towards the development and growth of The Center. These actors were often able to leverage these resources through a process of mining for logic opportunities – essentially by understanding the logical inconsistencies of their respective institutions, and identifying those contradictory logics that are favorable for The Center’s aims. For example, Dr. Ghose’s embeddedness at the University of Pennsylvania has resulted in The Center’s ability to access resources such as: the initial funding source, clinical support / access to the research database, student interns, a space for the first group meetings, the support of the Board of Trustees who are engaging in ongoing funding efforts, and access to city council to
discuss reentry issues. The West Philadelphia community has frequently critiqued Penn’s role as a major gentrifying force in West Philadelphia, displacing residents as it expands its real estate footprint, and failing to adequately support the existing west Philadelphia community (including claiming its property tax exemption, resulting in a significant loss of revenue for already struggling west Philadelphia schools). Though The Center’s goals of building bridges between the resources of this Ivy League institution and the West Philadelphia community haven’t historically been reflected in Penn’s engagements (or lack thereof) with the community, The Center’s work, as an extension of Penn, provides Penn with an opportunity to counter these critiques through its support of this initiative.

These contradictory logics have certainly posed challenges for The Center at times – for example, the dominant institutional logics prevailed when Penn’s real estate office refused to allow The Center to buy and modestly renovate a small property in deep West Philadelphia to serve as its community center (despite The Center having already secured funding for this project), as it did not fit within Penn’s real estate acquisition model of buying and fully renovating larger properties in close proximity to campus for university use. However, where limitations may surface in one institutional setting, the strategically collaborative nature of The Center’s work allows for opportunities to leverage resources in other settings. Upon learning of The Center’s barriers to securing a space, Tara Timberman utilized her role at CCP to connect The Center with CCP’s building managers, which ultimately led to The Center renting an affordable and convenient office space at CCP’s West Campus in West Philadelphia. Other examples of accessing these kinds of institutional resources include The Center’s funder Richard Mashaal’s offer to use his Wall Street connections to identify additional donors, analyze funding efforts, and review The Center’s plans for generative businesses. Though Wall Street is clearly
profit-driven and in fact in many cases profits from the prison industrial complex, Mr. Mashaal is able to leverage his personal connections there to lend certain resources to The Center’s aims. This kind of leveraging and sharing of multiple institutional resources has been critical to The Center’s ability to thrive and grow.

Social Movements

Social Movement Theory

Scholars of social movement theory point to two primary orientations in examining the factors that explain movements and lead to their success. Resource mobilization theorists argue that access to financial and other material resources (like offices, protest and meeting venues, housing, printing presses, connections with political brokers, and transportation) are key to movement success (McCarthy & Zald, 1977, 2001).

Critiquing this orientation as one that prioritizes elite support of movements, new social movement theorists argue that one of the main goals of movements is to establish collective identity and meaning-making around issues, both for internal movement members, and for society in general (Johnston, Larana & Gusfield, 1997; Taylor & Whittier, 1992; Buechler, 1995). They note that the collective identity and liberation ideology that emerge from movements, are a mark of success, and prioritize the examination of pathways to achieving them. Drawing on both these orientations, political process theory argues that movements can be explained, and should be examined using both, a top-down resources-oriented approach, as well as a bottom-up collective identity orientation (McAdam, 1982; McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1996; McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001). This perspective is based on four elements of social movement dynamics: 1) framing processes whereby a movement is able to create a collective identity that is transformative for movement members and for society, 2) political opportunity structure, or
the way in which certain changes in the political alignments of a particular context allow for movements to emerge, 3) mobilizing structures and contentious repertoires which include strategies to mobilize movement actors, and 4) develop protest and resistance strategies.

The decarcerate movement in Philadelphia, examined through the lens of political process theory, and applied to the Center’s processes, highlights several ways in which each of the four elements of the theory helped to establish innovative practices.

**Framing Processes Around the Decarcerate Movement**

The history of the unrestricted rise of incarceration in the US described in the previous section, created a massive incarceration population, with Philadelphia leading the charge nationally. The city’s incarceration rate (2,168 per 100,000) is the highest among the top ten metropolises, twice the national rate (1,057 per 100,000), with the rate of being incarcerated in city jails (810 per 100,000) being almost triple that of the national rate (341 per 100,000) (Vera, 2017). Moreover, African Americans are five times more likely to be incarcerated that white Philadelphians (The Urban Institute, 2007). Philadelphia also has the largest population on parole and probation in the country, with some of the highest re-incarceration rates anywhere in the world (Ewing, 2016; 2017). These bloated numbers could no longer be ignored by the political establishment in the city. The last District Attorney and the present mayor came to office on the basis of a promise to overturn the prosecution regime of Lynn Abraham, known as the deadliest District Attorney in the US during her nine-year term in office from 1991-2000 (Ewing, 2016; Eckholm, 2010; Rice, 2017).

The important thing to note here is the fact that the political climate in the city after 2010, seemed to turn against incarceration. Mr. Williams’ campaign and then, a left-leaning successful mayoral campaign by Mr. Jim Kenney amplified the need for the city to reduce its
incarceration rates. They were both supported by several leaders and institutions in the African American community who threw their weight behind their decarcerate platforms. Benford & Snow (2000) note that movements engage in a process of frame articulation whereby a movement narrative emerges that attributes the causes of a problem to certain factors and also enunciates the solution. The emergence of the decarcerate frame is an example of such articulation: the frame created a meaning schema to understand the problems and solutions around incarceration in Philadelphia. The problems were attributed to overzealous policing and prosecution, with the solution being the process of reducing numbers in prison and jail by absorbing returning citizens successfully into society. The concept of the “returning citizen” gained prominence in service arenas, and as I will describe in the next situation, ultimately shaped the service delivery landscape in the city.

The clientele of The Center has been considerably shaped by the orientation of clients coming in to The Center. Working with several programs (described earlier and in the next section), The Center sees a regular influx of participants who are looking to be ideal “returning citizens”: they seek education, employment, rehabilitation, and linkages with family members. When the E-CHATS group employs these as motivational goals, they are highly resonant with clients, thus eliciting a high level of buy-in and group participation. One participant, in introducing the E-CHATS group, and the broader GAINS intervention to potential members at various public fora, regularly notes that The Center brings the concept of reentry to life by engaging all the necessary elements of that process simultaneously, and on multiple levels. He points out that the GAINS intervention engages the psychosocial, collective and structural by addressing mental health, employment, family relationships, education, and career plans. This
resonance of goals is enabled by the frame articulation of the decarcerate movement, which establishes a schema for clients that prepares them for the GAINS protocol at The Center.

Several police shootings of young African American men and women during the period of 2010-2016 saw the decarcerate movement morph into a larger movement that took to the streets repeatedly. Benford & Snow (2000) note that movements engage in frame punctuation, whereby frames are amplified by stitching together events and narratives that lead to a movement motto. In fact, the police killings led overtly to such a powerfully punctuated frame: “Black Lives Matter” (BLM), that it became more than its motto – it became the movement name.

The BLM frame has also significantly connected with the meaning-making processes at The Center. Center participants have participated in BLM marches and in rallies protesting Philadelphia’s stop-and-frisk police practices. If the articulation of the decarcerate frame prepared them to be returning citizens who were consumers of services, the punctuation of the frame and its transformation into BLM resonated with their suspicions of the system. Strategies to engage with the system changed from being powerless recipients of services to people with agency, strategically managing systemic requirements. The Center for instance, works with participants closely to furnish letters of support for their parole, probation, and court hearings, subtly invoking clinical privilege, while encouraging systemic actors (like judges and parole/probation officers [POs]) to allow the evidence-based interventions at The Center time to take effect. Clients too negotiate the minefield of information-sharing with diversion courts and POs by being wary of the effects of giving up their confidentiality privilege (which routinely happens in diversion courts) and working through their public defenders to preserve the
adversarial legal process. Participants’ frame resonated with that of the BLM movement, with many coming to the conclusion that prison abolition, not just decarceration, is the final goal.

**Political Opportunity Structure in Philadelphia**

The decarcerate and prison abolition frames described above prompted state actors to implement policies that were resonant with the decarcerate frame. Several release programs initiated by District Attorney Williams’ office resulted in a decline in the prison and jail population in the city during this period (Richards, 2011, Ewing, 2016). The flood of returning citizens created its own demand in terms of housing, services, employment and education. McAdam (1982) notes that these structural pressures increase the cleavages of a political system, allowing social movements to emerge, become visible, and make its demands known. The political pressure to decelerate incarceration rates ultimately led to the city successfully applying for, an being granted a 3.7 million-dollar grant by the McArthur Foundation in 2016, to reduce the incarcerated population in the city (MacArthur Foundation, 2016). Moreover, several programs like the MENTOR diversion program of the Philadelphia Municipal courts, and the People’s Co-op which utilized art to intervene with returning citizens secured federal and private foundation funding in the same period. These funds helped initiate several programs that engaged people being released form incarceration. The new programs included the city’s RISE program, housed in Philadelphia’s city hall, which sought to help returning citizens secure employment and housing, the Reentry coalition which was formed to bring together returning citizens and service providers, the MENTOR and Future Forward diversion programs which were run by the municipal courts and the District Attorney’s office respectively, and the RSP program at the Community College of Philadelphia, which established a degree pathway for returning citizens. As described in an earlier section, these programs partnered with The Center,
establishing The Center’s GAINS intervention as standard practice for people with a history of incarceration who were seeking reintegration into the community.

I call attention here, to the substantial resources that the political opportunity structure, responding to the decarcerate movement, made available to the city, that in turn, led to the development of these programs. In turn, these programs, through their partnerships with the Center, have developed the Center’s salience in the field, with members occupying key positions in the city’s programs for returning citizens. The RSP program now utilizes the E-CHATS intervention to retain students in classes in the CCP. The MENTOR and Future Forward programs refer diverted people to The Center to engage in the GAINS protocol. The Re-entry Think Tank of the People’s Paper Co-op has appointed The Center’s participants as the main organizing peers in their collective. In other words, the programs that emerged because of the new political opportunity structure around incarceration and its discontents in Philadelphia, have enabled the innovative practices of The Center to become normalized in the field.

**Mobilizing structures and contentious reservoirs**

The decarcerate and BLM movement established several mobilizing structures in the community. Collectives like the BLOC (Build, Lobby, Organize, Campaign) Party and The Center for Returning Citizens in North Philadelphia organize people coming out of incarceration into powerful voting blocs. Similarly, the Sex Workers’ Collective operating in Kensington organizes sex workers into a co-operative that is working against police and pimp brutality, harm reduction in substance use treatment, and sex work rights. The Center works with all these collectives, with participants often becoming members of multiple groups such as these. Collaborations with these mobilizing structures has helped The Center to implement an important element of the GAINS intervention: the advocacy piece. As members of this
collective, Center participants have now actively been involved in several key campaigns such as the successful electoral effort to elect a friendly DA in Larry Krasner, and the effort to establish a co-operative of sex workers in Kensington that is connected to a global collective of sex workers.

The movements have also created repertoires of protest strategies that have been invoked by participant members in their process of gaining a political and advocacy voice in the city. Several participants have joined BLM and other community leaders in Philadelphia as speakers at panels, rallies, and conventions. They have joined several working groups that present evidence to City Hall (a key strategy of change in the repertoire) and city government officials around issues of incarceration. The jail support strategies organized by Occupy and BLM to wait for imprisoned people by massing outside jails and attending courts has percolated into Center practices, with Center participants and therapists routinely attending each other’s hearings and court appearances. In one such instance, the Judge, adjudicating a Center participants’ case, turned down the District Attorney’s office’s motion to send him to prison for absconding (a common sentence in these cases), by noting, “I have never seen so much support for a person in court. It is remarkable that he has continued to attend The Center even while absconding.” The participant was released on condition that he continued to participate in The Center’s activities.

Figure 1 summarizes the way social movements influence and shaped innovative practices at The Center:
Figure 1
Political Process Shaping Center Practices

Political Process Elements

**Framing**
- articulation: decarcerate and returning citizens
- punctuation: BLM and prison abolishment

**Political Opportunity Structure**
- political campaigns
- funding
- new initiatives

Mobilization Structures & Contention Repertoires
- leveraging community institutions
- political canvassing
- educating Philadelphia

Innovations at the Center

**Sensitizing Participants**
- prepared members for GAINS intervention
- prepared members to engage with system strategically

**Creating Opportunities**
- partnerships with new programs
- GAINS established as standard of practice
- participants in focal positions in partnered programs

**Supporting Advocacy Strategies at Center**
- partnering with BLM and community collectives to educate City Hall
- canvassing for political campaigns
- jail and court support
GAINS Intervention

The Center for Carceral Communities seeks to respond to Philadelphia’s unprecedented rates of incarceration / court supervision (probation and parole), as well as the many barriers the tens of thousands of citizens who have criminal records in the city of Philadelphia face. Dr. Ghose describes these conditions as a community need that is “at the apex of a national epidemic,” requiring immediate and intensive intervention (“Center Presentation,” 2017). To this end, The Center utilizes a new, multi-tiered intervention that, in the absence of a best practice for this type and scope of intervention, could become a national model. The intervention, referred to by the pneumonic GAINS, includes: Groups (G), which utilize a clinical intervention known as E-CHATS, which draws on evidence-based practices such as Motivational Interviewing and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy; Advocacy (A), which includes engagement with systems at multiple levels in order to change the political environment associated with incarceration; and the Integrated Network of Services (INS), which includes all of The Center’s many institutional and community partners, collaborators, and the constantly expanding pipelines for education, employment, housing, healthcare, and other services and resources.

Groups and the E-CHATS Model.

The “G” in GAINS refers to groups, which utilize the E-CHATS clinical intervention (the addition of the “E” is a group-specific modification to the intervention), and are the primary clinical modality at The Center. These groups, which run for an hour and a half once per week, utilize collective processes, drawing on the support, collective solution formulation, peer accountability, and “social lab” provided by the group. The E-CHATS model, which is grounded in evidenced-based clinical practices such as Motivational Interviewing (MI) and Cognitive...
Behavioral Therapy (CBT), provides a structure to the groups through the following components. Education (E), which occurs in the beginning of the group, consists of a detailed overviews of confidentiality parameters, the purpose for the group, group norms, and trust; Challenges (CH), in which each group participant provides a brief “check in” to share any challenges they are encountering, with a particular focus on the most recent week since the last group; Alternatives/Avoid (A), when group members identify alternative ways to deal with the challenges that have come up, whether through avoiding them (when possible) or coping differently; Triumphs (T), a time for group members to share and celebrate things that “went right” during the previous week; and Solutions (S), when participants look ahead to the upcoming week and work collectively to identify solutions to identified challenges (“MI for Adherence,” 2015).

In addition to functioning as a clinical intervention for master’s-level therapists to implement when facilitating groups, CHATS, which is deliberately straightforward and relatively simple to comprehend and remember, is also a tool to train group members to become more effective supports for themselves and for each other. The intervention is made completely transparent to the group, and members are encouraged to learn and use the intervention as a way of navigating problems they encounter outside of group as well. It is not uncommon for participants to report having “CHATS’d themselves” in the midst of a crisis, and often reach out to therapists at The Center for support and feedback after having already applied the CHATS model to their problem. Additionally, after a few weeks of group attendance, participants have the option of engaging in a process to become certified as a peer E-CHATS group co-facilitator, at which time they are eligible to co-facilitate groups alongside a master’s-level therapist. The process involves a couple of one-on-one support / training sessions with a therapist, and four
group co-facilitations in which the participant receives feedback about their facilitation from both the group, as well as the therapist. Once the participant demonstrates proficiency in the model through four successful group co-facilitations, they receive their certification. Group members have responded enthusiastically to this innovative twist on the standard implementation of a clinical model in a group, and express that it serves not only a practical tool they can use when they are encounter challenges, but that the certification is also as a source of pride and a boost to their resumes.

In terms of the intervention’s CBT orientations, the CHATS model essentially seeks to facilitate a process whereby the group supports its members in identifying “what isn’t working” for them, and subsequent strategies to eliminate or minimize the impact of these barriers; and conversely, mining for “what is working,” and seeking to replicate those strategies. The “Challenges” check-in, typically posed as a question, such as, “What challenges or barriers have you encountered during the past week?” prompts group members to reflectively think back over their week and identify the ways in which they’re struggling. As the group becomes accustomed to the model, group members often begin to spontaneously go around the room sharing their challenges, having anticipated this and prepared their thoughts prior to group. Similarly, group members describe mentally logging their “Triumphs” throughout the week and looking forward to sharing them with the group. In this way, the model provides group members with the tools to increase their awareness and analysis of their lives outside of group, in anticipation of sharing these insights within the group.

There are also multiple opportunities within the E-CHATS group model for eliciting motivation among group members, beginning with the Education section at the beginning of group. Framing the purpose of the group, which is ultimately for group members to support
one another in achieving their goals and dreams, can help to remind members to keep the big picture in mind. This can serve as a powerful potential motivator, particularly for a group of returning citizens, many of whom are frequently overwhelmed by the day to day struggle to meet their most basic needs met. Questions such as, “How would you like for things to be different?” and “What are your dreams?” are used to elicit motivation by cognitively prompting group members to move out of problem-focused orientations and encouraging them to think in hopeful terms for the future (“MI for Adherence,” 2015). Efforts are made throughout the group process to engage members in collective problem solving, which prompts participants to reflect on the ways they have successfully addressed barriers in the past: “Have others experienced this? How have folks dealt with this challenge? Can the group provide feedback on these challenges?” (“E-CHATS Groups,” 2015). This emphasis on peer support and group solution formulation centers participants as the experts of their own lives, empowering them to access their lived experiences as meaningful knowledge to contribute to the benefit of the group.

Advocacy.

The Center’s goal for the advocacy (the “A” in GAINS) the community engages in is to change the political climate around incarceration, specifically to further ideas associated with the anticarceral movement and to increase supports and opportunities for returning citizens. The Center’s philosophy around this advocacy often takes the form of both formal and informal engagement of different political stakeholders, such as City Council, judges, the District Attorney’s office, the Public Defender’s office, parole and probation offices, Community Behavioral Health (managed Medicaid funder), and other community groups. These engagements focus on sharing the stories of community members and addressing / advocating
around the issues that are relevant to them, such as barriers to employment and housing, the ways that drug testing in probation and parole interferes with clinical recovery processes and places clients at increased risk for re-incarceration, and the generally devastating impact of mass incarceration on Philadelphia’s communities, particularly communities of color.

Many of The Center’s clients have become actively involved in this advocacy, presenting regularly to judges and other community groups, as well as participating in marches and protests around the city. Members of The Center community have marched in Black Lives Matter protests in Philadelphia following several high profile deaths of black men and women by police around the country, as well as the Women’s March, Take Back the Night (an annual anti-rape / assault action), smaller events throughout the city. Center clients also engage in advocacy for one another by attending court hearings for other community members, both as a show of solidarity, as well as to speak on behalf of one another when needed. It is not uncommon for community members to appear at court hearings on behalf of others who they are not particularly personally close to, out of a sense of connection and commitment to the advocacy goals of the community as a whole. This level of client engagement in advocacy for themselves and for one another not only serves to further The Center’s goals of changing the political climate around incarceration, but also functions as a sort of clinical intervention for many clients. Multiple community members have expressed that their advocacy work has helped to increase their sense of mastery over their own life narratives, as well as provided them with a sense of agency and empowerment in terms of their ability to participate in a collective and often cathartic push-back against a system that they have long felt victimized by.

Integrated Network of Services.
The “INS” part of GAINS refers to the Integrated Network of Support, which describes the large network of community partners and pipelines for employment and education that The Center has developed. These partners / pipelines include the Philadelphia Criminal Courts, specifically the MENTOR program, as well as several individual judges The Center has formed relationships with; the Federal Courts, where a recent graduate of SP2’s MSW program was placed for a Fellowship this year while receiving supervision at The Center; probation/parole, the Defender’s Association, and the District Attorney’s office; the Reentry Coalition, a collaboration of reentry service providers throughout the city of Philadelphia seeking to promote successful reentry and reduce recidivism; Quaker City Coffee Company, providing careers and promoting job creation for the reentry community; Friends Rehabilitation, a low-income housing program; the Guild Program through Mural Arts, a paid apprenticeship program that hires people who were formerly incarcerated to help them develop job skills; and the educational pipeline, which consists of connections to GED programs, Community College of Philadelphia, Temple bachelor’s degree programs, and both Temple and Penn’s MSW programs.

The Integrated Network of Support (INS) is critical to the advancement of The Center’s goals, both in terms of reducing recidivism, as well as in supporting participants in building full, meaningful lives, rather than simply checking off boxes like “obtain housing” or “find a job.” While The Center’s advocacy and activism goals are in line with the decarceration / prison abolition movements, which ultimately seek to end mass incarceration and the prison industrial complex as it currently exists in the United States, it also recognizes that building relationships within the system is essential to successful advocacy and collaboration on behalf of participants. Making frequent appearances in court for participants’ hearings, providing
detailed updates describing participants’ progress, arranging and attending meetings with judges outside of court, and consistently demonstrating a willingness to support the judges and court programs by accepting many of their more challenging defendants for services have served to develop a rapport and reputation for The Center as a flexible, collaborative partner. On multiple occasions these mutually supportive relationships The Center has cultivated with judges and other members of the courts have resulted in court decisions to grant leniency or “give one more chance” to a Center participant who very likely would have otherwise been facing a much harsher sentence. These decisions have, at times, included input from probation/parole officers who have worked closely with The Center, as well as District Attorneys who have shown rare moments of compassion and understanding. In these instances, Center participants are seen in two very important ways that differ from the prevailing dehumanizing, disempowering processes. First, the detailed reports The Center prepares for these hearings (only when requested and fully consented to by participants) provide a narrative context to the picture of who participants are and the challenges they are facing, resulting in a more humanized process in court. Secondly, on a more structural level, rather than being viewed as “just another defendant,” participants are recognized as members of a community that not only provides support, but also accountability to the courts. The Center’s connection to the University of Pennsylvania has been noted by the courts on multiple occasions during these proceedings, and extends a sense of institutional power to community members that can meaningfully change the dynamics of a hearing.

Increasing participants’ access to meaningful employment and higher education are key goals of The Center, and given the lack of existing infrastructure for these kinds of opportunities for people who were formerly incarcerated, the development of new pathways is necessary.
Many Center participants describe having been left out of mainstream economies beginning in early childhood, when their under-funded schools failed to adequately engage or prepare them for higher education or competitive employment. After multiple periods of incarceration, the high-risk / high reward economy of the streets, which has often felt like the only available option for many participants, becomes untenably risky. Yet participants frequently express feeling as though there are no sustainable legal employment options available to them. Few employers are willing to hire people on probation/parole, and participants report being exploited by some of the employers who are, with low pay and poor working conditions. The Center’s partnerships with Quaker City Coffee (QCC) and the Reentry Support Project (RSP) at Community College of Philadelphia seek to address this gap by creating new career and education pathways for Center participants, and The Center is consistently working to expand these opportunities through new partnerships, as well as plans for business development. The Center is currently working on plans to open a thrift store, which will utilize the resources of the Penn campus by collecting items from departing students in the spring and selling them to students in the fall, and will employ Center participants in all levels of operations and management. Additional new initiatives include a partnership with Friends Rehabilitation, which, much like the partnerships with QCC and RSP, will function as a mutually beneficial relationship in which Friends provides access to safe, affordable housing for participants, and The Center provides psychosocial intervention and case management (including peer-led support) to residents of Friends’ housing units.

Organizational Culture

As discussed in the advocacy section above, The Center’s internal political and organizational culture is a vital component of the agency’s work, and is conceptualized as a
critical part of not only its organizational structure, but also its clinical practice. As with the Sanctuary model, The Center’s organizational culture is trauma-informed, an important component of any organization that is engaging people who have experienced significant trauma, which is certainly generally true of formerly incarcerated communities. However, during a correspondence about The Center, Dr. Ghose describes the ways in which The Center goes beyond what it considers the limited and limiting notions of most trauma-informed perspectives, including the Sanctuary model:

Focusing on trauma hides the cause of it - capitalist systems like the prison industrial complex. Trauma-informed is not what we do - capitalism-informed is what we do. Which also means questioning how trauma is defined by capitalistic and neoliberal systems of services that makes trauma informed care another industrial complex. They fail to indict and therefore address the real culprit, especially in the prison industrial complex: the systemic capitalistic framework that necessitates this trauma (and other collective psychic fallouts) in order to operate. The GAINS model that we've come up with really questions and addresses fundamental issues such as how we define trauma, how it affects communities and service organizations structurally and collectively (beyond what the Sanctuary model attempts to do), and how the trauma industrial complex has constructed another system to benefit from the original trauma itself.

Dr. Ghose explains the importance of reflexivity among service providers, particularly given the skepticism with which many participants approach engagement with these providers.

We must start to analyze how we as providers engage, because every one of the Center’s clients already are! Our clients know and are cynical of the care industrial complex that has risen out of trauma-informed care. That’s why we need to engage with
the collective trauma of the prion complex differently than what these trauma-informed models that sever the connection between trauma and racist capitalism do.

He goes on to clarify that this critique of trauma-informed service provision is in no way a reluctance to recognize trauma or the individual, collective, and organizational effects it can have, but rather is a rejection of the ways in which “trauma-informed” language has been coopted by the market, and in many cases reduced to little more than a meaningless buzzword:

We find that this orientation resonates with our clients - especially the ones with PTSD. We are absolutely trauma-informed, and yet not in the neoliberal way it has been conceptualized by much of the literature and many of the service providers (especially social workers!). At heart we are absolutely working towards taking down these industrial complexes, including the one which has been constructed around the service industry around it.

In practice, The Center’s resistance to these capitalist and neoliberal frames takes the form of collective processes of management. It is not uncommon for group facilitators to take time at the end of group for brief management meetings in which participants are engaged in big-picture strategy and decision making for The Center. This includes discussions around the direction of future business initiatives, feedback about collaborations with community partners and whether to increase or reduce The Center’s level of engagement with particular partners, and building / space-related issues. In addition to these big picture issues, community members are engaged in day-to-day decision making, such as whether and when to allow visitors to the group, who to nominate or recommend for various opportunities (such as Think Tank fellowships, jobs, speaking engagements), and strategies for communicating with courts and probation/parole in different situations. Community members also take an active role in
supporting one another through crisis – there have been many occasions in which Center staff have been unable to locate a group member, and another participant was able to make contact with them. As a result of the collective and non-hierarchical nature of the group, members take on a sense of responsibility for one another, and when someone who is struggling withdraws or falls away, other group members step into a supportive role and seek them out, often with greater success than group therapists have had.

Client and Structural Outcomes

Client Outcomes: John Booker.

“I know what I want to do with the rest of my life.”

John Booker is a 58 year-old man who has been a member of The Center since 2015, when he joined the psychosocial support group The Center was running in the Reentry Support Project (RSP) at Community College of Philadelphia (CCP). At a CCP ceremony he describes how he had been released after a 17-year period of incarceration only months before, and notes that he had a difficult time with the transition, particularly with regard to the mental shift from a highly guarded “up-state” mentality, as he refers to it, to engaging in relationships with family and others on “the outside.” Through this initial connection to the group at CCP, John began to engage more and more with The Center, and over time has become a critical leader and support to many of his peers. John earned his certification as a Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Group Co-Facilitator and currently co-facilitates a weekly group at CCP in addition to participating in a weekly group at The Center’s home location. He states that he plans to ultimately pursue a Master’s degree in Social Work, and is currently completing an Associate’s degree in Behavioral health. At a Center event in March of 2017, regarding his growing passion for this kind of work, he states: “[The social workers at The Center] get a kick out of helping us,
and that is contagious. I’m convinced, you can’t teach passion, but you can’t help catching it if you are compassionate.” In terms of his experiences working with others as a peer counselor, John reflects:

Some of it is even more tragic and more dramatic than I can even imagine. Some of this ain’t even a made for tv movie, it’s a horror film that just keeps going on in there. But to see them guys hang in there, to see them guys raise little kids, and that kind of stuff not only moves me, it motivates me.

In addition to his group co-facilitation, John regularly provides support and crisis intervention to his peers at The Center, attends court with others in a supportive capacity, and participates in management and strategy meetings regarding the direction of The Center. He is also a Fellow in the Philadelphia Reentry Think Tank through The People’s Paper Co-op, which “brings together a group of formerly incarcerated individuals from across the city to work with artists, advocates, and reentry sector stakeholders to engage the city's pressing reentry issues” (People’s Paper Coop, n.d.). Despite these impressive accomplishments and meaningful contributions, John, during a Center event in April 2017, identifies his roles as advocate and speaker as the most personally salient for him:

What I know that I like doing now, is not necessarily consciously being an advocate, but telling my story and telling other people’s stories that I get to mentor. It’s a chance to get with my cohorts and colleagues and just tackle different discussions and present it to groups that are a little disconnected as far as knowing what the real problems and challenges are that we face. I didn’t realize it, but that’s my new drug of choice. I like moving the crowd. I like not just speaking to one or two people – I like speaking to a group of people, so I can scan the room and see who I need to have the extra
conversation with, and even who I need to steer clear of so that they don’t steal my thunder or throw water on my passion. But I really like doing that stuff now. I’m not shy, and I really feel like I’m comfortable because I’m just telling my story. So it’s not anything that I need to conjure up or even enhance or make up. Like, some of this stuff...I can’t even believe it’s real.

He describes the ways in which his participation in The Center and the advocacy roles he has subsequently taken on have served as both clinical interventions in terms of his increasing mastery over his own complex life story, and have also increased his self-confidence as expert of his own life, as well as that of an expert on many dimensions of reentry in general. On sharing his perspective with various audiences, he reflects:

And all they have to do is just to have a conversation with us. Not that we’re the experts...but we’re the experts. We know. And that’s what ‘s been wonderful, like I shared, like last night – I knew I was the expert in there. And there were some big wigs there. And so to hobnob and rub elbows with these people, and to enlighten and educate them, is the thing that excites me. Again, I know what I want to do with the rest of my life.

He also describes his enthusiasm for being a part of making this same pathway available to others:

And doing that, and then convincing the young guys in my hood, or the guys from the Carceral Community here, that, “Yo, you too can come in there. And you don’t necessarily have to get a college degree, but you do have to know how to talk and tolerate. If you can do those two things, you’ll build on that, and you’ll be surprised at
how far it will take you.” Because I can’t even believe...sometimes it’s surreal that I’m in
these rooms, that I’m in these conversations.

He goes on to describe his reaction to learning from Christian Dennis that Quaker City
Coffee (QCC), which recently a $75,000 WeWork award, is pursuing plans to hire him to oversee
supportive services for their staff:

One of my colleagues last night, who’s an entrepreneur now, is saying that he not only
got grant money, but he got grant money for me. So it’s a network that, like, even when
I’m not thinking about helping me, somebody’s thinking about helping me. And that’s
what...it’s priceless, it’s priceless.

**Donna Banning.**

“We should use the media to tell the world our story, even if they don’t want to hear it.”

Donna, a single mother of five children, is member of The Center community and a
Reentry Think Tank Fellow. Donna became connected to The Center in the fall of 2016 after her
father heard Dr. Ghose speak about The Center’s work at a West Philadelphia community event
and, after speaking with Dr. Ghose after the event, urged Donna to attend a group. In sharing
her story at reentry events, Donna describes that her hopelessness and subsequent depression
had become overwhelming to the point of suicidal ideation prior to reaching out to The Center.
She identifies employment barriers and the many resulting instabilities, particularly housing
insecurity, as the primary sources of her distress — a distress that has only intensified now that
she is solely responsible for the wellbeing of her five children after a recent divorce. Donna
notes that prior to being arrested, she had completed an associate’s degree in business at the
Community College of Philadelphia and made a good living working as a licensed dental
hygienist and x-ray technician. She had good credit and owned a house and a car. However,
because one cannot have a felony conviction and hold a certification as a licensed x-ray technician in PA, Donna’s felony conviction set off a chain of events that resulted in her losing all of these stabilities that she had worked so hard to build.

The circumstances around Donna’s arrest and conviction are both shocking and all too common. Eight months pregnant with her youngest child at the time, Donna’s marriage had become increasingly unstable and her husband had begun to behave violently towards her when they argued. Donna describes that on the evening of her arrest, as yet another conflict between them escalated to violence, something inside of her “snapped” and she fought back. She states that she hit him with a glass bottle in self-defense, resulting in significant injuries. A friend who had been present during the altercation had called 911, and because her husband was more severely injured than she was when the police and ambulance arrived, they arrested Donna and transported her husband to the hospital. Donna was charged with attempted murder. The Commonwealth of PA decided to move forward with the charges against her even when her husband declined to cooperate, and despite the fact that she had no prior criminal record. Donna served several months in jail awaiting trial, and ultimately made the difficult decision to accept a deal and plead guilty to felony assault, ensuring her immediate release, rather than risk a conviction and subsequent long prison sentence. Donna explains that her family had come together to care for her children during her incarceration, but she knew that they would be unable to maintain the arrangement and ultimately her children would end up in foster care if she was away for much longer. She notes that at the time she was unaware that this decision would mean the end of her career as a dental hygienist and x-ray technician, as well as the loss of countless potential jobs in the future.
Donna describes how, after sharing her story and distress over being unemployed in the first group, which she admittedly reluctantly attended, another group member offered to connect her to with the event security team he worked for. She was hired immediately and has continued to work there part-time since. The following week, the group nominated Donna to represent The Center in the Reentry Think Tank, and Donna has since become one of their most active participants. At a Reentry Think Tank event at the Slought Foundation in March 2017, she described Mondays and Wednesdays, the days when she meets with the Think Tank and attends group with The Center, as her “favorite days of the week,” noting that she “look[s] forward to doing those two things all week.” Donna shares that her feelings of hopelessness and symptoms of depression began to alleviate after that first group, as she experienced the hope and relief of the support of a community.

Donna has continued to experience serious obstacles. At the Reentry Think Tank event at Slought, she shared that she had fallen behind with her rent and was facing eviction. She expressed her frustration over the reality that she has been barred from many of the social safety nets that would have previously been available to her (and, ironically, that she would not likely have needed) if she did not have a felony conviction.

I am a mother of 6 with no steady housing and [I’m] not eligible for PHA or Section 8 due to [my] background. The government will pay $6000 a month for foster care but nothing to help us stay together as a family.

After identifying a new apartment and negotiating a manageable rate for rent, Donna was able to borrow money from The Center’s communal fund to help her cover the up-front costs to move in. She notes that while her housing situation has stabilized for now, without more stable employment, she is likely to find herself in this precarious situation again. At the Slought event,
Donna shared that she had applied for a position as a retail manager of a gas station. After a long process, including four interviews, she was told that “the job was [hers].” However, the company’s corporate human resources department did a full background check as a final part of the hiring process, and when Donna’s criminal record was uncovered, they informed her that she was no longer eligible for the position. Donna shares that she has experienced some version of this employment story over and over again, lamenting how nearly impossible it sometimes feels to fully rebuild her life.

As Donna has continued to navigate these barriers, she has increasingly found her voice as a spokesperson and advocate for the reentry community, particularly for issues related to women in reentry. She has thrived on the many opportunities The Center and Think Tank have provided for her to engage in art-making and public speaking around her experiences. At the GRI Breaking Down the Walls event in May 2017, she described the potential of art to serve as a powerful medium for communication:

I feel like art is just like lighting. I mean, you go into certain places, just like… a club scene. The lighting is there for a certain reason. It does something to your brain. It makes you think a certain way. It’s the same thing with art. When you see a piece of art, it is there to transcribe into your brain what the artist meant, or what is meant for you to see.

On opportunities to utilize the media as an advocacy tool for the reentry community, she stated:

As far as the media, I feel like, when I speak or when I’m questioned, you’re supposed to ask a question in a way that makes people give you the answer that they don’t really
want to give you. So I feel like that’s the way we should use the media. We should use the media to tell the world our story, even if they don’t want to [hear it].

Robert Larson.

“I’m at the point in my life where it’s now or never.”

Robert, 56 years-old, first connected with The Center in January of 2017 through the CBT-based psychosocial support group The Center facilitates for RSP at CCP. During a Center event in April 2017, he describes his long history with incarceration:

Since the age of 11, I haven’t seen a whole year in society. I’m 57. I would come out and stay out for 5, 6 months as a juvenile, get locked back up. I’ve done a lot of time. Most of my life has been spent incarcerated, since the age of 11. I’ve been going back and forth, in and out of institutions and placements. I wound up at 17 getting certified. They sent me away and gave me 6-20 years. I wound up doing 7 years. Incarceration was crazy. I managed to survive. I got out after 7 years, I stayed out 9 months. I had a little job, trying to get it back together, but still running with the same thoughts and same attitudes. I wound up getting locked up again for a robbery. I got 10 to 20. They wind up making me do the whole 20 years and I came home in 2005. I got locked up in 1985 and came home in 2005. I just was trying to get it back together, but I still wasn’t ready yet.

He reflects on the mental and emotional toll those extended years of incarceration took on him, and the disorienting, overwhelming experience of returning to a home that had chanced and was no longer familiar, and to find that supports he had previously counted on were gone:
My mind was somewhere else. All those years inside, I became bitter, angry, frustrated, numb. Didn’t really care how people perceived me or took me, or if they was with me. Just a lot of struggle. And the world was different. Everything had evolved. People had changed. People had died. My parents and everybody was gone when I came home, so I didn’t have a safety net. So I had to really fend for myself. I was just trying to learn how to live life on life’s terms, and sometimes it gets real difficult out here. Lot of things coming that I’m not aware of, but I may be able to adapt later. So a lot of things use to frighten me. I’d just go into isolation, fall back. Try to navigate myself through this system. And a lot of times my thinking would be on point, but my outcomes would be bad. Like I would make good decisions, but my outcomes would be bad.

Robert was ultimately incarcerated again, and has served several shorter sentences since ending his 20-year prison term in 2005. He notes that he had begun to give up on ever living a stable, successful life outside of prison walls, when something shifted and his orientation suddenly changed:

So, then when I came home this time, I had a different mindset. I’m at the point in my life where it’s now or never. My head was clear, my mindset was right, and for the first time in my life I really actually knew what I wanted to do. So I had to get around people that was moving in that direction. People that was going to be a positive influence, going to be there if you needed them to talk to. So I left my whole circle.

In the absence of family members who had died while he was incarcerated and a social circle he had to leave behind in order to move forward, Robert needed support. He reached out to his Goldring Reentry Initiative (GRI) contacts who had worked with him in the last few months of his incarceration, and they connected him to RSP at CCP. Richard enrolled and
started classes in January, and then decided to attend the psychosocial support group The Center facilitates for students. He describes the importance of having a safe, collective space where he can access support:

We get a chance to air things out, don’t nobody look at you any different, don’t nobody judge you. You can be vulnerable, if you wanna cry, you wanna open up. People are there to listen. The groups is fabulous. I look forward to that. It help me get through my day. When I’m feeling down, you know, I come here. Maybe out of a job, pick myself up, people give you inspiration. The Center has always been there. It’s something I look forward to every week. CHATS is good, we talk about a lot of different things people are going through, where they try to go, if they need assistance, job opportunities. A lot of conversation here is real positive. Since I came to The Center I’ve been able to open up and express myself, be myself. You know I don’t have to be different, I don’t have to wear no mask, I can just come as I am. And let people know what’s on my mind. I’m glad today that I don’t keep it inside. That I put it out there and let people know. If I’m hurt, or going through this or that.

In addition to the sense of support Robert experiences at The Center, he describes his connection to the bigger picture of the organization and its goals, aware that he is a part of the collective process:

The center is the backbone. [It’s] strong, the organization is starting to move forward, and we’re starting to talk about all of the things we can do together down the line as a unit, as a team. And I’m really impressed by that.

Robert notes that he is now close to completing his first full year of life outside of prison since he was a child. It has certainly not been a year without challenges – he was recently
robbed, causing financial and emotional hardship, and the following week was suddenly evicted from his home:

I just got kicked out of my house. Because I was living with a friend and I don’t know what he was going through in his personal life, but he never paid the mortgage, even though he told me that he took care of it. I lost a lot of stuff in the process, once again.

Robert has relied on the group and Center staff for support in the midst of these challenges, and has ultimately been able to navigate them without falling back into the old behaviors that have previously resulted in a lifetime of incarceration. He acknowledges that this is the first time in his life that he has ever reached out for help in this way, and expresses his gratitude for the community he has not only joined, but helped to build. “I’ve got a lot of good people supporting me.”

**Structural Outcomes**

The Center’s structural interventions have reshaped notions of successful re-entry, conceptions of citizenship, and the prevailing prosecutorial landscape in Philadelphia.

**Reshaping conceptions of successful re-entry.**

Aspects of the GAINS intervention such as the E-CHATS group intervention have been adopted by the re-entry system as standard practice. Currently, programs like MENTOR, Future Forward, the Defenders Association, and the federal courts re-entry program routinely refer clients to The Center. Moreover, even public defenders and judges in Montgomery County have started referring clients to The Center to participate in E-CHATS groups. At several public settings, judges have drawn on The Center’s discourse on evidence-based practice to extoll the virtues of the E-CHATS group.
The Center has been explicit about the harm-reduction philosophy of the intervention, and has encouraged its partners to think about the implications of that approach to their own orientation. In several workshops with clients and administrators of the MENTOR program, for instance, the harm reduction philosophy of the CHATS intervention was emphasized in presentations. The social work interns at the MENTOR program who were being supervised by the Center presented their year-long evaluation of the MENTOR program to the Judges and administrators in a crucial session. The presentation encouraged the court to incorporate a holistic, harm-reduction approach to outcomes and expand from the limited abstinence-based dichotomous outcomes (of clean drug tests, violation of probation, and whether or not illegal activities were engaged in). The judges responded positively to the presentation, inviting an open session where MENTOR clients, peer counselors, Center participants and probation officers participated in an engaged discussion around reshaping outcome success. The session led to a focus in the MENTOR program, on outcomes such as successful parenting, reintegration with family members, educational attainments, retaining housing, and securing employment. Similarly, Center participants have routinely attended re-entry partner coalition gatherings and emphasized their own multidimensional achievements after being released, encouraging coalition partners to complicate notions of successful re-entry.

This reshaping of the narrative from an abstinence-driven orientation to an evidence-based holistic harm-reduction model is a key structural outcome for the Center, especially since the partners that have engaged in this narrative shift (such as MENTOR, CCP’s RSP, and The Re-entry Coalition), comprise salient elements of the re-entry landscape in the city.

*Reshaping conceptions of citizenship.*
The Center has encouraged partners such as the courts, and probation personnel to reconfigure the way they treat clients as agency-less flawed human beings who need to be monitored constantly, to citizens invested with rights. The monitoring and reporting system for people on probation for instance, routinely engages in practices that violate the right to clinical confidentiality for those who have been referred to treatment. The Center has successfully engaged with these violations on multiple fronts. When it receives requests from probation officers and Judges for confidentially secure information, Center therapists invoke the privilege of confidentiality, reminding the courts and the probation system that its therapists do not operate in a forensic capacity, even when clients are referred to it for treatment. At one meeting with probation officers, Center personnel were caustically told by a probation administrator that another University-based CBT program that also served as a treatment site where clients were referred to, routinely shared details of treatment that were being asked for. The Center pushed back on this response, pointing out to the probation officers and the Judges present that referred clients enjoyed the full protection of confidentiality and reports to courts needed to be summarized with all the clinical considerations (including ones ensuring that treatment did not put clients in further jeopardy). The Center personnel also emphasized that the inability to do so puts therapists at risk of losing their licenses, and that adherence to confidentiality laws ensured the trust that was necessary for the treatment success that the Center has been experiencing with clients. The probation officers and Judges were receptive to this intervention, and confidentiality is no resisted in the same way among Center partners.

Another key area where the rights of clients have been re-emphasized has been in the courtroom. Diversion programs often become partnerships among the client, the Judge, the prosecution and the defense. These encourage clients to consider the Judge as a parental
figure, interested in the client’s welfare. While this can be advantageous, a paternal relationship between the client and the court can encourage the client to give up on his/her rights, leading ultimately to clients being exposed to higher risk of conviction. The Center has encouraged the preservation of the adversarial process in the diversion programs it partners with, but forging a string and primary relationship, with the public defender’s office. This ensures that the legal rights of clients participating in the diversion programs is secured. This orientation has strengthened the role, and the salience of public defenders in the diversion programs, strengthening the rights of people who participate in them.

**Reshaping the prosecutorial landscape.**

While the reshaping of the role of public defenders has changed the way diversion programs operate in Philadelphia, conversations between Center participants and decarcerate movement actors highlighted the need for a culture change in the District Attorney’s office, in order to truly make a dent in the structural forces that lead to Philadelphia’s sky-high incarceration rates. After discussions and strategic planning sessions, The Center became a key participant in the campaign to elect one of the city’s prominent civil right lawyers, Larry Krasner, to that position. The Center’s founder, Dr. Ghose, shared the podium with a handful of other key strategic partners when Mr. Krasner declared his candidacy. The Center hosted Mr. Krasner, canvassed for him, helped to author key elements of his decarcerate platform, and leveraged its networks to get out the vote for him. Mr. Krasner went from being an unlikely candidate with little press coverage initially, and with no endorsements, to the eventual winner who was able to mobilize union, community, institutional and national support. His campaign has electrified the country, with news outlets like the New York Times, Slate and the Los Angeles Times hailing him as the frontline of a new left decarcerate movement. The Center
counts the successful crafting of his campaign, and the subsequent transformation of the
prevailing master frame around incarceration in Philadelphia, and possibly in the country, as
one of its most important structural successes, to date.
CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

My results indicate that the carceral field is shaped by institutional logics, whereby multiple institutional fields, actors, and frames of understanding interact to opportunities to resist institutionally normative processes. These then, allow innovative practices to emerge, flourish and establish themselves in the carceral institutional field. Figure 2 indicates how institutional logics shaped innovative practices at The Center, which in turn influences positive client and structural outcomes:
Institutional Logics Shaping Innovative Practices and Outcomes

Institutional Logics of the Carceral Field

Embedded actors in institutional fields of:
- finance (funder)
- academia (Penn, CCP)
- judicial system (Judges)
- business (partners)

Leveraged resources from:
- Wall Street
- universities
- business partners

Social Movements:
- established frames
- utilized political opportunity structures
- utilized mobilization structures and contentious repertoires

Innovative practices at Center
- multilevel intervention GAINS
- Group (E-CHATS)
- Advocacy
  - internal advocacy with inclusion in management processes
  - external advocacy in courts, campaigns
- Integrated Network of Services
  - partners with CCP, MENTOR, Quaker City Coffee

Outcomes
Client outcomes
- significantly reduced reincarceration
- reintegration with families/communities
- meeting education and employment goals

Structural Outcomes
- participating and shaping a successful DA’s race
- re-establishing the salience of confidentiality in diversion, education, and probation settings
Agencies and actors that are interested in engaging in innovative practice need to take into account the institutional logics at play in their field of engagement. Our results indicate that the first step in innovative practice is the identification of influential actors who are embedded in multiple fields, and are able to destabilize the normative thinking of the institutional field in question. Funders, for instance, need to bring into play a non-capitalistic orientation to social justice on the one hand, and a finance world-driven insistence of evidence-based practice for innovative practice to thrive in the trenchant carceral services field. Judges, prosecutors and probation / parole officers need to be able to think “outside the (punitive) box” to be able to encourage practices that are harm-reduction in orientation, and engage holistically with clients. Similarly, academics need to have a unique orientation to research and practice to be able to support research and implementation that might, in the normative academic fields, be dismissed as “activist” rather than objective knowledge production.

Contradictions, conflict, and partnerships from across institutional actors help to open up space for innovation. Leveraging resources from these opportunities requires a strategic understanding of how these fields and actors engage with each other. Practitioners and agencies that are interested in innovative practice in the carceral field for instance, need to engage in an instrumental and power analysis to understand how different stakeholders engage with each other. Doing this helped Center personnel to leverage CCP and Penn for space and funding resources.

It is imperative that practitioners interested in engaging with innovative practice in the carceral field be aware of the social movements that shape the frames of meaning and action around it. Engaging actively with social movement actors, and understanding optimal moments to implement structural changes significantly improve chances of success.
Building partnerships with various stakeholders is an essential element in successful innovation. Partnerships need to include actors who can engage the entire client system: housing, employment, business, legal support, and mental and physical health. Parsing out engagement, or emphasizing one over another element in this system will invariably lead to a co-optation into institutional silos, thus curbing successful innovation.

Finally, the bedrock of successful innovation, as my results indicate, is the utilization of evidence-base practice, as a starting point. Evidence-based practices need to be modified to fit the needs of clients in the carceral environment. This calls for the utilization of action research that builds a feedback loop to knowledge gathered through research, and the continual process of fine-tuning practice. The CHATS model, as well as the GAINS intervention, are constant works in progress, and data gathering, analysis and translation into interventions keeps innovative practice responsive to client systems and needs.

Current developments in the field of reentry have put social work at the front and center of reentry efforts in cities like Philadelphia. For instance, both the public defender’s office, as well as the DA’s office, have increased the role of social workers in working with clients, especially those involved in diversionary court programs such as MENTOR and Future Forward. In 2017, with Larry Krasner’s election into office, indications are that this trend will continue, especially given his campaign’s emphasis on the role of social work case management and treatment as a diversion to being incarcerated. Social work practice, therefore, has to arm itself with innovative, evidence-based interventions in working with people with a history of incarceration. The protocol that emerges from this research showcases the kinds of practices that need to become standard interventions in social workers’ tool kits in cities like Philadelphia. Moreover, the processes described in this research that shape these innovations
provide a blueprint for social work agencies in this field. The results of this research, therefore, add to our knowledge of what practices constitute successful innovations in social work practice, as well as pathways to implement them.

While a case study allows me to generate rich concepts and add to prevailing theoretical frameworks in the field of organizational theory, it has some limitations. The study suffers from low external validity since it only focuses on one organization. It is not empirically established that these results apply to other agencies or fields. Future research needs to establish the external validity of these concepts by testing them in other agencies and areas of practice.

While the use of participant observation allows for a deep and personal engagement in the setting, it also has certain limitations. Personal bias can shape the interpretation of results. I have attempted to account for this bias by triangulating from multiple sources of data and using reflexive journals to control for skewed perspectives. However, future research needs to further test the theoretical concepts generated in this study through the use of more objective methods.
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Appendix A
E-CHATS Group for Adherence PowerPoint

THE E-CHATS GROUP
FOR ADHERENCE
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

GROUP ADVANTAGES

• support
• collective solution formulation
• peer accountability
• here and now
• social lab
CHALLENGES TO ADHERENCE

• alcohol/substance use
• depression/anxiety/stress
• homelessness/chaotic life
• poor self-efficacy
• lack of social support
• poor understanding of importance of adherence
• punishment beliefs about HIV
• medication guilt
• GLHC (God Locus of Health Control)

CHALLENGES TO ADHERENCE

• side effects
• forgetfulness
• holidays/weekends/changes in schedule
• degree of complication of regimen/comorbidities
• not having HIV-related symptoms
• poor doctor/patient relationship
• additional risk factors:
  • younger age
  • lower SES
  • lower level of education
  • higher # of children (women)
OVERVIEW OF E-CHATS

E-CHATS: An Implementation of MI in Group

- **E** – *Education* (around group rules, psychoeducation re: adherence, etc.)
- **CH** – *Challenges* (ongoing & new)
- **A** – *Alternatives* (what didn’t work? alternatives?)
- **T** – *Triumphs* (what did work? why? replicate!)
- **S** – *Solutions* (anticipate/explore barriers for upcoming week, collaboratively identify solutions)

E: EDUCATION

- Group rules (education/orientation to group)
  - purpose
  - attendance
  - tardiness
  - confidentiality
  - trust
  - etiquette
E: EDUCATION

• Psychoeducation – provide info and elicit motivation
  • Elicit group information
  • Elicit motivation
    • “How might you like for things to be different?”
    • “What are the conditions that make you feel really hopeful about the future?”
    • “How do you feel about being a part of a community effort to lower viral loads and end AIDS?”
    • “What are your dreams?”
    • “What would it look like for this problem to disappear?”

CH: CHALLENGES

• What challenges/barriers did you encounter during the past week?
  • elicit challenges, barriers, concerns
  • elicit support from group
    • “Have others experienced this”?
    • “Is ___ the only one to have encountered this?”
    • “Can the group provide feedback on these challenges?”
A: ALTERNATIVES

• “How have folks dealt with this challenge?”
• “A” can also be for avoid
• When avoiding is not possible: minimize.
• Model group behavior here
• Summarize successful alternatives

T: TRIUMPHS

• What worked last week?
  • Were there any challenges that they were able to cope with/overcome in order to maintain adherence?
  • How could these successes be maintained/replicated?
• elicit group congrats
• elicit triumphant strategies
S: SOLUTIONS

• Anticipate challenges and identify solutions for the upcoming week.
  • think through the upcoming week – any challenges in sight?
  • scale - how can we increase by 0.5?
  • elicit advice-giving and taking among group members
  • elicit group and peer strategies

STRATEGIES/INTERVENTIONS

• review a typical day to identify the most consistent/logical time to take meds
• establish support / buddy system
• anticipate upcoming week, identify challenges, collaboratively strategize solutions
• identify conditions/thoughts/behaviors that connect clients to hope – repeat those!
STRATEGIES/INTERVENTIONS

• identify conditions that are barriers – help to avoid
• communication with medical providers
• referrals for substance use treatment
• referrals for MH treatment
• remember: the E-CHATS process is an intervention!

GROUP PROCESS STRATEGIES

• group support
• group info-sharing
• group confrontation
• group trust
Appendix B
MI for Adherence PowerPoint

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING
FOR ADHERENCE
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

CHALLENGES TO ADHERENCE
• alcohol/substance use
• depression/anxiety/stress
• homelessness/chaotic life
• poor self-efficacy
• lack of social support
• poor understanding of importance of adherence
• punishment beliefs about HIV
• medication guilt
• GLHC (God Locus of Health Control)
CHALLENGES TO ADHERENCE

- side effects
- forgetfulness
- holidays/weekends/changes in schedule
- degree of complication of regimen/comorbidities
- not having HIV-related symptoms
- poor doctor/patient relationship
- additional risk factors:
  - younger age
  - lower SES
  - lower level of education
  - higher # of children (women)

SIX STAGES OF CHANGE

1. **Precontemplation** – (not ready) Individual unaware or under-aware of the problem; sees no costs to behavior; not even thinking about change.
   a. (subgroups: reluctant, rebellious, resigned, and rationalizing)

2. **Contemplation** – (getting ready) Individual is ambivalent; sees both costs and benefits to behavior, but costs outweigh benefits; no intention to change at this time.

3. **Preparation** – (ready) Individual preparing to change; costs outweigh benefits of former behavior; lacks plan for change.
SIX STAGES OF CHANGE

• 4. Action Maintenance – Individual changing through a plan; learning and using skills to change behavior. Individual continuing to use and master skills; shift of focus to wellness and lifestyle improvement.

• 5. Relapse: Individual experiences a return of problem behavior; may cycle back to early change. Relapse can be seen as recycling back through the stages.

• 6. Termination: Individual has zero temptation and they are sure they will not return to their problem behavior as a means of coping.

OVERVIEW OF MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

• MI: Spirit and Technique

• Motivational Interviewing is (spirit):
  • non-judgmental
  • non-confrontational
  • non-adversarial
  • warmth, genuine empathy, and acceptance are necessary

• Motivational Interviewing skills (technique):
  • ability to ask open-ended questions
  • ability to provide affirmations
  • capacity for reflective listening
  • ability to periodically provide summary statements to client
OVERVIEW OF MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

• Four Guiding Principles of MI:
  • 1. Expressing Empathy
  • 2. Aligning Behaviors to Motivation
  • 3. Rolling with Resistance
  • 4. Supporting Self-Efficacy

OVERVIEW OF MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

• MI uses four general processes to achieve its ends:
  • Engaging - used to involve the client in talking about issues, concerns and hopes, and to establish a trusting relationship with a counselor.
  • Focusing - used to narrow the conversation to habits or patterns that clients want to change.
  • Evoking - used to elicit client motivation for change by increasing clients' sense of the importance of change, their confidence about change, and their readiness to change.
  • Planning - used to develop the practical steps clients want to use to implement the changes they desire.
OVERVIEW OF A-CHATS

A-CHATS: An Implementation of MI in Session

• **A** – Assessment (of adherence during week since last session - # of missed pills)
• **CH** – Challenges (ongoing & new)
• **A** – Alternatives (what didn’t work? alternatives?)
• **T** – Triumphs (what did work? why? replicate!)
• **S** – Solutions (anticipate/explore barriers for upcoming week, collaboratively identify solutions)

A: ASSESSMENT

• What has adherence been like during the week since the last session?
  • STAY STRENGTHS-BASED! REFRAME, REFRAME, REFRAME!
  • document precise (self-reported) # of pills missed/taken
  • assess overall motivation and confidence
  • use of scaling: ("On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, how motivated/confident did you feel about taking your medication during the past week?")
  • “Tell me how you’re able to maintain this?”
  • summary of pros and cons to changing vs not (helps to address ambivalence/motivation)
A: ASSESSMENT
ELICITING MOTIVATION

• “How might you like for things to be different?”
• “What are the conditions that make you feel really hopeful about the future?”
• “How do you feel about being a part of a community effort to lower viral loads and end AIDS?”
• “What are your dreams?”
• “What steps can you take?”
• “Who has helped you?”

CH: CHALLENGES

• What challenges/barriers did you encounter during the past week?
  • you know your clients! – develop hypotheses about challenges prior to session, then assist clients in enunciating
  • remember to stay open to their perspectives as well
  • elicit challenges, barriers, concerns
  • collaboratively identify challenges when client needs help – refer to list of universal challenges
  • identify both ongoing challenges and new/unexpected challenges that came up during the past week
  • MI principle of expressing empathy is important here!
A: ALTERNATIVES

• What are some alternative ways to cope with the challenges that came up?
  • could the challenge have been avoided?
  • if not, could the impact be minimized?
  • remember that autonomous decision-making leads to longer-term behavioral changes
  • collaborative problem solving!
  • if client has exhausted solutions, ask permission to suggest some solutions “that have worked for other people”
  • draw on the client’s internal motivation – how does adherence support/relate to other goals/values?
  • MI principles of aligning behaviors to motivation and rolling with resistance are important here!

T: TRIUMPHS

• What worked last week?
  • were there any challenges that the client was able to cope with/overcome in order to maintain adherence?
  • how could these successes be maintained/replicated?
  • be collaborative and ready to help when needed – positively reframe!
  • analyze/build on client’s existing strengths
  • keep rolling with resistance
  • MI principle of supporting self-efficacy is important here!
S: SOLUTIONS

- Anticipate challenges and identify solutions for the upcoming week.
  - think through the upcoming week – any challenges in sight?
  - refer back to client’s motivation/confidence scaling during assessment – how can we increase those numbers by 0.5?
  - refer back to adherence #’s – how can we maintain/incrementally increase this by 0.5 during the coming week?
  - collaboratively create a contract – client agrees to try at least one solution
  - CM summarizes what was agreed upon and incorporates client’s suggestions

STRATEGIES/INTERVENTIONS

- review a typical day for clients and identify the most consistent/logical time to take medication
- establish cues/reminders for taking pills
- anticipate upcoming week, identify challenges, collaboratively strategize solutions
- assist client in creating a med calendar, diary, etc.
- identify social supports/work on building supports
- identify conditions/thoughts/behaviors that connect clients to hope – repeat those!
STRATEGIES/INTERVENTIONS

- identify conditions that are barriers – help to avoid
- communication with medical providers
- coping with side effects
- referrals for substance use treatment
- referrals for MH treatment
- referrals for support groups
- psychoeducation re adherence, big picture
- remember: the A-CHATS process is an intervention!
Battling the Epidemic

The Center for Carceral Communities

We’re No. 1.

- At 2.2 million, the U.S. has the largest incarcerated population in history...
- ...higher than the next two countries on the list – China and Russia
- ...put together!
U.S. State and Federal Prison Population, 1925-2014

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics Prisoners Series.

Racial and ethnic disparities in prisons and jails

Whites are underrepresented in the incarcerated population while Blacks are overrepresented.

Compiled from 2010 Census, Summary File 3.
The Prison Industrial Complex

- US national rates: 341/100,000
- Philadelphia rates: 810/100,000
- Phila African Americans: 1267/100,000
- Phila men: 1467/100,000
- Phila jail+prison: 2168/100,000
The Prison Industrial Complex

- 1/3 African American men between 18-40 will be incarcerated at some point.

Michele Alexander calls it:
The New Jim Crow.

Dollars and Sense

- 48.3% of drug arrests were for marijuana
- It costs taxpayers $32,000/inmate/year
- $1 of incarceration: $10 in social costs
- $1 of treatment yields $18 in cost savings
- Yet, diversion courts have limited effectiveness…..
- …and the question remains: diversion to where?
A Huge Opportunity for SP2

- There is a **community need** that is at the apex of a national epidemic
- The moment is **NOW** – the anticarceral movement is very effective
- The place is **HERE**: Philly is the best lab
- There is **no best practice** that has been established yet
- We can become a **National Model**

**GAINS** : A Model Intervention

- **Groups.** CHATS intervention drawing on evidence-based practices.

- **Advocacy.** Changing the political environment associated with incarceration

- **Integrated**
- **Network of**
- **Services**
**Groups**

- Utilizing collective processes
- Implementing evidence-based practices:
  - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Motivational Interviewing

- Modifying group therapeutic processes
  - Affective Behavioral Therapy
  - Social Media as engagement
  - Peers as facilitators

**Advocacy: Engaging the external environment**

- Engaging different political stakeholders:
  - City Council
  - Judges
  - DA’s Office
  - PD’s office
  - Medicaid Office
  - Parole/Probation Office
  - Community Groups
Advocacy: Engaging the internal political environment
Moving from hierarchy to collaboration:
  - Inclusive management meetings
  - Spokespeople in different settings
  - Peer outreach for challenged members
  - Non-mandatory and confidential.

Integrated Network of Services
  - Partnering city-wide
    - Philadelphia Criminal Courts – MENTOR court diversion
    - Community College of Philadelphia, Temple, Penn
    - Friends Rehabilitation Program – Housing
    - Federal Courts
    - Reentry Coalition
    - Mural Arts Program
### Integrated Network of Services

- Sustaining citizenship through BIG model
  - **Business development**
    - Thrift Store
    - Housing Development
  - **Innovation**
    - Social media and cell phones
    - training
  - **Generalize**
    - training
    - collaborations

### Outcomes

125 clients currently being served. 250 served since the beginning of the program.

45 / 125 clients with high needs being provided intensive engagement

15 / 45 are high-risk clients (timeline of reincarceration: 2-3 months on average)
Outcomes

45 clients with high needs being provided intensive engagement

Employment /Education engagement:
44/45

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>General clients (n=125)</th>
<th>High-need clients (n=45)</th>
<th>High-risk clients (n=15)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining Education/Job</td>
<td>115/125 (92%)</td>
<td>44/45 (98%)</td>
<td>14/15 (93%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secured Education/Job</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9/10 (90%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reincarcerated</td>
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Next Steps

SP2
The Decarcerate School

“Taking down the prison industrial complex one community at a time”

The Right Place, The Right Time, The Right Resources