Probation and Parole Case Management as Opportunity-Reduction Supervision

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Abstract

Recent developments in probation and parole show a shift from the traditional control and treatment approach towards opportunity-reduction supervision strategies. Studies show that although opportunity-reduction supervision is not yet an organising framework for practice, many practitioners rely on these tactics informally as an approach to case management. The current study uses survey data to explore the predictors of surveillance, rehabilitation, and opportunity-reduction strategies used by probation and parole officers. Results indicate job burnout and stress are the strongest predictors of the supervision strategies that officers use. Implications for the use of opportunity-reduction supervision strategies in offender case management are discussed.

Keywords

probation, parole, case management, opportunity reduction, supervision strategies

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Introduction

Probation and parole supervision consistently manifests itself through two principal strategies: treatment and control (Skeem & Manchak, 2008; Taxman, Shepardson, & Byrne, 2004). The rehabilitation approach addresses the psychological or social roots of offending behavior by adopting a supportive model to incorporate programmes and services that penetrate the elements of criminality. The surveillance and control approach is more focused on observation, the enforcement of rules, and the threat of punishment. Typically, community corrections officers and organizations are more inclined to adopt one of these styles, and many variables have been empirically demonstrated as predictors of the supervision strategies that officers use (Hemmens & Stohr, 2000; Latessa & Smith, 2015; Maahs & Pratt, 2001; West & Seiter, 2004). However, it is not uncommon for some to incorporate both in a *synthetic* model of supervision (Miller, 2015), or for there to be an ambivalence between treatment and control (Worrall & Hoy, 2005).

Both strategies aim to reduce recidivism, although they tackle two different elements of crime: propensity and opportunity. While there is a large body of research that demonstrates how to reduce criminogenic propensity (Andrews & Bonta, 2010), far less attention has been paid to the role of crime opportunities in offender supervision (Schaefer, Cullen, & Eck, 2016). This is a regrettable omission, as even a person with the propensity to commit crime must also have the opportunity necessary to execute the criminal act. Studies in environmental criminology demonstrate that opportunity reduction leads to offending reduction (Bernasco & Block, 2011). Yet within probation and parole practices, the typical approximation of the reduction of crime opportunities is the generic use of deterrence (Cullen & Jonson, 2012; MacKenzie, 2006), comprised of case plans containing vague restrictions and prescriptions designed to scare offenders straight. These practices are not effective in reducing recidivism and may even result in increased reoffending, which calls into question their use in probation and parole supervision (Cullen & Gendreau, 2000; MacKenzie, 2006).

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A growing argument, however, is that when supervision stipulations knife-off *specific* crime opportunities that are *individualized* to each offender and *relevant* to reoffending risk, desistance may result (Miller et al., 2014, 2015; Schaefer et al., 2016). The ‘environmental corrections’ model of probation and parole advocates that supervising officers redesign offenders’ routine activities such that criminogenic settings are avoided and replaced with prosocial influences (Cullen, Eck, & Lowenkamp, 2002; Schaefer et al., 2016). Opportunity-reduction strategies hold promise within community corrections, and research indicates some officers rely on these tactics periodically (Miller, 2012). Yet understanding how officers incorporate these strategies in their case management approach has been largely unexplored. This study examines the nature and frequency of the use of opportunity-reduction strategies amongst probation and parole officers, and whether there are predictive factors that incite the use of this framework over the typical strategies of treatment and control.

The traditional role of community corrections officers

Probation and parole work has been shaped by excessive caseloads (Clear, 1992), limited timeframes and high turnover (Gornik, 2002), and the competing demands of rehabilitation versus deterrence (whereby surveillance and punishment are used as tools for behavioral compliance). Historically, research shows that community corrections officers likely experience role conflict because of the imbalance of treatment and control orientations (Klockars, 1972; West & Seiter, 2004). While this may be the result of an incongruence of guiding philosophies, this job strain may also be a consequence of organizational ideologies (or unclear goals, as the case may be; Clear & Latessa, 1993), or prevailing agency goals such as pragmatism and risk management as the preference over corrective intervention (Rhine, 1997). More recently, studies support the notion that probation and parole officers tend to rely on surveillance *and* treatment tactics in their offender supervision (Fulton, Stichman, Travis, & Latessa, 1997; Miller, 2015; Skeem & Manchak, 2008), although there are often predictors of which strategy is preferred among individual officers.

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Probation and parole officers may feel strained by trying to meet the seemingly incompatible demands of treatment and control, and sometimes choose one strategy to the detriment of the other. In addition to this job strain produced by competing ideological orientations, many officers resolve to act as passive case managers and service brokers simply trying to meet the demand of rising caseloads and diminishing resources (Solomon et al., 2008; Turner, 2010). This condition has led to an atmosphere in which community corrections practices are largely atheoretical (Schaefer et al., 2016), with one former probation and parole officer lamenting that supervising offenders “had no theoretical basis,” such that understanding “*why* the clients got in trouble was not the main concern” (Fuller, 2012, pp. 20-21). This sentiment mirrors the research of Bonta and colleagues (2008) which demonstrates that officers do not routinely address offenders’ criminogenic needs. Other scholars have similarly suggested that probation and parole tools have no inherent value if they are not guided by a theory of how to supervise offenders (Burrell & Gable, 2009), particularly when officers are overcome by bureaucratic obligations (Latessa, 1999; Solomon et al., 2005). As a result of these findings, there have been suggestions that current probation and parole practices are concerned with administration and compliance rather than intervention. Accordingly, the effectiveness of probation and parole supervision has been compromised (Schaefer et al., 2016), leaving many scholars calling for a new narrative to organize community corrections strategies (Rhine, 1997; Taxman, 2008).

A shift towards opportunity reduction

In response to these concerns, several philosophies and programs have emerged that attempt to reorient probation and parole, many arguing for a return of ‘community’ to community corrections (more largely, this reflects movements to return the role of ‘community’ to community crime prevention (Crawford, 1997) and the role of contextual considerations in hot spots and problem-oriented policing (Weisburd, 2012; Weisburd & Braga, 2006)). The impetus for this conceptual redesign is that offenders are supervised in their home

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communities, which represent unique risks and resources that contribute to reoffending outcomes. Newer models of supervision employ partnerships with police and local organizations, increased reliance on informal social control agents, place-based supervision, and prosocial activities that routinize desistance (Solomon et al., 2008; Taxman, 2008). These tactics have called attention to the importance of *context* in the risks for relapse that offenders encounter. Many of these contemporary models of supervision aim to minimize offenders' exposure to crime opportunities (and reduce the likelihood that supervisees will capitalize on the chances to commit crime that they do encounter). This movement toward opportunity-reduction is both complementary and distinct from the two traditional probation and parole supervision strategies of treatment and control (Schaefer et al., 2016).

The clearest articulation of this reorientation is seen in 'environmental corrections', which outlines "opportunity will be curtailed not only by threats of formal punishment for non-compliance, but more importantly by problem-solving officers who seek to expand informal social control over offenders, to increase the effort offenders must exert to access crime opportunities, and to work with offenders to restructure and fill their lives with prosocial routines" (Cullen et al., 2002, p. 35). This opportunity-reduction approach to offender supervision is not revolutionary, however it does include novel applications of environmental criminological theory to probation and parole practices which, until recently, have been ignored (Schaefer et al., 2016). Opportunity-reduction strategies in community corrections borrow the insights of routine activity theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979) and crime pattern theory (Brantingham & Brantingham, 2008), assisting supervisors to examine how offenders come into contact with chances to commit crime (Clarke & Eck, 2005). From here, practitioners can develop case plans and officer-offender meeting tactics that help offenders to avoid criminogenic settings (Schaefer et al., 2016).

While opportunity reduction is ordinarily observed in crime prevention research (see, for example, Felson, 2006; Reynald, 2009; Wilcox, Madensen, & Tillyer, 2007), it is becoming

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more commonplace for specific elements of these principles to be integrated as a component of probation and parole strategies (particularly in the United States and the United Kingdom). For example, in their studies of opportunity-focused supervision, Miller (2012) and colleagues (2015) found that techniques focused on reducing opportunities for crime were employed by officers and aimed specifically to engage probationers in an effort to deter them from frequenting certain locations or participating in activities that may foster criminality. Efforts to involve offender handlers (such as members of the probationer's family or social circle) were frequently used, while the involvement of the community and police as potential managers were less common (Miller, 2012, 2015). Cullen and colleagues (2002) suggest that applying Felson's (1995) strategy of utilizing crime controllers as informal social control agents may be beneficial in the context of community corrections, by recruiting offender handlers (who help to reroute probationers and parolees away from risky settings), and target guardians and place managers (who help to protect and control remaining risks for reoffending in the community). Indeed, preliminary evidence from the United States suggests probation and parole officers use opportunity-reduction strategies somewhat commonly, although they are used independently of other supervision tactics and tend to emphasize the incorporation of crime controllers to dissuade offenders from crime opportunities (Miller, 2012).

Engaging crime controllers as an opportunity-reduction strategy

In line with the opportunity-reduction strategies outlined by Schaefer and colleagues (2016), officers have increasingly engaged offender and community stakeholders in an effort to enhance desistance amongst probationers and parolees. This is beneficial for two reasons. Firstly, community-supervised offenders are less likely to reoffend if their connection to the community and their family are strong (Schaefer et al., 2016). Secondly, the use of family, community, and police as guardians, handlers, and managers may be effective in preventing probationers and parolees from accessing or acting on crime opportunities (Crawford, 1997; Felson & Boba, 2010; Solomon et al., 2008; Taxman, 2008).

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Involving other agents of social control can act as a deterrent to steer potential recidivists away from crime opportunities, particularly those individuals in the offender's close social circle (Miller, 2012; Piquero, 2003). The desire to commit crime can be reduced if an individual's social bonds and attachment to social conventions and societal rules is strong (Hirschi, 1969). When individuals feel connected to elements of social order, the likelihood of crime commission is reduced (Laub & Sampson, 2003). As such, probation and parole officers could benefit from methods that engage individuals who can perform both an informal and formal social control role. The involvement of these third parties acts not only as a positive influence, but also as another tool of offender management as the probationer or parolee navigates his or her way towards prosocial behaviors (Miller et al., 2014).

The current study

Despite these promising findings that highlight the applicability of environmental criminological theories to probation and parole supervision, the use of opportunity-reduction tactics in community corrections practices is informal and eclectic, and it is unknown how frequently these practices occur. Consequently, this project explores the extent to which probation and parole officers rely on opportunity-reduction supervision compared to the more traditional strategies of surveillance and rehabilitation. We also examine the predictors of the use of opportunity-reduction tactics and attempt to isolate the variable manifestations of how these strategies are used by probation and parole staff. This study employs data from a survey of probation and parole officers in Australia, which is not immune to the same treatment versus control debate seen elsewhere. Much like the trends in community corrections strategies observed in the United States and the United Kingdom, Australian community supervision practices have been summarized as failing to address offenders' criminogenic needs and focusing on compliance and case management above intervention (Parole System Review, 2016). Accordingly, further research is needed into the use and predictors of opportunity-reduction supervision strategies.

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In this study, we speculate that in addition to an officer's personal characteristics, two groups of variables will significantly influence the use of certain supervision strategies. This project follows the research which identifies that factors related to officer background (such as age, gender, and education), officer experience (such as tenure and position), and officer dispositions (such as occupational stress, political orientation, and attitudes and values) impact the strategies that officers employ (Hemmens & Stohr, 2000; Latessa & Smith, 2015; Maahs & Pratt, 2001; West & Seiter, 2004).

First, we anticipate that job burnout and stress will be important (see, for example, White et al., 2015; Bangasser, 2010), with opportunity-reduction strategies being utilized by officers reporting less occupational fatigue. Specifically, similar to findings of the impact of tenure on supervision style, we envision that greater degrees of professional strain may lead to the adoption of surveillance-oriented strategies, while increased professional satisfaction may lead to greater treatment and problem-solving orientations. For this reason, we are speculating that opportunity-reduction tactics, as an innovative strategy, will be more commonly used among officers with lower degrees of burnout. Given the amount of resourcefulness officers may need to incorporate the offenders' environmental risks into case plan stipulations, in addition to the initiative officers would have to take to employ these strategies that are largely personalised to the supervisor and not endorsed by broader agencies (Schaefer et al., 2016), we estimate that the use of opportunity-reduction tactics is likely to be higher among staff that are less strained by their job.

Second, we envision that the individual's professional orientation, including how they subjectively view their role and how they view offenders, will impact which strategy they tend to employ (see, for example, Ricks & Loudon, 2015; Steiner et al., 2011; Willits et al., 2010). Specifically, we estimate that (similar to the prediction that less burnout will lead to greater use of opportunity-reduction tactics), more optimistic and change-oriented attitudes will be linked to the use of opportunity-reduction supervision strategies. More generally,

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following from studies that specify the relationship between officer attitudes and supervision styles, we predict that more punitive role orientations and more pessimistic attitudes about offenders will lead to greater uses of surveillance tactics, while more lenient orientations and optimistic perceptions about supervisees will produce an increased reliance on propensity- and opportunity-reduction strategies. In essence, we envision that officers that favour compliance and enforcement or that have more negative perceptions of offenders will be more likely to use surveillance strategies in their work; contrarily, officers that are oriented toward intervention and are hopeful about offenders' prospects for change may be more inclined to use rehabilitation focused techniques or opportunity-reduction strategies (the latter of which requiring the identification and alteration or control of environmental risks). Our methods for investigating these propositions follow.

Method

The current project utilizes self-report survey data from probation and parole officers in a large metropolitan area in Australia. The survey was hosted online and was self-administered by respondents via a hyperlink within an email invitation. All case management staff in the region were sent an invitation to participate (approximately 125 individuals), with 75 usable surveys completed for an estimated response rate of 60%. Following the participation information and informed consent processes, survey respondents were presented with six sections of questions related to supervision strategies, role orientations, job satisfaction and stress, use of case management tools, attitudes toward offenders, and reporter characteristics. Descriptions of each of the measures used in our analyses are reported below.

Supervision strategies

Our primary analyses include three dependent variables, measuring the three forms of supervision strategies probation and parole officers may use: surveillance, rehabilitation, and opportunity-reduction. The use of these supervision strategies was measured using the scales developed by Miller (2012). Respondents were asked to indicate how frequently they rely on

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particular strategies (from 0 = never to 6 = always). The *surveillance strategies scale* includes five items as a mean scale ($\alpha = .868$, $R = 2.40-6.00$, $M = 4.35$, $SD = .83$) with tactics such as *remind probationer/parolee of legal consequences of behaviours* included in the scale. The *rehabilitation strategies scale* is comprised of five items as a mean scale ($\alpha = .898$, $R = 3.40-6.00$, $M = 4.84$, $SD = .63$) with strategies such as *connect probationers/parolees with appropriate therapeutic services* included. The *opportunity-reduction strategies scale* includes eight items in a mean scale ($\alpha = .874$, $R = 1.13-5.75$, $M = 3.55$, $SD = 1.19$) with prompts such as *help probationers/parolees recognize and avoid places where they are at risk of offending*. Higher scores on each scale represent a greater use of that type of strategy. The spread of the frequency of use for each of these supervision strategies among this study sample can be seen in Figure 1.

Respondent characteristics

To investigate the influence of the officer's individual characteristics on their supervision strategies, we included several demographic and employment variables in our analyses. *Gender* was measured as a dichotomous variable (0 = female, 1 = male), with the majority being female (86%). *Age* was reported in years ($R = 22-64$, $M = 33.76$, $SD = 10.86$). *Position* categorised respondents' current professional role, which were collapsed into the categories of case manager (29.40%), senior case manager (43.10%), and other roles (such as program delivery, services officer, or management; 27.50%). *Length of employment* represented the period of time each participant has been in probation and parole case management work, in months ($R = 0-204$, $M = 66.83$, $SD = 58.59$). *Caseload size* prompted participants to indicate the average number of offenders that they supervise ($R = 0-100$, $M = 49.89$, $SD = 28.61$). *Political affiliation* was categorized as Liberal-National Coalition (conservative ideology; 22.7%), Australian Labor Party (progressive ideology; 47.7%), and other alliances (29.5%). We also included measures to reflect the staff member's familiarity with the area in which their supervised offenders live, given the importance of the officer

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being aware of the crime opportunities for their supervisees. *Kilometres between home and office* represents the distance travelled ($R = 3-65$, $M = 22.45$, $SD = 16.20$). *Length of area residence* reflects the number of years the participant has lived in the region ($R = 1-48$, $M = 20.59$, $SD = 12.37$).

Job burnout and stress

Given the links between probation and parole officers attitudes and agency atmosphere with officers' styles of supervision (Latessa & Smith, 2015), we speculated that the amount of professional strain or satisfaction the individual experiences may impact his or her selection of supervision strategy. To investigate this association, we include three measures of job burnout and stress using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). The inventory is comprised of 22 items that ask respondents to indicate how often they experience a particular feeling as a consequence of their current job (ranging from 0 = never to 6 = everyday). The items are organized around three different dimensions, each of which has been aggregated into a mean scale for our analyses. The *depersonalization scale* includes five items ($\alpha = .705$, $R = 0-3.60$, $M = 1.20$, $SD = .87$), incorporating statements such as *I feel I treat some offenders as if they were impersonal objects*. The *emotional exhaustion scale* includes nine items ($\alpha = .881$, $R = .11-5.00$, $M = 2.01$, $SD = 1.06$) with prompts like *working with offenders all day is a real strain for me*. Higher scores on both scales represent greater degrees of job burnout and stress. The *personal accomplishment scale* includes eight items ($\alpha = .738$, $R = 2.25-5.75$, $M = 4.33$, $SD = .86$) and provides assertions such as *I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job*. Higher scores on this scale reflect less professional burnout and stress.

Professional orientations

Comparable to previous research, we also speculated that the officer's professional orientation would influence their selection of supervision strategies. To analyse these relationships, we included measures of the respondent's subjective role and his or her

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attitudes toward the offenders supervised. Following the survey methodology used by Fulton et al. (1997), respondents were provided with ten-point semantic differentials that measured their reactions to paired concepts that have opposing meanings (see Heise, 1971; Mueller, 1986). For instance, participants responded to the statement, *Your primary function as a case manager is* combined with two anchors, 'enforcement' versus 'intervention'. Questions included reverse-coding to discourage response sets. The *subjective role scale* included five of these items which were combined into a summative scale ($\alpha = .773$, $R = 11-45$, $M = 25.03$, $SD = 7.41$). Lower scores reflect a more liberal role orientation, while higher values indicate more conservative approaches to supervision. A score that approximates the true mean ($M = 25$) symbolizes a balanced orientation between the two role anchors.

The *attitudes toward offenders scale* measures officers' perceptions about the offenders under their supervision. The questions from the Attitudes toward Prisoners scale (Melvin, Gramling, & Gardner, 1985) were modified to reflect probation and parole work, such as by replacing the term 'offender' when 'prisoner' was originally used. Three of the questions from the original scale were discarded because they were too prison-specific. The final scale included 33 items, which asked participants to rate their agreement (0 = strongly disagree through 6 = strongly agree) with a summary statement about probationers and parolees, such as *offenders are different from most people*, and, *most offenders are victims of circumstance and deserve to be helped*. Approximately half of the questions were reverse-coded during presentation. The items were internally consistent and collapsed into an additive scale ($\alpha = .797$, $R = 90-173$, $M = 130.68$, $SD = 18.46$). Lower values reflect negative attitudes that offenders are deviants deserving of punishment, while higher values represent the attitude that offenders are capable of positive change.

Results

In looking at the frequency of use of each of three forms of supervision strategies (scales for surveillance, rehabilitation, and opportunity-reduction), the distributions are

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approximately normal with relatively low levels of skewness (all $< -.29$) and kurtosis (all $< -.57$). The spread of each strategy scale can be seen in Figure 1. The spread for the rehabilitation strategy scale was narrower than the other scales ($R = 2.60$), with most officers indicating that they use these strategies quite regularly ($M = 4.84$). The spread for the opportunity-reduction scale was widest, with a range of 4.63, indicating considerable variation in the use of these techniques. The items within this scale also had the greatest proportion of respondents indicating they never use particular tactics. For example, 22% of participants indicated that they never “seek support from community members to help offenders avoid risky places and activities.” Yet other opportunity-reduction strategies were more popular, reflected in the 38% of respondents reporting that they always “help offenders recognize and avoid activities that put them at risk of reoffending.” The spread of the frequency of use of each opportunity-reduction supervision strategy can be seen in Figure 2.

To examine the predictors of the use of these categorized supervision strategies, we computed three multivariate linear regressions using respondent characteristics, job burnout and stress, and professional orientations (see Table 1; unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors reported in parentheses). Model 1 uses the surveillance strategy scale as the dependent variable. None of the respondent characteristics were influential (although the coefficient for participants identifying their political affiliation as more liberal neared significance, $\beta = .610, p = .056$), nor were either of the professional orientation measures. However, two of the scales measuring job burnout and stress were predictive of the use of surveillance supervision strategies. Probation and parole officers who reported greater degrees of depersonalization of offenders used surveillance tactics less frequently ($\beta = -.373, p < .05$), while higher levels of emotional exhaustion were associated with greater use of surveillance strategies ($\beta = .243, p < .05$).

Model 2 predicts officers' use of rehabilitation-focused supervision strategies, and again, none of the respondent characteristics or professional orientation variables were

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significantly predictive. The only variable to reach significance was the personal accomplishment scale, with a heightened sense of accomplishment in the job leading to a greater use of treatment-oriented tactics during offender supervision ($\beta = .365, p < .001$). The bivariate correlation between these two variables is strong ($r = .496, p < .001$). The other two reflectors of job burnout and stress, which were significant in Model 1, failed to predict the use of rehabilitation strategies.

Model 3 explores the predictors of probation and parole officers' utilization of opportunity-reduction strategies for supervising offenders. Again, none of the respondent characteristics were influential. Levels of depersonalization of clients was negatively associated with the use of opportunity-focused tactics ($\beta = -.460, p < .05$), while the degree of personal accomplishment was positively predictive ($\beta = .435, p < .05$). These two coefficients maintained the direction of influence as seen in Models 1 and 2, respectively, although the magnitude of the relationship increased for both variables. The subjective role scale was again nonsignificant, although the officers' summary attitudes toward offenders predicted the use of opportunity-reduction strategies ($\beta = -.025, p < .01$). Interestingly, this relationship indicates that more pessimistic attitudes about offenders lead to a greater use of opportunity-focused supervision techniques. Some of the item-wise correlations were particularly curious here, such as the *negative* association between the use of opportunity-reduction supervision strategies and the belief that "Offenders choose to commit crime" (Spearman's $\rho = -.354, p < .01$). These findings are explored further in the discussion section.

Particularly given the overwhelming number of non-findings, we wondered whether some of our independent variables may be more strongly related to individual tactics within the opportunity-reduction strategy scale (see Figure 2). Summarily, few predictors were significant, and of those that were, they generally mirrored the results displayed in Table 1; however, two notable exceptions emerged. We isolated those opportunity-focused strategies that involve the officer soliciting third parties to help the offender to *avoid* crime

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opportunities ($k = 3$, $\alpha = .761$) versus those where third parties *monitor* the offender's activities ($k = 3$, $\alpha = .689$). First, the number of kilometers between the officer's home and office was positively correlated with the use of both opportunity-avoidance strategies ($r = .339$, $p < .05$) and opportunity-monitoring strategies ($r = .300$, $p < .05$). In other words, the further the officer lives from the community in which they work, the more likely they are to engage in specific opportunity-reduction tactics involving the recruitment of crime controllers. Second, the subjective role scale was negatively associated with the use of opportunity-avoidance strategies ($\beta = -.076$, $p < .05$), whereby more conservative role orientations were associated with the less frequent use of third parties to help offenders avoid crime opportunities. This indicates that officers who exhibit a more traditional, enforcement-focused approach to supervision tend not to use additional agents of social control.

One of the most important findings from our analyses is that not much is known about why probation and parole officers utilize the supervision strategies that they do. Although none of the respondent characteristics such as personal demographics and employment factors were relevant, this may highlight that other more pertinent influences are at play, such as organizational ideology or professional training (not measured here). Importantly, the job burnout and stress variables were each predictive of the use of different supervision strategies, and officers' attitudes about probationers and parolees influenced the use of opportunity-reduction tactics. We discuss some possible explanations for these results below.

Discussion

Several emerging studies have begun to demonstrate that probation and parole officers rely on opportunity-reduction strategies in their supervision of offenders (Miller, 2012, 2015; Miller et al., 2014, 2015). However, the tactic of steering offenders away from specific, individualized crime opportunities has not been an organising framework for practice until recently (Schaefer et al., 2016). While Miller (2012) discovered opportunity-focused strategies are relatively common in community corrections work, further understanding is

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needed regarding the individual catalysts for the use of opportunity-reduction supervision practices, particularly as they may differ from adopting surveillance- or rehabilitation-oriented strategies. These predictors are timely for us to understand. Probation and parole officers exercise discretion in how they choose to manage cases, so understanding the factors that influence adopted supervision strategies is important. This study sought to explore the predictors of the use of opportunity-reduction supervision using individual officer characteristics, job burnout and stress, and professional orientations. Relying on self-report survey data from community corrections officers, this study is the first to examine the use of opportunity-reduction strategies in the Australian context, as well as the first to quantitatively explore the impact of community corrections job stress on adopting these tactics.

Comparable to the findings of Miller (2012), our results demonstrate opportunity-reduction supervision practices are regularly utilized, but are used less frequently than traditional tactics that rely on surveillance and rehabilitation (see Figure 1). However, by examining the individual strategies that comprise the opportunity-reduction scale, there are clear differences in trends of usage (see Figure 2). The most frequently incorporated tactics involve the officer working directly with the probationer or parolee (i.e., helping the offender to recognize and avoid places and activities that place him or her at risk of reoffending). The least frequently used tactics involve the incorporation of community members (who help offenders to recognize and avoid risky places and activities, and who help to supervise and monitor the daily activities of offenders). This finding mirrors those in Miller's (2012) study, whereby place-based opportunity reduction was a more commonly employed tactic than those that relied on third parties. Regarding the predictors of the use of opportunity-reduction supervision strategies compared to other categories of tactics, we had two specific predictions.

First, we estimated that job burnout and stress would influence an officer's use of supervision strategies. We speculated that greater professional strain would lead to more frequent use of surveillance tactics, while enhanced job satisfaction would promote the use of

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rehabilitation and opportunity-reduction strategies. This prediction was partially supported. Among the three elements of job burnout and stress (depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and personal accomplishment) and the three categories of supervisory strategies (surveillance, rehabilitation, and opportunity-reduction), an intriguing pattern emerged (see Table 1). Greater degrees of depersonalization led to less usage of surveillance strategies, while increased emotional exhaustion predicted greater usage of these tactics. However, although the depersonalization scale was also negatively associated with the usage of opportunity-reduction strategies, here emotional exhaustion was nonsignificant but personal accomplishment was strongly and positively predictive.

These findings suggest that the development of specific rules (embodied in both the surveillance and opportunity-reduction approaches) is less likely when officers depersonalize offenders. Contrarily, when offenders are seen as individuals, probation and parole staff may be more inclined to implement individualized case plan conditions. This individualization, however, can result in a greater policing orientation (rules must be monitored and enforced, after all) or a greater problem-solving orientation (outsourcing supervision to informal social control agents, for example). Combined with the other significant variables, then, it may be that officers who are also emotionally exhausted may adopt the harsher surveillance tactics, while a sense of personal accomplishment (perhaps spawned by the creativity an opportunity-reduction approach requires) leads to opportunity-focused tactics. As predicted, personal accomplishment likewise led to greater use of rehabilitative strategies. As much of the work on job burnout and stress amongst probation and parole case management work has focused on work-related stressors not integral to offender supervision (White et al., 2005), these findings offer additional insight into the implications of perceptions of offenders on the choice of supervision strategies by case managers (Lewis, Lewis, & Garby, 2013).

The unique combinations of these predictors on the three groups of supervision strategies suggests that job burnout and stress is important, but in quite different ways.

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Indeed, just as the sources of job stress in probation and parole work are diverse (Patterson, 1992), we should likewise expect that their impacts will vary as well. Dowden and Tellier (2004) found a weighted mean effect size of .13 for the impact of role conflict and job stress among (institutional) corrections officers across the studies included in their meta-analysis (this raises to .21 with one outlier excluded). However, they point out that problems associated with professional role orientations are varied and not clearly defined (see Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000). Several studies demonstrate that role conflict may lead to job burnout and stress (Gayman & Bradley, 2013; White et al., 2005; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1985). Allard, Wortley, and Stewart (2003) discovered that the preference for a particular supervision strategy is not necessarily associated with role conflict. Yet Holgate and Clegg (1991) discovered that role conflict leads to greater emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, while role ambiguity contributes to a lack of personal accomplishment. This mirrors the findings of a more recent study by Gayman and Bradley (2013), thereby further highlighting the potentially harmful effects of role conflict, emotional exhaustion and overall work stressors on the capacity of probation and parole officers.

Related to these findings, then, we had estimated that conflict or ambiguity in an officer's role may lead to differences in the supervision strategies adopted. Our second prediction was that professional orientation would influence supervision strategy usage, whereby punitive role orientation and pessimistic attitudes about offenders would promote surveillance tactics, while more lenient orientations and optimistic attitudes would encourage the use of rehabilitation and opportunity-reduction strategies. This was not supported. The subjective role scale, which aims to place officers on a continuum from punitive to lenient orientations, was not predictive of the use of any of the three categories of supervision strategies (although more conservative roles were negatively associated with opportunity-avoidance tactics). The *attitudes toward offenders* scale was not predictive of surveillance or rehabilitation strategy usage, but did predict the use of opportunity-reduction tactics, although

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in the opposite direction than estimated. Officers that have more pessimistic attitudes about their supervisees are more likely to incorporate opportunity-reduction strategies. Particularly when looking at some of the item-wise correlations between opportunity-reduction strategies and attitudes about probationers and parolees, it appears officers may be relying on these strategies not as a helping mechanism (aimed at encouraging prosocial behavior and reintegration), but as an extension of their authority as enforcers of rules. Thus, rather than recruiting additional crime controllers (such as the offender's family) as people who can promote and solidify desistance, probation and parole officers may actually be doing so to enhance their reach of supervision.

These findings draw further attention to the notion that we do not yet understand how and why probation and parole staff incorporate opportunity-reduction strategies into their supervision of offenders. Respondents in one study reported the sentiment that there is no direct relationship between supervisory style and recidivism, although the case management tactics they use change depending on the nature of the offender and his or her offence (Seiter & West, 2003; West & Seiter, 2004). We do know, in fact, that supervision strategies are very much associated with recidivism outcomes (Cullen & Gendreau, 2000), and that the use of opportunity-reduction tactics with probationers and parolees should be effective in theory (Schaefer et al., 2016). Opportunity-reduction supervision strategies are perhaps being used as an amalgamated style of surveillance and treatment. As evidence begins to amass that community corrections officers are using these strategies somewhat regularly (Miller, 2012, 2015), and opportunity-reduction models of probation and parole are popularising (Schaefer et al., 2016), further research is clearly needed to document the catalysts and impacts of opportunity-reduction approaches to offender supervision.

This call for additional research is further highlighted by the limitations of the current project. First, the use of self-report survey data can be problematic, and poor reflection or dishonesty among staff is possible. Next, the sample size is somewhat small, and many of the

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nonsignificant findings may have reached significance with a greater number of participants. Third, many factors that may be influential (such as organizational ideology and staff training) were not measured here. Additionally, because we relied on cross-sectional data, the direction of causation is perhaps not clear. Although there were some strong associations between job burnout and stress and the use of different categories of supervision strategies, it is possible that the direction of influence is opposite of what we envisioned (or is even reciprocal). Perhaps the adoption of surveillance strategies in the first instance leads to greater emotional exhaustion, for example, rather than the other way around. Finally, the probation and parole officers in the jurisdiction studied here supervise offenders on all types of orders (which includes all offence types, supervision conditions, and levels of risk). Thus, given the amount of diversity in the offenders on an officer's caseload, staff may rely on many different types of strategies for reasons unmoved by our independent variables.

With these limitations in mind, the present study makes important contributions. First, overwhelmingly, the respondent characteristics were uninfluential in predicting the use of supervision strategies. This may suggest a strong organizational ideology that mutes individual differences (Newman & Nutley, 2003), and requires further investigation. Second, job burnout and stress variables were highly predictive of different supervision strategy usage. The finding that less depersonalization and greater personal accomplishment leads to higher frequencies of opportunity-reduction tactics is a novel insight about probation and parole work. This is particularly salient given depersonalization also mattered for surveillance strategy usage but in combination with emotional fatigue. Moreover, personal accomplishment predicted both rehabilitation and opportunity-reduction strategies. With these results combined, it appears opportunity-oriented tactics may be being utilized as a merger for treatment and control. Third, the negative association between opportunity-reduction supervision and attitudes toward offenders is a notable discovery. While not much is understood about the motivations for using opportunity-reduction supervision techniques,

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the finding that more pessimistic attitudes about probationers and parolees leads to increased recruitment of crime controllers points us in an important research direction. This result suggests opportunity-reduction supervision strategies may be a problem-solving approach to offender supervision, but in the sense that extends the supervisory capacities of community corrections officers perhaps more than promoting desistance.

Conclusion

There is a growing body of literature that highlights the increasing use of opportunity-reduction case management strategies, and the associated outcomes of these approaches (Miller, 2012; Miller et al., 2014). Despite the promise of opportunity-reduction strategies, they are yet to be utilized uniformly within probation and parole. As such, understanding the factors that predict their use in case management is timely. This study has highlighted some factors that predict their use by case managers, to foreground the circumstances that may be conducive to utilising this strategy in regular practice. The findings of the present study show that despite their inconsistent application by case managers, the motivations for their use is influenced positively by a sense of accomplishment and negatively by stress and burnout. As further research uncovers the regular but unregulated use of opportunity-reduction strategies in offender supervision, and more frameworks for probation and parole rely on the insights of environmental criminology, additional examinations into the goals of community corrections officers using these tactics will be required.

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