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ANOTHER DAY IN THE OIL PATCH: NARRATIVES OF PROBATION WORK IN
MONTANA

By

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B.A., University of Montana, Missoula, MT, 2014

Thesis

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Another Day in the Oil Patch: Narratives of Probation Work in Montana

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Job stress has been linked to several negative outcomes for workers in human service professions. Despite a wealth of knowledge on job stress in social service occupations, relatively little is known about the job stress of probation officers. In eastern Montana and western North Dakota's Bakken region, a recent oil extraction boom and bust cycle has caused rapid socio-demographic change. Researchers have found that oil extraction in the Bakken region has led to several challenges for social service and police agencies in the area. In this study, I use qualitative interview methods to examine the stresses and challenges involved in probation work on the Bakken. How do probation officers working on the Bakken perceive and respond to job stress? How does emotional labor influence the workplace experiences of these officers? The findings of this study indicate that rapid socio-demographic change in the Bakken region has created several unique challenges for probation officers in the area. Additionally, probation officers working in the Bakken face an array of structural and personal job stressors on a daily basis. Despite these active stressors, the officers in my sample do not experience burnout or turnover intention, and instead have positive emotions about their jobs. Specifically, probation officers in my sample utilize self-oriented emotional labor techniques to cope with job stress and manage their emotions about their work.

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Probation is used to provide a community-based setting for the supervision and rehabilitation of sentenced offenders. Probation officers carry out two functions within the community: (1) to protect the community and (2) to assist probationers in becoming productive and law abiding citizens (Stohr and Walsh 2016:120). In order to accomplish these goals, probation officers must play a dual role between social work and law enforcement. This dual role allows them to tailor supervision to each offender's individual needs. Supervision includes office visits, home visits, and other contacts with family members, friends, treatment providers, and employers of offenders. The nature of the job brings probation officers into close contact with many different individuals on a daily basis. For this reason, probation has commonly been referred to as "the people business." Probation is used extensively in the criminal justice system, with over half of adults in the correctional population on probation (Kaeble et al. 2015a). Despite the widespread use of probation, probation is relatively under-studied (Whitehead and Lindquist 1985).

In eastern Montana and western North Dakota's Bakken region, rapid socio-demographic change has occurred due to an oil extraction boom and bust cycle. Oil extraction booms have been shown to increase strain on human service agencies in boom communities. Socio-demographic change within boomtowns often includes a population increase, a large influx of a diverse and transient workforce, and a high rate of population turnover (Broadway 2000; Carrington, Hogg, and McIntosh 2011; Ruddell 2011). In the Bakken, this change has created several unique challenges for both social service and law enforcement agencies (Weber, Geigle, and Barkdull 2014; Archbold, Dahle, and Jordan 2014; Dahle and Archbold 2015). Because probation work involves a dual role between law enforcement and social work, rapid socio-

demographic change may also produce significant challenges for probation officers working in this area.

One possible challenge resulting from rapid socio-demographic change is job stress. Job stress often has serious consequences for workers. Over time, job stress may lead to burnout, which is a syndrome that occurs commonly among individuals who perform “people work” (Maslach 1982:2). Burnout has heavy costs for workers, ranging from decreased job performance to poor physical and psychological health (Maslach 1982; Slate, Wells, and Johnson 2003). The costs of job stress and burnout also extend beyond negative consequences for workers. When workers experience burnout, they may provide lower quality of care for clients (Maslach 1982). In addition, burnout may cause some workers to experience turnover intention, or a desire to leave his or her position. Turnover is a serious problem that has heavy costs to the organization as a whole, causing increased strain on remaining employees, as well as large monetary costs associated with replacing former workers (Lambert 2001; Knight, Becan, and Flynn 2012).

Considering the widespread use of probation in the United States, it is clear that probation officers play a large role in the correctional system as well as in the lives of many American adults. In many “people” professions, the occupational experiences of workers are directly linked to client outcomes (Maslach 1982). Thus, in order to better understand the outcomes for offenders on probation, it is important to first examine the ways in which probation officers experience their jobs.

Conducting research on probation officers working on the Bakken is necessary for understanding the occupational experiences of probation officers. Further, this research may provide insight into the effect of rapid socio-demographic change and increased societal strain on

probation work. In this study, I utilize qualitative interview data to describe the workplace experiences of probation officers working in the Bakken region. Specifically, I examine the ways in which probation officers working on the Bakken perceive and respond to job stress, as well as the role of emotional labor in the jobs of probation officers in Eastern Montana.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to capture the complexity of this issue, I draw upon four very different literatures. I first provide an overview of the probation profession and what this work entails. Next, I present an overview of the Bakken oil boom and its consequences for communities in this area. Then, I discuss the issue of job stress, burnout, and turnover. Finally, I discuss the literature on emotional labor in interactive occupations.

The Probation Profession

The use of probation in the United States is extensive. Adults on probation constitute over half (56.4%) of the total adult correctional population in the United States (Kaeble et al. 2015a). In 2014, researchers estimated that 1 in 64 American adults were on probation . This equates to a total of 3,846,100 adults on probation in the United States (Kaeble, Maruschak, and Bonczar 2015b). In Montana alone, the Department of Corrections' Probation and Parole Division consists of approximately 215 employees and supervises approximately 8,700 felony offenders (Montana Department of Corrections 2015:2-4).

The Bureau of Justice Statistics defines probation as “a court-ordered period of correctional supervision in the community, generally as an alternative to incarceration” (Kaeble et al. 2015b:2). As this definition highlights, the main goal of probation is to keep offenders in the community, thus alleviating stress on prisons. According to Stohr and Walsh (2016:119), probation benefits society for many reasons: it allows offenders to remain in the community and

contribute to the community's economy, avoids separation of families, keeps offenders from becoming hardened within prison walls, allows offenders to receive counseling and treatment, and is far more cost-effective than imprisonment.

The job duties of probation officers are significantly different from those of other corrections workers. According to the Montana Department of Corrections (2015:2),

Probation and Parole maintains the supervision of offenders in the community to enhance the public safety in the communities of the state of Montana. It employs best practices and professional staff that hold offenders accountable through restorative justice, effective communication and treatment, which inspires the habilitation/rehabilitation of each offender based on their needs.

Probation officers are expected to perform two separate and distinct roles: law enforcement officer and social worker. Probation officers are required to enforce court orders and make arrests, thus placing them in the law enforcement role. They are also required to provide rehabilitative programming and connect offenders with treatment services, thus placing them in the social worker role. Probation officers are required to balance these two distinct roles on a daily basis.

The Bakken Region

In the past decade, western North Dakota and eastern Montana, an area also known as the Bakken region, has experienced significant socio-demographic change. This change is due, in large part, to a boom and bust cycle of oil extraction within the area. Socio-demographic change in the Bakken includes an overall population increase, high population turnover, with individuals moving into and out of the area at a rapid pace (Broadway 2000; Ruddell 2011), and a large influx of workers, particularly young men (Ruddell 2011). In addition, the incoming population in boom areas is often diverse and heterogeneous, which Broadway (2000) suggests is a shock for traditionally homogenous rural communities that are ill-prepared for this community

change. According to Carrington, Hogg, and McIntosh (2011:340) socio-demographic change in boom towns stems from an “increasing reliance on non-resident workforces.” The local workforce cannot alone satisfy the growing need for workers, so boom towns are forced to rely on a transient and non-local workforce.

Strain on Social Services within the Bakken. Resource extraction booms have serious consequences for the community in which the boom is occurring. Perhaps some of the most serious consequences include increased strain on organizations that provide social services within the community. Weber, Geigle, and Barkdull’s (2014) study of North Dakota social service providers revealed that rapid socio-demographic change in the Bakken has led to several challenges for social service organizations in the area. The Bakken oil boom created social challenges such as a lack of affordable housing, shortage of adequate child care and foster homes, and increased instances of domestic violence. This, in turn, has stretched social services thin by creating a greater need for assistance.

Not only is there an increase in social problems on the Bakken, but social service providers find that the solutions to these problems are not always clear. Social service providers on the Bakken have difficulty finding solutions for social problems for two main reasons (Weber et al. 2014). First, “social workers in the oil patch lack the terminology and methodology to quantify boom-related problems and, subsequently, the means to alert policymakers” (Weber et al. 2014:69). The changing social conditions on the Bakken challenge traditional definitions of social problems such as abuse, neglect, and homelessness. For example, social service providers on the Bakken face confusion about how to define homelessness, since many Bakken workers do not have permanent addresses and instead live in mobile trailers or “man camps.” Second, funding for social service providers is not adequate to address the increase in social problems on

the Bakken (Weber et al. 2014:70). This means that even when social service providers are able to identify social problems, they lack the means to fully address these issues.

Crime in Boom Towns. Another social structure that is greatly affected by resource extraction booms is the criminal justice system. Researchers have hypothesized an increase in crime in areas affected by resource extraction booms, and have also provided several theoretical explanations for a boom-crime relationship. One such theory is social disorganization theory. According to Carrington, Hogg, and McIntosh (2011:340-342), the transient workforce within a boom town lacks commitment to the community, and often ushers with it an acute wave of crime. Shaw and McKay's (1942) social disorganization theory posits that poverty, residential mobility, and racial and ethnic diversity lead to a breakdown of social cohesion within communities, which in turn leads to heightened rates of crime. The overall "scale and pace of socio-demographic change" within boom towns "can produce social disorganization and dislocation in communities" (Carrington et al. 2011: 339).

While social disorganization theory provides a plausible explanation for a boom-crime relationship, empirical studies paint a more complicated picture. Crime in boom towns is difficult to track, which makes the empirical study of boom-crime relationships challenging. Researchers face this challenge because rural boom communities sometimes do not collect or report comprehensive and complete crime data (Ruddell et al. 2014). Ruddell and his colleagues (2014) failed to find a statistically-significant relationship between resource extraction and crime in the Bakken. However, they emphasize that this does not definitively disprove a boom-crime relationship, but instead, missing crime data could have had an effect on the results of the study. Thus, there is a need for further research examining the relationship between crime and resource extraction booms.

Regardless of whether or not there is, in fact, increased crime in oil boom communities, researchers have demonstrated that law enforcement agencies in boom communities face significant challenges. In his study of a Canadian boom community, Ruddell (2011) found that during the resource extraction boom, the community's crime rate was three times the national average. Despite the high crime rate, the number of police deployed in this community was well below the national average. Ruddell (2011) argues that rural communities may lack the resources necessary to increase police strength when needed, so resource extraction booms cause added strain on already small police forces.

More recently, researchers have found that the Bakken oil boom has caused several challenges for police agencies in the area. Archbold, Dahle, and Jordan (2014) found that the volume of police calls has drastically increased on the Bakken, leaving short-staffed police agencies to face difficulty with responding to and prioritizing calls. In addition, due to the increased volume of calls and increased workload, police officers on the Bakken believe that they are unable to provide the same quality of service to area residents that they did before the boom (Archbold et al. 2014:404). Overall, rapid population change in the Bakken has caused severe strain on police resources, which sometimes translates into greater stress and burnout for individual police officers (Dahle and Archbold 2015).

There is a demonstrated effect of the Bakken oil boom on both social service agencies (Weber et al. 2014) and law enforcement agencies (Archbold et al. 2014; Dahle and Archbold 2015). Because probation officers' jobs involve a balance of social service and law enforcement, we can expect that resource extraction booms would have an impact on the work that these officers do. To date, however, no research has examined the impact of rapid-sociodemographic change in boom towns on probation work.

Job Stress, Burnout, and Turnover

One of the possible consequences for probation officers in boom towns is job stress. Job stress is a serious issue that can have heavy costs to workers. Researchers have found that one of the consequences of chronic job stress is burnout (Brown 1986; Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter 2001). Burnout is characterized as “a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment” that occurs among workers in human service professions (Maslach 1982:3). The symptoms of burnout include feeling “overextended and depleted of one’s emotional and physical resources,” a lack of self-esteem, and “feelings of incompetence” (Maslach et al. 2001:399).

There are several factors that may play into the development of occupational burnout. Originally, it was thought that burnout arose solely out of the helping relationship between clients and providers (Maslach 1982). Maslach (1982) argued that burnout was most common in occupations such as nursing, law, and other professions which involve a large amount of negative contact with clients. Maslach (1982) stated that negative interactions often occur when workers must deal with “bad” clients. She stated,

Common among the “bad” ones are people who are constantly demanding more care and complaining that what they get is less than they deserve. Others fail to follow instructions on how to care for themselves or seem to foil every attempt to help them. Another “bad” group are people who expect instant cures rather than advice, and who get impatient regarding treatment (Maslach 1982:41).

Burnout was originally theorized to arise from the nature of “people work” itself. However, more recently, researchers have discovered that burnout is also related to heavy workloads, time demands of the job, and role conflict and role ambiguity (Maslach et al. 2001). Moreover, burnout may arise from the structure of the occupational setting. This is especially

true in occupations where workers are not given autonomy or control over their work (Maslach 1982).

Burnout itself has serious consequences. Workers who experience burnout are “unable to deal successfully with the chronic emotional stress of the job, and this failure to cope can be manifested in a number of ways” (Maslach 1978:113). Burnout has several negative consequences for workers. These include poor physical health, poor psychological health, unnecessary risk taking, and family problems such as arguing and an inability to be emotionally available for family members (Maslach 1982). However, the worker is not the only one affected by burnout. When workers develop burnout, their clients may experience a lower quality of service or care. Maslach (1982:78) states that when workers are burned out, “not only is the treatment of service more routinized, but the provider pays less attention to the recipient’s human needs.”

Perhaps most importantly, burnout may cause the worker to develop turnover intention, or a desire to leave his or her position (Tziner et al. 2015). Turnover commonly occurs when a worker experiences burnout, and social and institutional supports in the workplace are lacking (Mor Barak, Nissly, and Levin 2001). Voluntary turnover has adverse effects on the workplace itself (Lambert 2001). For example, Knight, Becan, and Flynn (2012) found that turnover in substance abuse treatment centers had adverse effects on remaining employees, such as increased workload and decreased perception of support in the workplace. Additionally, turnover has large monetary costs for the organization. Lambert (2001) estimated that correctional agencies sometimes spend up to \$20,000 in the hiring and training of new staff. Job stress, burnout, and turnover can have severe consequences for workers, clients, and organizations alike.

Probation Officers and Job Stress. Researchers have identified several structural and institutional causes of probation officer stress. Interviews with members of the American Probation and Parole Association identified three major sources of occupational stress in probation: high caseloads, paperwork, and deadlines (National Institute of Justice 2005). Slate, Wells, and Johnson (2003) also identified low salary, little opportunity for promotion, excessive paperwork, and disappointment with the entire criminal justice system as significant predictors of stress in the field of probation. Many researchers (Whitehead and Lindquist 1985; Brown 1986; Slate et al. 2003) argue that stress in probation work stems from structural problems; thus, they recommend that occupational stress should be addressed with organizational, rather than individual, solutions.

However, job stress in probation work does not only stem from institutional and structural causes. Lewis, Lewis, and Garby (2013) have also identified several individual-level stressors faced by probation officers. They found that experiencing traumatic events, such as offender suicide, violent or sexual recidivism, and being threatened or assaulted on the job were predictors of stress and burnout for probation officers.

Job stress has been linked to several negative outcomes for officers working in probation. Slate, Wells and Johnson (2003) explain that physical stress is an outcome of occupational stress. In addition, Gayman and Bradley's (2013:338) survey of probation officers found that "officers with higher levels of depressive symptoms tended to describe their work environment as particularly negative." They concluded that occupational stress and organizational climate significantly contribute to depression among probation officers.

As noted above, several researchers have documented the causes and consequences of job stress in probation work. Compared to the literature on stress in social service occupations,

however, relatively little is known about probation officer job stress. This is surprising, as a higher percentage of probation officers than police or correctional officers report experiencing job stress (Whitehead and Lindquist 1985) Because of the high prevalence of job stress in probation work, further research in this area is necessary.

Emotional Labor

Another theorized precursor to occupational burnout is emotional labor. Emotional labor is the process involved in managing one's own emotions in the workplace in order to produce a specific response from others, including customers and clients (Hochschild 1983).

The first sociologist to study emotion as a social phenomenon was Arlie Russell Hochschild (1979; 1983). Hochschild (1979) proposed that in everyday life, people perform emotion work, or emotion management. Hochschild (1979:561) referred to "emotion work" as the active process involved in shaping one's own emotions to align with latent feeling rules. Wharton (2009:148-149) defined feeling rules as "societal norms about the appropriate type and amount of feeling that should be experienced in a particular situation." Emotion work occurs when people actively try to evoke or suppress their own emotions in order to accommodate feeling rules in social situations.

Hochschild (1979) explained that there are two aspects of emotion work: surface acting and deep acting. Surface acting mirrors Goffman's (1959:4) presentation of self, in which individuals put on an act in order to "convey an impression to others which it is in his interests to convey." However, Hochschild (1979) contended that surface acting does not cover the full range of techniques that individuals use to manage impressions; therefore, she introduced the concept of deep acting. Deep acting involves a conscious, intentional effort to manage one's own internal emotions in order to adhere to normative feeling rules. Thus, "[deep acting] involves an

attempt to change what is privately felt, while [surface acting] focuses on what is publicly displayed” (Wharton 2009:149).

Since emotion work is a normal part of everyday life, in itself it is not harmful. Emotion work only becomes problematic when it moves from the private realm to the domain of work (Hochschild 1983). When emotion work is performed within the workplace, it is called “emotional labor” (Hochschild 1983). In jobs such as service industry occupations, it is necessary for workers to manage their emotions in order to convey a particular impression, usually in order to please the customer. Employers have capitalized on the ability of workers to manage their emotions, “thereby transforming emotion management into emotional labor as a formal job requirement” (Wharton 2009:149).

Hochschild (1983) argued that emotional labor has several negative consequences for workers, and is in fact, a precursor to burnout. Emotional labor is usually strictly monitored and controlled by management, thus eliminating workers’ control over their own emotions. Hochschild (1983:90) suggested that “emotive dissonance” and stress result when workers are forced to display emotions that might be incongruent with their internal emotions. Emotive dissonance further creates worker alienation and estrangement from self. Finally, Hochschild (1983) argues that emotional labor can cause the worker’s sense of self to become entangled with his or her work identity, leading the worker to “overextend herself into the job and burn out” (Hochschild 1983:189).

The study of emotional labor has expanded significantly since its inception. Contemporary studies of emotional labor have extended beyond the service industry, as in Hochschild’s (1983) original conception. In fact, the field of emotional labor has “gradually expanded to consider interactive work in its broadest sense; this includes

professionals' interactions with clients and coworkers, as well as interactions involved in caring and family work" (Wharton 2009:150). Wharton (2009) emphasizes that this extension has been significant. The inclusion of professionals and other interactive occupations in the emotional labor literature has opened the study to individuals who have much more emotional autonomy than do service workers.

The expansion of emotional labor research calls into question some of Hochschild's (1983) original ideas. Specifically, research on the consequences of emotional labor has produced mixed results. Whereas Hochschild (1983) concentrated primarily on the negative consequences of emotional labor, several researchers have focused on potential positive consequences of emotional labor. For example, Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) found that for social service workers, surface acting is positively related to two components of occupational burnout: emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. However, deep acting did not produce these negative effects, and instead increased workers' feelings of personal accomplishment. While surface acting does, in fact, have harmful consequences for workers, deep acting can actually be a protective factor against occupational burnout. Additionally, in their study of a 911 call center, Shuler and Sypher (2000) found that emotional labor has several positive functions for workers, including providing comic relief from the stressors of their job, providing workers with an adrenaline "fix," and providing workers with a sense of altruism and accomplishment. Because of these functions, some employees seek out emotional labor in their jobs.

These departures from Hochschild's (1983) original theory warrant further research on the ways in which emotional labor is performed and its consequences on interactional occupations. Moreover, while researchers have dedicated much time to examining emotional labor in an assortment of interactive occupations, there has been no research focused specifically

on emotional labor in probation work. Due to the highly interactive nature of probation work, however, emotional labor may be especially useful to understanding the workplace experiences of probation officers.

Current Study

Researchers have extensively examined job stress, burnout, and turnover within social service occupations. However, relatively little is known about the effects of job stress and burnout on probation officers. Additionally, to date, no studies have examined the effects of rapid socio-demographic change on probation officers' occupational experiences. Furthermore, although the literature on emotional labor has expanded to include a wide variety of interactional occupations, no research has specifically focused on emotional labor in probation work.

This study aims to bridge these gaps in the literature by documenting the self-narrated experiences of workplace stress among probation officers in Montana. In doing so, I explain how probation officers on the Bakken perceive and respond to job stress, as well as the influence of emotional labor on the workplace experience of probation officers on the Bakken.

DATA AND METHODS

This study draws from qualitative interviews with probation and parole officers employed with the Montana Department of Corrections, Adult Probation and Parole Division. Since the research population is not considered a vulnerable population, this project was granted expedited approval by the University of Montana's Institutional Review Board (IRB Protocol No. 151-15).

Study Population

The Montana Department of Corrections, Probation and Parole Division is divided into six different geographical regions (Montana Department of Corrections 2015). Each region is supervised by one Regional Administrator and employs several probation and parole officers. In

order to understand the implications of the Bakken oil boom for probation workers, I chose to interview officers a probation region in eastern Montana, which I will refer to as Region East.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling techniques (Ritchie et al. 2014). They were selected for participation in this study if they were currently employed as probation and parole officers in the Montana Department of Corrections. Specifically, participants were chosen if they were stationed in Region East or if they had previously worked in Region East and later transferred to another probation region. Since the goal of this study was to understand the occupational experiences of ground-level probation officers, Regional Administrators were not included in the selection criteria.

I obtained permission to conduct this study from the Administrator of the Montana Department of Corrections, Probation and Parole Division. I then contacted the Regional Administrator of Region East to obtain a list of probation and parole officers currently and formerly stationed in Region East. Each officer was then contacted directly to determine interest in participation and to schedule an interview.

I conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with a total of 11 probation officers. This number constitutes the entire population of probation and parole officers stationed in Region East, as well as several officers who had transferred away from the region.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted over a period of four months (August 2015 through November 2015). Each interview was conducted in-person at the participants' office location. Before each interview, participants signed and were given a copy of a statement of informed consent, as well as a statement of consent to be audiotaped (See Appendix A). The average length of the interviews was 30 minutes.

The officer interviews followed a set interview schedule which consisted of a series of open-ended questions. I utilized two separate interview schedules: one for officers currently stationed in Region East and another for transfer officers (See Appendices B and C). Interview questions remained consistent across each interview schedule. Due to the semi-structured format of the interviews, however, the order and phrasing of interview questions differed slightly across participants. In addition, probes were utilized when necessary in order to elicit additional information from participants.

Coding and Analysis

Once all interviews were complete, I transcribed the interviews, yielding 103 single-spaced, typewritten pages of data. In order to protect the confidentiality of the participants, each participant was assigned a pseudonym and identifying information was deleted from the transcripts before analysis. To further protect the participants' confidentiality, the audiotaped recordings of each interview were destroyed upon transcription.

I utilized NVivo, a qualitative coding program, to analyze and organize the transcribed interview data. I then coded the data into descriptive and interpretive categories (Saenz and Moses 2010).

Descriptive Codes. According to Saenz and Moses (2010:269), descriptive codes do “not require any interpretation or judgment on [the researcher’s] part.” I used descriptive codes to capture background information on each participant and identify meaningful distinctions between the types of officers in my sample. Each participant was assigned a descriptive code related to their current work location. They were coded “Region East officer” if they were currently stationed in Region East, and “transfer officer” if they had previously worked in Region East but were currently stationed in another region. Each participant was also assigned a

descriptive code related to the number of years they had worked as a probation and parole officer in the Montana Department of Corrections. Participants were coded “short-term” if they had been employed with the department for less than two years, “medium-term” if they had worked there for two to four years, and “long-term” if they had worked there for five or more years.

Interpretive Codes. Interpretive codes allow for deeper analysis in order to identify “patterns, themes, and meanings” in the data (Rooks and Penney 2015). I created five interpretive coding categories to capture the day to day occupational experiences of probation work on the Bakken (See Appendix D).

FINDINGS

In their interviews, the officers in my sample described the complexity of their everyday occupational experiences. Several themes emerged from the officer interviews. These themes included officers’ day to day work activities, unique features of working on the Bakken, rewards of working in probation, stressors involved in probation work, and coping strategies the officers use to deal with job stress. In order to provide context for the complexity of probation work on the Bakken, I will briefly discuss the first three themes. However, since the primary focus of this research is how probation officers working on the Bakken perceive and respond to job stress, the latter two themes will be discussed in greater detail below.

The officers in my sample explained that in probation, there is no such thing as a typical day. Their daily work activities vary widely, depending on what situations arise. However, the officers I interviewed told me that their daily routine typically includes working on paperwork, interstate compact requests, presentence investigations, traveling, working with offenders, and a heavy amount of time management and prioritization.

In addition, there are several challenges that the officers in my sample believe are unique to work on the Bakken. According to the officers, one of the most serious issues on the Bakken is widespread economic problems, including a lack of affordable housing and a difficult job market. Economic problems on the Bakken create challenges for officers, as well as the offenders on their caseloads. The officers in my sample also told me that the Bakken oil boom has created supervision challenges such as an increase in crime and a subsequent increase in probation violations, problems with interstate compact transfers, and an increase in work-related travel for offenders. Officers stated that it is difficult to supervise offenders who work in oilfields, as several job sites on the Bakken are across the state border and out of the jurisdiction of Montana state probation and parole officers. The transient workforce in the Bakken also creates transient and unknown caseloads, which makes it difficult for officers to get to know the offenders on their caseloads. Finally, the officers in my sample told me that the Bakken oil boom has led to an increase in certain probation violations, including failure to report, drug and alcohol violations, and crossing state lines without prior approval.

It is clear that the jobs of the officers in my sample are not simple. However, the ways in which they perceive and experience their jobs are even more complex. The officers I spoke to told me that there are both rewards and stressors involved in probation work. They state that probation work is rewarding because it allows them to become a better person, to contribute to community safety, to help victims and offenders alike, and to work together with other professionals in pursuit of positive offender outcomes. Despite the rewards of probation work, the officers I interviewed also spoke at length of the stressors they faced while on the job.

From their interviews, it is apparent that probation officers on the Bakken experience stressors at an institutional level. This is not surprising, as previous research has highlighted the

structural issues facing probation officers (see, for example, Brown 1986; Slate et al. 2003; Finn and Kuck 2005). However, it is also clear that there is a significant personal and emotional element to the way that probation officers in my sample perceive and respond to job stress.

Stressors Involved in Probation Work at a Structural Level

The officers in my sample talked about several aspects of their job that they found stressful. Some stressors are institutional or structural in nature. The institutional and structural stressors facing the officers in my sample include role ambiguity and an inability to keep up with work duties.

Inability to complete work duties. Many officers in my sample stated that they are dissatisfied with their inability to keep up with their workload even when they work long hours. Although they told me that lack of time is a normal part of probation work, they also stated that there are unique issues in the Bakken area that create further time constraints for officers. In this area, there is a large and transient caseload, a large geographical area for officers to cover, high officer turnover, and a heightened number of presentence investigations (PSIs) for officers to complete. In addition, the officers in my sample face intra-role conflict that further complicates their work duties.

Perhaps one of the biggest reasons why Bakken officers have a lack of time to complete their duties is a shortage of probation staff and high officer turnover in Region East. This problem is region-specific, and several of the officers in my sample stated that this is an issue for them. The Bakken oil boom has led to a severely inflated housing market, which in turn has caused housing to become very expensive for those living in the area. Because of a lack of affordable housing for officers working on the Bakken, it is difficult to recruit officers to come to work in the area, and once they are there, it is challenging to get them to stay. When discussing

how the inflated housing market has affected offenders on her caseload, Leslie, a short-term Region East officer, stated,

And the other thing is, you know, we can't hire more staff in our area. Because, well, A. there aren't any positions open right now, but B. even if there were. Housing is crazy expensive. I mean . . . a studio apartment is 1,500 dollars a month. You know, we've got lot rent over there that's 800 dollars a month. Just to park a camper. It's crazy. . . . But, at the same time, they're driving long-term residents out. People that have lived in the area for long, long periods of time just can't take it anymore. Or their landlord said, "Well, you know, your rent's going up from 400 dollars to 1,500 dollars." And then they can't afford it. It's just mind-blowing.

The lack of affordable housing directly affects the work of probation officers on the Bakken. It has led to high turnover and a severe shortage of probation staff in the area. Each probation office in Region East employs just a few probation officers, and only a few of these offices have administrative assistants to "provide valuable support services which [allow] P&P officers to focus on field work" (Montana Department of Corrections 2015:5). The lack of administrative assistants creates further stress for officers. For example, the officers in one Region East office told me that their office formerly employed an administrative assistant. After this individual left the position, however, the Department of Corrections was unable to fill the vacancy. This has left the officers to pick up administrative responsibilities in addition to their own work duties. The shortage of probation officers and administrative assistants places a large burden on the workloads of the officers in my sample.

Region East also consists of a wide geographical area. With very few officers covering such a large area, each officer's workload is very heavy. Brady, a medium-term officer in Region East, told me that even after he transferred to another office, he is still expected to help out at his former office location:

So I transferred, on the basis-- hopeful a job would open here. . . and a week later, it opened, and so everything's hunky dory except for, they still haven't hired people in [the

town I was working in before], so. . . I go help as needed. Now I'll be heading back again, so my frustration and anxiety is starting to build again.

When there is a shortage of officers, each officer has a very large caseload. Officers in my sample stated that sometimes, their caseloads consist of upwards of 100 offenders. In addition, officers like Brady are sometimes forced to cover extra geographical area in order to help other offices that may be facing a shortage of staff. When officers working on the Bakken attempt to juggle all these added responsibilities, they find that do not have the time needed to complete all their regular job duties.

Another reason why officers find it difficult to complete their work responsibilities is that they are given court duties that do not conform to the Department of Correction's primary goals of rehabilitating offenders and enhancing community safety. Court paperwork and deadlines detract from the officers' ability to complete their primary work duties. This problem is very common among the officers in my sample.

When asked what he considered the most stressful aspect of his job, a long-term transfer officer named Randall told me, "So the most stressful, quite honestly, I think would be trying to meet deadlines. . . . I don't worry as much about getting killed as looking like a fool in court, for example. (*laughs*)" Randall is not the only officer who explained that meeting court deadlines is imperative. Keenan, a long-term officer working in Region East, expressed a similar sentiment:

So, unfortunately, that's the thing that's the most frustrating for me is, and I guess it just comes with the job. . . but it's just difficult to stay on top of, because we have to stay on top of these presentence investigations. Because if we get behind, then the court gets behind, then the court gets mad at us, and things start happening, and people get upset. Court, you know, it's a mess.

As Randall and Keenan's statements illustrate, court expectations place tremendous pressure on probation officers. The officers in my sample repeatedly told me that meeting court deadlines is the most stressful aspect of their jobs. However, upon further analysis, it is clear that deadlines

are not the problem. Rather, the language that the officers in my sample use obscures the root cause of the problem: a disconnect between the expectations of the court and the expectations of the Department of Corrections.

As a part of their job, probation officers are required to write presentence investigation reports and testify to the court regarding offenders who have not yet been sentenced. Because these offenders have not been sentenced, they are not a part of the probation caseload. Probation officers, then, are required to take time out of their busy schedules to complete work that contradicts what they believe their role in the corrections system is. According to the Montana Department of Corrections, Probation and Parole Division's mission statement,

The Probation and Parole Division promotes the mission of the Department of Corrections by providing effective supervision, sanctions, and alternative programs to adult offenders. The Division provides offender supervision and programming through professional staff that supports the needs and concerns of crime victims, their families and the citizens we serve (Montana Department of Corrections, N.d.).

The probation system in Montana consists of a partnership between the Department of Corrections and the courts. However, there is a clear discrepancy between the expectations of the courts and the goals of the Department of Corrections. The Probation and Parole Division aims to provide offender rehabilitation and community safety by providing an alternative to prison for sentenced offenders, while the courts expect probation officers to complete investigations for offenders that have not yet been sentenced. Officers are thus required to put an extensive amount of time into work that is not directly related to the goals of their employer, the Montana Department of Corrections. Sigler (1988) refers to this type of disconnect in expectations as intra-role conflict. This intra-role conflict causes further strain and frustration for officers who already struggle to complete their work duties.

The inability of officers to complete their workplace tasks in a timely manner leaves them with two choices: (1) They can give up on the goal of proactivity and resign themselves to the idea that probation work is solely reactive, or (2) They can put in extra time in order to try to keep up with the demands of their job. Both options create further stress for probation officers.

Some of the officers I spoke with told me they have learned over time that probation is a reactive line of work, and there is little chance to be proactive with offenders. When asked about the most stressful aspect of his job, Brady explained that trying to juggle his work tasks has led to an inability for him to be proactive at work:

Well, the issue that they want in supervision is they want us to be pro-active. That means we need to be working with the offenders, and making sure that they're doing what they're supposed to be doing, and giving them the resources to make sure they don't get in further trouble. Making sure they're at their appointments. With the amount of people we have and the turnover of officers going on, we don't have that opportunity. It's reactionary. If law enforcement calls me at two o'clock in the morning, 'Hey, I got Jimmy drinking,' I'm reacting to it. Instead of are there signs that I should have been seeing that he was going to have a relapse? . . . You're just reacting to the events at the time.

Because of the amount of time the job takes, officers simply do not have time to work with offenders. Instead, they must prioritize other tasks before the offenders. Because of this, they are unable to prevent issues with offenders, but instead, they must react when a problem inevitably occurs. Multiple officers I spoke with call this phenomenon "putting out fires."

These officers argued that their job is solely focused on putting out fires, rather than preventing them. During a discussion about the rewarding aspects of his job, Trenton, a short-term transfer officer, spontaneously stated, "So I don't know if you know this, but you realize probation is a reactive agency. . . . You can't put out a fire if there never is a fire. You can't do anything." Trenton's matter-of-fact tone illustrates the fact that officers truly believe that probation work cannot include proactivity. For many officers, this is stressful because it directly

contradicts their personal reasons for working in probation. Many officers told me that they work as probation officers because they want to help rehabilitate offenders, help victims, and protect the community. However, when other work tasks get in the way of proactivity, these outcomes cannot always be met.

In response to their inability to complete their work duties, many officers put in extra time in an attempt avoid falling behind. Brady told me that during one of the most stressful times in his job, “I’d come home from work, and I would actually log in and do more work. Just because I was so far behind. I tried to log in and do stuff remotely. . . . And I just felt like I needed to do more.” Although putting in extra hours does, in fact, help officers to complete their tasks, it can also detract from the officers’ sense of accomplishment. As Brady’s quote illustrates, even when he worked extra hours from home, he still believed he had not completed enough work. Instead of easing his anxiety about work, putting in extra time exacerbated it. The officers in my sample described this as a vicious cycle that creates further stress in their work lives.

Role ambiguity. For the probation officers in my sample, stress is maximized when role ambiguity is at play. Role ambiguity can arise from competing theories of corrections. Theories of corrections are philosophies about the goals of corrections and how to best carry these goals out (Cullen and Jonson 2012). These theories emerge from the social and political context, and they often have direct influence on policy. Because theories of corrections emerge from changing social and political contexts, they are constantly in flux (Cullen and Jonson 2012). In probation, this is no different. The officers in my sample told me that change is a constant in their jobs. When asked about changes over the course of her job, Jacquelyn, a long-term Region East officer, told me that there is always change happening in probation, largely due to the fact that

the political context is constantly shifting. She explained, “You have a lot of changes because the legislators change a lot of laws all the time and you end up having new directors. And, you know, they come out with new policies and stuff. But . . . that’s kind of normal.”

Constant change in correctional practice and policy can make it difficult for officers to know how they are expected to perform their jobs, thus creating role ambiguity. According to Van Sell, Brief, and Schuler (1981:44), role ambiguity occurs when “information is unclear regarding which potential role expectation - A, B, or C - should be performed.” Probation officers must shift their focus between law enforcement and social work, and it is sometimes difficult to know on which role they are expected to place a greater emphasis.

It is apparent that the probation officers in Montana face role ambiguity. In fact, some officers told me they believe the current emphasis of the Department of Corrections is social work, while others believe that the current emphasis is on law enforcement. When asked if he had noticed any changes in his job since he began working as a probation officer, Trenton told me,

The aspect of being more law enforcement has changed to the other side, where it’s becoming more social work aspect. Again we’re not counselors, but we’re very much case management driven. We do assessments, we have all these tools that tell us how often we should meet with somebody, what we should do as a consequence, a sanction. They’re moving kind of our ability to make good, well, not good decisions but our ability to make a decision. They’re directing us in kind of a uniform way.

Trenton believes that there is an overall focus on social work and case management within the Department of Corrections. Many of the officers in my sample stated that although they have always been required to conduct assessments on offenders, the Department of Corrections has recently adopted much more robust risk and needs assessment tools. These tools require the officer to gather extensive information on the offender, and decisions about how to treat offenders are heavily based on the results of these assessments. Like Trenton, some officers

believe that the use of these tools has tied their hands and reduced their options for using personal discretion when sanctioning offenders. Overall, these officers believe that a heavy emphasis on social work has created a difficult work situation for them.

On the other hand, Orrin, a short-term Region East officer, believes that the Department of Corrections places greater emphasis on law enforcement. He explained,

There was a lot of policy that came down this past year. . . . And, well, when I first got hired, everything was all about community placement and community activism, I guess you would say. So it was a lot less, if you came in and peed hot for marijuana, instead of taking you to jail for three days to think about what you did, it was, ok, sign a consent form, go see an addictions counselor. . . . [Now] I think we're kind of going back towards law enforcement. But then when you look at the hierarchy of, you know, there's no room in prison, there's no room in pre-release or treatment or anything. So that's kind of the frustrating part.

Orrin explained that the emphasis on law enforcement in probation is quite stressful for officers:

The frustrating part comes with the people that are doing minor violations and just continually, you know, you revoke them, put them in front of the judge. And the judge has to say, "What do you want to do with them?" Basically the question comes back to us. And it's like, well, we need treatment, but if they're in treatment, they're going to sit in jail for three to four months before they get in. . . . And then you get the sheriff calling. "Why is so-and-so still in jail? Let's get them moved." It's like, "I can't move him." And from higher-ups.

Like Trenton, officers like Orrin also believe their hands are tied, but for different reasons. Orrin believes that policy changes have created a situation in which his only option for sanctioning offenders is to put them in jail. When officers know that jails are overcrowded, but believe they are supposed to put offenders there anyway, it creates stress.

Considering Trenton and Orrin's conflicting statements about their roles, it is apparent that the role expectations of Montana probation officers are not entirely clear. Constant shifts in policy create role ambiguity, leaving officers confused about how to perform their jobs.

Role ambiguity is exacerbated when policy change occurs without clear guidance on how to implement the change. Officers stated that sometimes, policy change is accompanied by clear

guidelines and expectations, but many times, this is not the case. Jacquelyn told me that when policy change occurs,

I think it's pretty easy to adapt if you understand what you need to do. Then it's then you just put it into your new routine. At least that's the way I see it. If, if you've got full direction on what they want you to do or how you're supposed to be doing it, then it's not really difficult to adapt. . . . [But] it can happen both ways. And then sometimes I think it's just a learning process. . . . What did the legislators want? How are we supposed to put this together? So sometimes it comes out in pieces. And then sometimes it comes out, "Here it is." So, but I think a lot of it's down on how they receive it or how they're trying to understand it.

Role ambiguity can cause stressful situations for probation officers who are already required to juggle several distinct roles. When it is unclear what is expected of officers, these officers are forced to figure out how they are expected to perform their jobs as they go along. The officers in my sample told me that policy changes and unclear role expectations often make their jobs more difficult than necessary.

Stressors Involved in Probation Work at a Personal Level

In addition to stressors stemming from structural causes, the officers in my sample also talked about several aspects of their job that create stress within their personal lives. These include isolation, challenges with separating work and personal life, and anxiety about offenders.

Isolation. According to several of the officers in my sample, one of the most dissatisfying aspects of their work is social isolation. Probation work negatively impacts these officers' personal relationships, largely because other people in their lives do not understand what probation work entails. Many officers explained that their families and friends do not understand the difference between probation work and other types of criminal justice work. When asked how his job has impacted his relationships with friends and family, Trenton replied,

Do you want statistics, like what they say about law enforcement has the highest rate of alcoholism, divorce, suicide, again, it's one of those things where you have to have a very understanding significant other. Because our job's really funky. If people know what

probation is, they have one idea of what it does, you know, “You throw people back in jail.” It’s hard to understand for outsiders what we do. So yes, of course it always impacts relationships and what I’ve found is just don’t talk about it, because someone on the other side is going to go, “I don’t understand. It should be this or it should be that.” And it just starts to downward spiral.

Several officers share this problem. Brady stated that he is sometimes frustrated because he often perceives a need to explain his job to his friends and family:

There’s a couple friends that, they aren’t law enforcement, and they don’t understand the job. You know, so a lot of times, I gotta explain it to them. Because again, the cut and paste thing from what you see on TV or what they read in books and whatever says, “This is what he should be able to do.” And it’s like, no, we gotta, you know, as I call it, play the game... But they have respect for what I do.

Many officers, such as Brady, believe that misperceptions about the probation profession are caused by distorted representations of the criminal justice system on television. This scenario is not unique to probation officers. In her study of correctional officers, Tracy (2005) emphasized that media portrayals of these workers create stereotypes and misperceptions about correctional work, which generally adds to the difficulty of these officers’ jobs. Misperceptions about probation work don’t necessarily make the job harder for the officers in my sample, but instead have a detrimental effect on their personal relationships. Officers either become stigmatized, or they begin to feel isolated and frustrated when those close to them struggle to understand their work. This sense of isolation can cause tension in officers’ personal relationships.

Some officers I interviewed stated that they face stigmatization among their peers because of their job. This is especially true for the young probation officers in my sample. Young probation officers often have to deal with similarly-aged friends being overly cautious around them or refusing to spend time with them at all because they fear getting into trouble around the officer. Adelle, a medium-term officer stationed in Region East, told me that social relationships with others her age are sometimes frustrating because

Me being young, I still have some friends that may not be 21 yet, and so they're concerned that they're breaking the law. . . . Not that I don't get invited to do stuff. . . . but I'll ask [my friends] what they're going to be doing this weekend and they'll be like, "Oh, I'm going to hang out with so and so. But we're not going to do anything." . . . I think a lot of it is they're afraid of how they're going to act around me. You know, like, concerned that they're going to get in trouble because of little stuff. You know, like going on a road trip with my friend and her making sure that she's going 65 and she's not speeding with me (*laughs*).

Adelle longs for normal relationships with peers her age, but this is difficult when her friends censor their behavior around her. Because of the fear surrounding officers' position of authority, some young officers face difficulty maintaining friendships with others outside the probation profession. Sometimes, peers elect to stop socializing with these officers altogether. This has happened to Bailey, a short-term officer working in Region East, who told me, "My friends don't like hanging out with me (*laughs*). . . . Because I work in law enforcement, or a capacity of, like, social work. So, they don't want me to criticize them." The loss of friends resulting from fear of authority can create severe strain on the social lives of young probation officers.

Not only do probation officers become isolated by choice of their peers; they also face a type of voluntary isolation. The probation profession requires officers to maintain the image of upstanding citizens, so they must avoid spending time in situations that might harm that image. Officers understand that they must make responsible choices and avoid illegal behavior because they are always under public scrutiny. Bailey told me that her responsibility as a probation officer has caused her to mature more quickly than her peers. When asked to expand upon this, she stated,

You make more mature choices. And you have more consequences. Like, if I get drunk and get arrested, I could lose my job. If I get drunk and my friends get in an accident or something, it could be a major consequence for me. So I choose my friendships and where I go a lot better than I did before. . . . And so it just, makes you grow up a lot faster and come to reality. Because. . . you have to be on top of everything to make sure the people you're working with are on top of it. And kind of set a good example.

As a result of her newfound job responsibilities, Bailey has had to make difficult choices about her friends. She recognizes that she not only has to put on a good face for the public, but she also has to set an example for the individuals on her caseload. If she fails to do these things, she faces consequences ranging from a lack of respect to the loss of her job. Many of the officers in my sample told me that they have to sacrifice aspects of their social life for their job. These sacrifices can leave officers socially isolated.

Challenges with separating work and personal life. Another stressful aspect of probation work is difficulty with maintaining a separation between work and personal life. Officers express a desire to separate themselves from their work, but this proves problematic when running into offenders in a small community is inevitable. Many officers are forced to change their own routine in order to successfully separate themselves from their work.

In some cases, officers' friends or acquaintances break the law and subsequently become part of their probation caseload. When this occurs, it creates an overlap in an officer's work and personal life; this overlap is often difficult to navigate. When talking about her caseload, Bailey stated,

And a couple of them were my friends before I got this job, and so it's just kind of like, "I don't really know what to do with you." I watch out for if they have beer or anything, like that's just kind of the first thing I think about. Even though, like I should be doing that, but it just feels weird outside of professional. Yeah. So it's different.

Bailey's quote highlights the challenges officers face when they have personal acquaintances on their caseload. In rural areas, social networks tend to be small. When a personal acquaintance ends up on a probation officer's caseload, the officer must make difficult decisions regarding whether or not to continue to socialize with that individual. In Bailey's case, she has chosen to continue to spend social time with acquaintances on her caseload, but she finds it difficult to navigate her professional boundaries during this social time. In addition, it is possible that

longtime acquaintances might become a part of the probation caseload. It is understandable, then, that officers might find it difficult or uncomfortable to enforce the probation conditions of a long-time friend or acquaintance. Because Region East is largely rural, many probation officers in my sample found themselves in this awkward limbo between personal and professional relationships.

Even when officers do not have acquaintances on their caseload, some try to avoid going out in public because they are afraid they might run into an offender. Melanie, a long-term Region East officer, told me that her job has not impacted her relationships with friends and family, but it has affected where she goes and what she does:

I mean, I don't go anywhere anymore. Because I'm constantly running into somebody on probation. And so, I learned quickly just to avoid going in to any social situations. Just because I don't want to have to run into anybody.

As previously stated, social networks in rural areas are usually small. There are often few opportunities for social involvement, and as such, it is difficult for probation officers in these areas to avoid running into offenders when they go out in public. Researchers have recommended social activities as a pathway for individuals to develop healthy identities outside of work (Tracy and Trethewey 2005). However, when these activities are limited and offenders are often present, it complicates this process. Not only does running into offenders create awkward situations for officers, but it also hinders opportunities for them to create a healthy divide between their work and personal lives. Many officers in my sample have chosen to change their daily routines in order to avoid this situation altogether.

Not only do they want to avoid awkward situations with offenders, but the officers I interviewed also strive to maintain a sense of privacy and personal boundaries. These officers

change their daily habits in order to avoid having offenders know anything about their personal lives. Trenton explained,

I don't know if you've ever done any work like this, but when you start having a caseload, you end up running into it. And it doesn't stop. You start to develop this, "I don't want anybody to know that I have a dog or a cat, or I have a girlfriend, a boyfriend, whoever it is." So you start, you start changing where you go.

In order to protect his privacy, as well as the privacy of the people he is close to, Trenton has changed his routine. Privacy is an issue for probation officers for several reasons. One such reason is that probation officers often work with violent or dangerous offenders. If offenders become privy to personal information about officers, it can pose a serious risk to the safety of these officers, their friends, or their families. Additionally, maintaining privacy and personal boundaries allows officers to uphold a position of authority over offenders. If an officer's privacy is compromised, it may greatly undermine his or her authority status. Thus, in order to maintain their privacy and protect themselves, their friends and families, and their position, the officers in my sample make changes to their daily routine.

However, officers acknowledge that sometimes it is not realistic to change their routine in order to avoid offenders. During a discussion about an unrelated topic, Bailey spontaneously stated, "And so it's just trying to juggle everything and trying to maintain your life. Like, you can't go to the next town and work or grocery shop or anything, just to get away from your probationers." In a rural area such as the Bakken, there is only so much that officers can do to avoid offenders without severely disrupting their own lives. Rural areas are often geographically isolated, and the next town may be several miles away. Additionally, surrounding communities may not have the services and amenities that are available in the officers' home town. This can create a need to travel even further to access goods and services. For probation officers working

in rural areas, it is not realistic to travel long distances to simply avoid contact with offenders. The costs of avoiding offenders often outweigh the benefits.

Anxiety about offenders. Another significant stressor for the officers I interviewed is their anxiety over offenders. Randall told me, “. . . the people that you supervise, they’re going to make you miserable. That’s just inevitable.” It is difficult for officers to always know where offenders are and what they are doing. Since not all offenders are invested in making positive change, there is always the potential that they might reoffend or break the law in some other way. Montana state probation officers often have violent offenders on their caseload, thus creating the possibility that offender recidivism could do extensive harm. Adelle told me that dealing with violent offenders is extremely stressful for her:

Oh, well, we deal with dangerous and violent offenders. It’s nerve wracking and irresponsible for these people in the community and sometimes we get dealt with cases that uh, probably aren’t ready for the community, right? The way the court, you know they only had so much time and they bounce out and then they have an option, or other things like that. It’s, it’s scary and stressful I think to be responsible for someone in the community that can do damage. At no part in our job do we want to make more victims. And that’s, that’s pretty nerve-wracking.

Officers realize that it is impossible to keep constant watch over violent offenders, which causes them constant worry over what offenders might do when officers are not looking. Most of the officers in my sample stated that their main goal is to help offenders and victims alike. If an offender recidivates or victimizes another person, this means that their goal has not been met. The possibility that offenders might cause further damage to the community causes the officers in my sample great worry.

In addition to the fear that offenders might break the law or reoffend, the officers in my sample also face anxiety about how offenders’ behavior reflects on them. Probation officers sometimes face severe public scrutiny when an offender recidivates or violates his or her

conditions of probation. Orrin explained that in his job, scrutiny comes from all directions, but scrutiny from the public is particularly stressful:

I think the stressful part comes in everything that we do gets called into question. And that's kind of community-based, too. So if we have somebody on probation that commits a crime, [the community's] first question is, "Well, where was their probation officer?" I've had that, people call all the time. "What are you doing? Why aren't you doing this?" And I have to explain to them I have over 100 people on my caseload. I can't, you know, constantly be on everybody at all times. So, you know, I mean that's stressful, too. But I think, you know, constantly being called not into question, but, you know, your every, every decision that you make is being scrutinized by somebody.

Officers' fear of public scrutiny has been made worse with a number of high-profile probation violations highlighted in the media. For example, the national media focused heavily on the case of Phillip Garrido, a convicted sex offender in California who kidnapped and held a woman captive for 18 years during the time he was on state and federal probation. Media outlets publicly placed blame for the woman's ordeal on Garrido's probation officers for failing to effectively supervise him (see Wollan 2011). Although this is an extreme example, the probation officers in my sample experience great anxiety due to the fact that they are often publicly held responsible for the behavior of the offenders on their caseload.

Response to Job Stress

The officers I interviewed describe many aspects of their jobs as stressful and difficult. Despite this, all of the officers told me that they love their jobs. Keenan told me that although his job has become more stressful for him over time, he really enjoys what he does:

And it honestly is, as I get older and I've been doing this job longer, I find more things that frustrate me, yet, I still can say without any doubt that it is the best job I've ever had, ever. I absolutely love it. It drives me crazy some days, and I get frustrated, because some days, you deal with nothing but crappy people doing crappy things. And not seeing any, anything positive from the stuff you're doing. But every now and then, you'll see a person get it. And that's cool.

Officers acknowledge that they experience significant job stress; yet, they do not exhibit

symptoms of burnout or turnover intention. Instead, the officers in my sample report that they feel overall positive emotions toward their jobs. For these officers, the rewards of probation work heavily outweigh the stresses involved. This point is illustrated by Melanie, who told me, “This is, it’s a rewarding job at the end of the day. It’s never the same because you’re constantly busy. And it’s fun. It’s a fun job.”

Although officers admit that they sometimes think about leaving their current positions, none of the officers in my sample stated that job stress was a reason they would ever leave. In fact, when officers do consider quitting, it is largely because of personal reasons, rather than stress or burnout. For example, when asked if he ever thinks about leaving his job, Curt replied,

Daily. Because I want to retire! But you know what? There’s been very few days where I haven’t wanted to go to work. . . . As a probation and parole officer there really haven’t been very many days where I just didn’t want to go to work. And, you know, I am looking forward to retirement. . . . But it isn’t because of the job, you know, it’s because I’m ready to move on and do something else.

Most of the officers I interviewed share Curt’s sentiment. They stated that if they did end up leaving the position, it would not be due to job stress or burnout, but rather, it would be for personal reasons not related to their jobs. Neither general job stress nor Bakken-specific challenges deter the officers I interviewed from working in probation. In addition, the transfer officers in my sample did not even cite these issues as reasons why they chose to transfer away from Region East. Instead, most of these officers stated that they transferred simply because it was an opportunity to move closer to family members. Overall, job stress does not seem to have a significant negative impact on the occupational experiences of the probation officers I interviewed.

Considering previous literature on the consequences of job stress, it is surprising that the officers in my sample are able to resist burnout and respond to the job stress in a positive way.

While there are likely numerous reasons for this, a theme that emerged several times throughout the officer interviews was the use of coping strategies for dealing with job stress.

Coping Strategies

The probation officers in my sample have several strategies they use to cope with the stressful aspects of their jobs. These include the use of humor, compartmentalization of tasks so as to not become overwhelmed, relationships with others, acceptance, and detachment from work. In this discussion, I focus on acceptance, detachment, and comradery, as these are the strategies most commonly used among the officers in my sample.

Acceptance. One way in which officers cope with the dissatisfying aspects of their job is by accepting their lack of power and control over the offenders they work with. These officers realize that although they may put extensive effort into rehabilitating offenders, sometimes offender outcomes may not reflect this effort. While some offenders are willing try to make a positive change in their lives, others simply want to put in the minimal amount of effort required to finish their probation sentence. Curt, a long-term transfer officer, told me that probation work is a good fit for him because he has learned to accept his lack of control. He explained,

It's what you make of it. And you don't take things personal, I think that's more than anything. You know you can't take this job personal. You know, if you think that it's something that you did, that it's your fault that that guy went out this weekend and got another DUI, or he fell off the wagon and he's shooting up and smoking or whatever, you know, well then you're going to burn out too quick. If you have power and control issues in this job, you're going to burn out. You know, um, that's not why you should be here. . . . It's a job, you do the best you can, you help these guys the best you can, and you know, you do what you feel is right, you know, and it's a good job.

Probation officers have little control over offender outcomes. Offenders do not participate in probation voluntarily; instead, they end up on probation by a court order. Thus, many offenders are resistant to change. Because of this, some recidivism is unavoidable. As previously stated, the inevitability of offender violations creates anxiety for many probation officers.

However, as Curt's quote illustrates, letting go of personal responsibility over offenders helps the officers in my sample cope with this stressor. The probation officers I interviewed found that accepting their lack of control over offender behavior helped to protect them from burnout in their jobs.

Detachment. Another strategy that probation officers use to cope with the stresses of the job is detachment. Officers detach from their work by creating firm boundaries between work and life outside of work. They work hard during their work day, and when they leave, they completely disengage from work. Curt explained that he tries not to bring stress from work home with him. He said, "I go home at night, and this doesn't go with me. I enjoy my home life and I like where I live, so when I get home, I'm good."

Officers who practice detachment do not talk about work with their friends or family. As Trenton explained, ". . . when I leave work, I rarely talk about it. Family will say, 'How's work?' I'll say, 'Fine.' That's my answer." Some officers even refuse to talk about the job while socializing with their coworkers. For certain officers, it is important to be able to express their grievances to their coworkers. Others, however, find no utility in this practice, and instead view it as counterproductive. Not only does he refuse to talk about work with friends and family, but Trenton also refuses to spend time outside of work with his coworkers. He stated,

I've learned quickly when I leave, it's done. Work is done. I do my very best not to discuss it with anybody. You'll find in any job, co-workers will go out after the job, and they'll talk about work. That is just so toxic, in my mind, for me. . . . I mean, in the beginning I used to love talking about my job. It was a comradery thing, you'd go out with your co-workers, you'd spend some time, have some laughs, and you'd talk about your job. Uh, the longer I've been in the system, and doing probation and parole, I've I don't talk about it. I went from talking about it all the time to now it's, it's very rare. I don't even like hearing, I don't even like to listen to people talk about just one thing – let me tell you one thing that happened today. Now, if I'm at work. I'll listen to you. If it's after hours, I don't want to know. I just don't. I don't.

Although socializing with coworkers provides a sense of social support for some officers, for others, it creates more stress within their lives. By refusing to talk about work or socialize over workplace issues, officers are able to create social distance between themselves and their work.

Not only do the officers in my sample avoid talking to others about work while they are off-duty, but some also try to erase work from their thoughts completely. Sonnentag and Bayer (2005) refer to this practice as “psychological detachment.” As Randall stated, “I guess you kind of learn to shut it out.” Shutting it out is sometimes difficult, especially after a stressful day at work. When talking about the stress he encounters at work, Brady said,

You know, sometimes you gotta, and it’s hard for me because of my personality and my training, my ways is I don’t just shut down. And I’m getting to the point now, I’m learning, when I walk out the door, unless the phone rings and they call me back to work, I just need to let it go. So, that’s probably the toughest part.

Although it is sometimes challenging for officers leave work at work, this strategy is important for coping with job stress. Sonnentag and Bayer (2005) found that across occupations, psychological detachment is positively related to a positive mood and low fatigue, particularly after stressful work days. This finding rings true for the officers in my sample, as well. For these officers, distancing themselves psychologically from their work proves useful for combatting the daily stressors involved in probation work.

Comradery. In order to cope with the stresses of their jobs, several officers in my sample form friendships with their coworkers. When asked how the job has impacted his relationships with friends and family, Randall stated that he has made several friends within the probation profession. He told me,

You know, I got some really good friends here. People that I really, really trust. People that I would put my life in their hands. And I like to think that there are some that feel the same way about me. So, you know, in law enforcement, and this is kind of law enforcement. You know, I think that there’s brotherhood, comradery, whatever you want to call it. Because we all, we have seen things and we have to do things that would

probably shock the average person. You know, going on a home search. Wading through knee-deep dirty clothes and dirty dishes and babies crawling on the floor amongst the cat crap. And that sort of thing. . . . And that's where you talk to my friends. . . . So I think the job, you develop friendships, and they're, I think they're stronger friendships.

The sentiment that relationships between probation officers resemble a “brotherhood” is shared by Keenan, who told me, “And so, we learn, we get a pretty close bond, and I have a pretty good relationship with everyone out here. So it's almost like a, it's almost like a family. And we really look out for one another. And I think that we all want the best for everybody.” The officers in my sample place a high value on their relationships with coworkers. In fact, these relationships often become an important part of an officer's identity. Comradery with coworkers is vital to several of the officers I interviewed. This is consistent with previous literature, which has identified comradery as an important tool that workers use to build “common identity and interdependence” and to cope with stress in the workplace (Waldron 2000:70).

Officers don't just rely on their coworkers for social support, but they also rely on them for advice and instrumental support when problems arise within the workplace. Melanie told me that when she is having a stressful day, she talks to her coworkers. She stated, “We're constantly going in and venting or you know talking about situations we've run into.” Jacquelyn agrees that her coworkers are an important tool when dealing with stressful situations. She told me, “I think we do a lot of talking within the office with our co-workers. An awful lot. Go in and say, ‘This is going on.’ Or, ‘I just received this call.’ And, you know, ‘Do you have any ideas of what would be the best way to maybe handle this call?’” Jacquelyn and Melanie have both worked as probation officers for several years, but they still believe that relationships with coworkers are invaluable resources for dealing with difficult situations in the workplace.

Not only do the officers in my sample rely on their coworkers for comradery; but many probation officers also seek comradery with other professionals in similar jobs. While it is

sometimes difficult for outsiders to understand the stresses associated with probation, other professionals working in similar capacities are able to empathize with probation officers. Adelle told me, “Well, I think that, you know, police officers, and probation officers in general, kind of flock together because, like I said, my family’s very supportive and I turn to them, but they don’t understand.” Probation officers find that friendships with social workers, police officers, and other law enforcement workers are sometimes vital to coping with the stresses of their job.

When explaining how he copes with the stressful parts of his job, Keenan stated,

Um, I found that it’s, my best friend is a CPS worker. And her and I both have jobs that can be stressful. . . . So anyways, you know, her and I, we would just go cruise around. I have a little portable scanner. We would listen to the scanner and listen to the cops doing whatever they’re doing, and we would just go cruise around, and we would just basically vent to one another. That helps. I mean, it helps to have someone that can relate to your situation. It doesn’t change anything. But it’s nice to have a way to do stuff like that.

Many of the officers I talked to have close friends, partners, or even spouses that are employed in law enforcement or social work positions. Officers find these relationships especially helpful. As Randall stated, these relationships are helpful because unlike others, partners or friends who work in these positions understand “shit work and that sort of thing.” Brady believes he is lucky to have several friends who work in a similar capacity:

Well again, I’m pretty fortunate because I’ve got a lot of friends that are in law enforcement. I got a lot of other POs, so we, we can do the sounding board. Um, my wife works as a social worker. You know, we can’t talk specific cases, but we can talk in general. So her caseload and my caseload. . . so, I mean, we have a lot of the same issues, frustrations, you know, clientele can be the same. And that’s the big thing.

Comradery is a way that the officers in my sample seek out and generate social support, which in turn helps them to cope with the stresses of their jobs. House (1981) classifies four different types of social support: emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, and appraisal support. Comradery with coworkers and other professionals provides all four of these types of social support for officers. The officers in my sample receive emotional support

from coworkers and other professionals because these individuals are able to understand and empathize with the stresses involved in probation work. In addition, coworkers provide instrumental support when they step in to help an overwhelmed officer. Finally, the probation officers I interviewed receive informational support and appraisal support in the form advice from coworkers and other professionals. Overall, the officers in my sample find that comradery is a valuable tool for combatting job stress.

Although comradery and detachment seem incompatible, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Many of the officers I interviewed utilized a mix of these two strategies in order to cope with the stresses involved in their jobs. For example, Brady told me that he finds relationships with his coworkers and other professionals vital to his well-being, but he has also learned over time that it is important to sometimes detach from work. The officers in my sample each have their own unique blend of coping strategies that allow them to manage job stress.

DISCUSSION

At the outset of this study, I expected that officers working on the Bakken would experience significant job stress, leading to burnout and turnover intent. Job stressors, which stem from both interpersonal interaction and structural causes have previously been linked to burnout (Maslach 1982; Maslach et al. 2001). The officers in my sample spoke at length about the stressors they faced while at work; however, the sentiment that these officers had toward their jobs was overwhelmingly positive. When asked if she ever thinks of leaving her job, Jaquelyn stated,

I think everybody does. (*laughs*) I think everybody has those days. “What am I doing here?” I do. When, sometimes when things go crazy, you think, “Ugh, why am I doing this?” And then the next day comes around and you’re thinking, “Hmm, I’m doing this because I like it and I think I’m pretty good at it.”

Every officer I interviewed agreed with Jacquelyn's statement. Although officers acknowledged that there are stressors involved in probation work that make them consider leaving, none of the officers told me that they were experiencing burnout. In contrast, all of the officers told me that they loved their jobs. One reason for this is their use of coping strategies.

By utilizing coping strategies, the officers in my sample performed emotional labor. The stressful nature of probation work required these officers to employ emotion management techniques to evoke positive emotions about their jobs. The probation officers I interviewed did not talk about emotional labor as a mandatory part of their jobs, but the techniques they used to cope with job stressors are a clear manifestation of deep acting. Detachment, acceptance, and comradery were all strategies that the officers in my sample used to manage their emotions about work.

As Hochschild (1979) states, deep acting involves two separate processes: emotion suppression and evocation of emotions. These processes are reflected in the officers' use of three different coping strategies: detachment, acceptance, and comradery. Detachment was used by the officers in my sample as an emotion suppression technique. These officers did not wish to feel negative emotions stemming from job stress, so they created firm boundaries between their work and personal lives. Acceptance was a technique that officers used to reframe their emotions about work. Instead of feeling negative emotions when problems occurred, officers told themselves that they did what they could and they were not responsible for the choices of offenders. Finally, officers used comradery to evoke a sense of shared identity and mutual support. Seeking out friendships with coworkers and others who worked in similar positions was a way that officers performed "collective emotional labor" (Hochschild 1983) in order to evoke a positive group emotion (Waldron 2000).

Surface acting involves putting on a façade in order to sustain an outward appearance. The actor who performs such acting is not required to feel the emotion he or she is trying to display; instead, he or she utilizes words, facial expressions, or body language. In contrast, in deep acting, an actor inwardly tries to change his or her own emotions in order to meet feeling or display rules. Surface acting did not emerge as an important part of work for the officers in my sample; however, the coping strategies used by these officers clearly involve deep acting. However, the motivations, goals, and outcomes of Hochschild's (1983) deep acting techniques are different from those found in the techniques used by my sample.

Traditionally, emotion work (including deep acting) is performed in response to social norms or formal organizational rules. Hochschild's (1983) concept of emotional labor is usually an explicit requirement of one's job. Additionally, Hochschild's (1979) original conception of emotion work requires "feeling rules," or informal norms that govern the ways in which individuals are supposed to experience emotion. Thus, the motivation for deep acting, according to the traditional definition of emotion work, is to reflect rules and social norms. Furthermore, in the traditional definition of emotional labor, the goal of deep acting and surface acting is to either benefit the client or to forward the organization's goals. For example, the flight attendants in Hochschild's (1983) study were required to perform surface and deep acting in order to produce a pleasant experience for airline customers, whereas correctional officers in Tracy's (2005) study were required to perform emotional labor in order to maintain the appearances of toughness and suspicion toward inmates. Because of the motivations and goals involved in the traditional definition of deep acting, I will refer to this as organization-oriented deep acting.

Organization-oriented deep acting has been associated with several negative consequences for the worker. Hochschild (1983:7) argues that emotional labor, in the form of

surface acting and deep acting, can cause emotive dissonance, and eventually, “the worker can become estranged or alienated from an aspect of self- either the body or the margins of the soul- that is used to do the work.” Although several researchers have focused on possible positive consequences of emotional labor (see, for example, Shuler and Sypher 2000), traditional conceptions of organization-oriented deep acting emphasize serious negative effects on workers (Hochschild 1983).

Organization-oriented deep acting does not adequately describe the type of deep acting used by the probation officers I interviewed. The officers in my sample were not explicitly told to perform emotional labor. Although emotional labor is likely informally required as a part of probation work, much like it is in the jobs of correctional officers (Tracy 2005), the officers in my sample did not recognize the deep acting they performed as a job requirement. There is also no social norm declaring, for example, that officers must feel positively toward their jobs. According to the traditional definition of emotional labor, then, the officers in my sample would not need to engage in deep acting. Although the officers in my sample utilized deep acting techniques, the motivations for doing so were not in response to any social norms or job requirements. In addition, the probation officers I interviewed did not perform emotional labor to produce a specific emotion or reaction in someone else, but instead to maintain their own positive emotions about their jobs. As such, the goal of deep acting for the officers in my sample is not to forward the mission of the organization, but instead the goal is to preserve one’s own sense of self.

I argue that the officers in my sample utilized a different form of deep-acting: self-oriented deep acting. The techniques utilized in this type of deep acting are the same as those used in organization-oriented deep acting; however, the goals and outcomes of this type of deep

acting are different. In self-oriented deep acting, the primary goal is self-preservation. The probation officers I interviewed performed deep acting in order to produce positive internal emotions about their jobs, despite the vast number of stressors involved in their work. Self-oriented deep acting may indeed forward the mission of the organization by making officers more likely to remain in their jobs, but this is a secondary outcome, rather than a primary goal. It is unclear why the officers in my sample perform self-oriented deep acting, but as illustrated above, this did not result as a response to social norms or formal organizational rules. Finally, the consequences of self-oriented deep acting are different than those of organization-oriented deep acting. Whereas in organization-oriented deep acting, the long term consequences for the worker may be damaging, it seems that at least in the short term, self-oriented deep acting has positive consequences for the employee.

Although deep acting is unmistakably a large part of the work of the probation officers in my sample, previous research has failed to capture the complexity of this subset of emotion work. The officers in this study performed a kind of self-oriented deep acting, which stands in contrast to the traditional organization-oriented definition of deep acting. This suggests that researchers have only begun to fully understand the nature of emotional labor in interactive work.

CONCLUSION

Despite the many structural and personal stressors involved in probation work in the Bakken area, officers do not experience burnout and turnover intent. This is surprising, as previous literature suggests that prolonged job stress has dire consequences for workers, including burnout and turnover (see Brown 1986; Tziner et al. 2015). For the officers in my sample, emotional labor plays a large role in providing a way for them to cope with the

demanding aspects of their jobs. The probation officers in my sample managed their emotions about work by using deep acting techniques such as acceptance, detachment, and comradery. These techniques helped them to foster a genuine love for their jobs, despite the many negative circumstances they face within the workplace on a daily basis.

Perhaps most importantly, there is a need to expand upon the traditional definition of emotional labor in order to capture the complexity of the different types of emotional labor done by workers. This study demonstrates that emotional labor is not only performed to forward the mission of the organization, as in Hochschild's (1983) original conception, but also is also performed as a self-oriented process with the goal of self-preservation in a stressful and demanding workplace.

Studying probation officers within the context of rapid socio-demographic change allowed for the discovery of this key finding. Probation is an interactive profession, marked by constant interpersonal interaction with offenders, coworkers, and the public. However, probation differs from many other interactive professions because probation officers are required to balance two separate and distinct roles: that of a social worker and that of a law enforcement officer. Because of these dual roles, I refer to probation as a type of hybrid interactional work, as opposed to work that is defined by one specific role. This classification of probation as hybrid interactional work opens an area ripe for research. Despite this, probation is relatively understudied within the field of criminal justice (Whitehead and Lindquist 1985). This study revealed a distinction between organization-oriented emotional labor and self-oriented emotional labor, a distinction not previously examined in the emotional labor literature. This suggests not only the importance of future research on probation work as a type of hybrid profession, but also a need for continued research on other types of hybrid professions.

Another important aspect of this research is the use of qualitative methodology. Qualitative research methodology allowed themes to emerge from the officer's narratives. Thus, I was able to find that officers were not burned out, but instead, that the use of emotional labor was crucial to their workplace experiences. Quantitative research on probation officers in the Bakken region could have produced drastically different results. A survey on job stress would not have allowed the importance of emotional labor in probation work on the Bakken to emerge. Utilizing qualitative methodology allowed me to collect more nuanced information about the officers in my study, without being constrained by my original conception of the research question.

Limitations and Future Research

This study suggests that emotional labor is more complex than previously thought. This is the first study to identify self-oriented emotional labor, and as such, further research is necessary to determine whether or not this phenomenon exists among probation officers in other areas. It is also crucial to study this subset of emotional labor across occupations to determine how it plays into the experiences of workers in other interactive occupations.

If, in fact, self-oriented emotional labor is identified within other occupations, future research is necessary to determine what motivates workers to perform self-oriented deep acting. In this study, I did not seek to identify the motivators of self-oriented deep acting. Perhaps there are few job opportunities available in rural areas such as the Bakken, so workers must focus heavily on self-preservation in order to have a sense of job security. In addition, it is possible that the rapid socio-demographic change occurring in the Bakken during the time of this study produced a unique situation in which workers had to adapt their emotional labor techniques to ensure self-preservation. The hybrid nature of probation itself could also have an influence on

the use of self-oriented deep acting. In order to determine the exact causes and motivations of this subset of emotional labor, future research is necessary.

In addition, future research on emotional labor should examine the long-term impacts of self-oriented deep acting. Self-oriented deep acting appears to have a short-term positive impact on the worker. However, previous literature on emotional labor has produced mixed results regarding the consequences of organization-oriented emotional labor. It is possible, then, that the long-term consequences of self-oriented deep acting may actually have detrimental effects on the well-being of the worker. Longitudinal research could provide a better understanding of the long-term impacts of self-oriented emotional labor.

This research may have implications for both workers and employers. Researchers have demonstrated that job satisfaction acts as a protective factor against occupational burnout (see Kalliath and Morris 2002), and those who report higher job satisfaction have lower intentions to leave their current occupation (Harrington et al. 2001). The results of this study suggest that in the short-term, self-oriented emotional labor helps to maintain probation officers' sense of job satisfaction. Thus, self-oriented emotional labor may be a useful tool for mitigating the effects of job stress on workers and employers alike. If future research confirms the existence of self-oriented emotional labor across occupations, the use of self-oriented emotional labor techniques could be encouraged and perhaps even taught in order to help protect workers from burnout and reduce rates of voluntary turnover in interactive occupations.

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Appendix A. Subject Information and Informed Consent

Study Title: Another Day in the Oil Patch: A Comparative Analysis of Probation Work in Montana

Investigator(s):

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Purpose:

The purpose of this research study is to examine the workplace experiences of probation officers across Montana in order to better understand what makes probation work in eastern Montana's Bakken region unique. The results of this study will be presented as a MA thesis.

Procedures:

If you agree to take part in this research study, you will be asked to answer several open-ended interview questions regarding your daily work life, as well as the rewards and stresses associated with working in the field of probation. The interview will be audiotaped and will take approximately one hour.

Risks/Discomforts:

Mild discomfort may result from answering questions about your workplace experiences. You may choose to skip any questions which you do not feel comfortable answering and you may discontinue the interview at any time.

Benefits:

Although you may not directly benefit from taking part in this study, the results of this study will contribute to the scientific knowledge regarding probation work. Through your willingness to complete the study, we will learn more about how changes in oil extraction boom areas affect how probation officers in these areas experience their day to day work lives.

Confidentiality:

Your records will be kept confidential and will not be released without your consent except as required by law. You will be assigned a pseudonym for data analysis, and the audio recording of your interview will be transcribed without any information that could identify you. The audio

recording will then be erased. Your consent form will be kept in a locked file cabinet separate from any audio recordings and interview transcripts. If the results of this study are written in a scientific journal or presented at a scientific meeting, your name will never be used.

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal:

Your decision to take part in this research study is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to take part in or you may withdraw from the study at any time or for any reason without penalty.

Questions:

If you have any questions about the research now or during the study, please contact: Ally Guldborg, Graduate Student or James Burfeind, PhD at 406-243-4811. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may contact the UM Institutional Review Board (IRB) at (406) 243-6672.

Statement of Your Consent:

I have read the above description of this research study. I have been informed of the risks and benefits involved, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. Furthermore, I have been assured that any future questions I may have will also be answered by a member of the research team. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study. I understand I will receive a copy of this consent form.

Printed Name of Subject

Subject's Signature

Date

Statement of Consent to be Audiotaped:

I consent to being audiotaped during this study. I understand that audio recordings will be destroyed following transcription, and that no identifying information will be included in the transcription.

Subject's Signature

Date

Appendix B. Interview Schedule for Region East Officers

Work

1. Tell me about a typical day at work.
2. What made you decide to become a probation officer?
3. Have there been any significant changes to your job since you started working as a probation officer?
 - a. Probe: What are those changes?
 - b. Probe: Tell me about how they have impacted your day to day work life.
 - c. Probe: How have these changes impacted how you feel about working as a probation officer?
4. What do you consider the most rewarding aspect of your job?
5. What is the most stressful part of your job?
6. Think of a day or a week when something was going wrong at work. Who did you turn to?
7. How has your job impacted your relationships with your friends and family?
8. Do you ever think about leaving your job? Why or why not?
9. What makes you continue working as a probation officer year after year?

The Bakken

1. How has your community changed since the oil boom began?
 - a. Probe: How have these changes impacted your daily life?
2. Tell me about a typical day at work before the oil boom began.
3. Now tell me about a typical day after the oil boom.
 - a. Has the oil boom affected how you perform your job on a daily basis? How?
4. How has the oil boom affected the way you feel about working in probation?

Appendix C. Interview Schedule for Transfer Officers

Work

For this first set of questions, I want you to think about your current position, where you work right now.

1. What made you decide to become a probation officer?
2. Tell me about a typical day at work.
3. What do you consider the most rewarding aspect of your job?
4. What is the most stressful part of your job?
5. Think of a day or a week when something was going wrong at work. Who did you turn to?
 - a. Probe: Was that different when you were working in Region VI? How?
6. How has your job impacted your relationships with your friends and family?
7. Have there been any significant changes to your job since you started working as a probation officer?
 - a. Probe: What are those changes?
 - b. Probe: Tell me about how they have impacted your day to day work life.
 - c. Probe: How have these changes impacted how you feel about working as a probation officer?
8. Do you ever think about leaving your job? Why or why not?
9. What makes you continue working as a probation officer year after year?

The Bakken

Now, I'd like you to think about your previous job in Region East.

1. Describe a typical day working in Region East.
2. How was it different from a typical day in your current job?
3. How did the community you were working in change during the time that you worked in Region East?
4. Which of these changes were related to the oil boom?

- a. Probe: How did those changes impact your day to day work life?
5. What was the biggest factor that led you to your decision to transfer?

Appendix D. Interpretive Coding Scheme

<i>Interpretive Categories</i>	<i>Codes</i>
Day to day work practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discretion with offenders • Interstate compact • Mundane tasks • No specific daily routine • Paperwork • Presentence Investigations • Time management • Travel • Working with Offenders
Unique features of probation work in Region East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Problems • Increase of crime • Problems with interstate compact transfers • Perceived workplace inequity • Supervising offenders working in oilfields • Transient or unknown caseload • Traveling • Offender violations
Satisfying aspects of job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becoming a better person • Contributing to community safety • Department of Corrections resources • Helping offenders • Helping victims • Learning about people • Personal safety • Working together • Working with other professionals
Stressors in probation work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety about offenders • Difficulty separating work and personal life • High turnover of officers • Inability to complete work tasks • Isolation • Role Ambiguity • Safety Concerns
Coping Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance • Comparative diminishment • Compartmentalization of tasks • Comradery • Detachment from work • Humor • Union work