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Benjamin Steiner¹, Lawrence F. Travis, III²,
and Matthew D. Makarios³

Abstract

There are constant calls for reform in the criminal justice system, but observers have often reported that criminal justice reform is an exceptionally challenging task. As with any organizational change, resistance to new policies, procedures, and practices comes from a variety of sources. The relatively broad discretionary authority vested in line-level personnel often contributes to the difficulty associated with implementing change in criminal justice agencies. There is ample evidence that line staff resistance to organizational reform can undermine the implementation of organizational change. In this study, the authors examine the effects of the state of Ohio's transition to graduated sanctioning guidelines on parole officers—in particular, how these reforms were perceived by the key actors in the sanctioning process: parole officers. Findings from a statewide survey revealed that officers were generally dissatisfied with the restrictions on their discretion resulting from the reform. Analyses revealed that organizational factors such as officers' perceptions concerning how the sanctioning policy was implemented and its intended purposes were more influential than individual characteristics in shaping officers' views concerning the efficacy of the reform.

Keywords

parole, sanction, reform, organizational change

¹University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC, USA

²University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, USA

³University of Wisconsin–Parkside, Kenosha, WI, USA

Corresponding Author:

Benjamin Steiner, Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice,
University of South Carolina, 1305 Greene Street, Columbia, SC 29208, USA
Email: steinerb@mailbox.sc.edu

Graduated or progressive sanctions are structured, incremental responses to noncompliant behavior by offenders under supervision (Taxman et al., 1999). In response to the increases in state correctional populations and high failure rates of offenders under parole supervision, a number of jurisdictions have implemented reforms or reentry initiatives that include graduated sanctions for violations of offenders' release conditions (e.g., Burke, 1997; Committee on Community Supervision and Desistance From Crime, 2008; Travis & Lawrence, 2002; Travis & Petersilia, 2001; Travis & Visher, 2005). Agencies have also structured sanctions according to the severity of violations and offenders' level of risk (Burke, 1997). These graduated sanctioning models have the potential to reduce offender noncompliance through consistent, incremental supervision, while reserving scarce resources (e.g., prison space) for those offenders who pose the greatest threat to public safety (Burke, 1997; Taxman, Soule, & Gelb, 1999). Yet, despite the promise of these reforms, there have been few evaluations of either their effects or the implementation process (e.g., Martin, Van Dine, & Fialkoff, 2009). With regard to this last issue, we are unaware of any quantitative studies that have examined parole officers' perceptions of graduated sanction models or related reforms.

Parole officers' perceptions of sanctioning reforms are important because line-level officers and mid-level supervisors are the key actors in the sanctioning process. Understanding officers' perceptions of sanctioning reforms may be important for determining the efficacy of reforms but also for understanding the organizational reform process. As with change in any organization, parole reforms are likely to be met with some resistance from line staff. Determining the influences of parole officers' perceptions of reforms, however, could inform the development and implementation of these policies in other agencies. Using data collected from a statewide sample of parole officers, we examine officers' perceptions of the state of Ohio's transition to a graduated violation response strategy known more formally as the Ohio Adult Parole Authority Progressive Sanction Grid.

Criminal Justice Actors and Organizational Reform

Correctional change requires support at all levels of the organization, especially at the line level (Latessa, 2004). Many reform efforts fail because the personnel expected to implement the reform were not committed to it (Harris & Smith, 1996). Latessa observed that the benefits of change must be communicated to important constituencies in ways that specify what is to be gained. For line personnel, this means that the change has to be described in terms of

how it will benefit them in their day-to-day work. Often, criminal justice reforms that seek to achieve grand philosophical ends are perceived by line personnel as threatening or burdensome. Staff resistance to these reforms often leads to a failure of implementation (Latessa, 2004; see also Ferguson, 2002; Walker, 1993).

Parole violation sanctioning reforms, such as the one under study here, are comparable in many respects to judicial sentencing guidelines (Simon, 1993). Similar to sentencing guidelines, one of the goals of these policies is to structure officers' responses to parole violations and provide uniformity in the response to violations. Therefore, much like sentencing guidelines, policies that structure sanctioning for parole violations restrict the discretionary decisions of the criminal justice actor (Taxman et al., 1999).

Criminal justice reforms that restrict discretionary capacity are generally viewed cynically and met with some resistance by those whose behavior and powers are affected by the reform (Bazemore, 1994; Lurigio & Skogan, 1994; Sadd & Grinc, 1996; Stojkovic, Kalinich, & Klofas, 2003; Walker, 1993). For example, Bazemore (1994) found little agreement with the imposition of detention placement criteria among juvenile court judges in Florida. Although Griffin and Wooldredge (2001) found that judges modestly supported Ohio's sentencing guidelines and were almost evenly split in their assessment of the effects of the Ohio reform on sentencing outcomes, they also found that judges' views with regard to sentencing reform in Ohio were influenced by their perceptions of the effect of the reform on their discretionary power. Sadd and Grinc (1996) observed that police officers in several jurisdictions were resistant to their department's transition to community policing because of their perceived loss of enforcement power. Allen (2002) reported that officers' attitudes were strongly related to the successful implementation of community-oriented policing. Officers and managers who did not support the reform undermined its implementation and success. Miethé and Moore (1988) found that court actors generally opposed Minnesota's sentencing guidelines, however, they also uncovered that most court actors perceived the guidelines to be at least somewhat effective in achieving their goals of uniformity, neutrality, and proportionality. In contrast, Lawrence and Johnson (1990) found that probation officers in Minnesota generally perceived that the sentencing guidelines were ineffective in achieving fairness and eliminating disparity. They also observed that officers generally held negative views of the guidelines. According to Lawrence and Johnson, officers felt that the Minnesota guidelines did not take into account individual offenders' needs. Similarly, in her ethnographic study of parole officers, Lynch (1998) uncovered resistance to directives from management that sought to reorder officers'

self-defined priorities in favor of aggregate risk management strategies. Lynch observed that officers generally favored an individualized approach to case management. She argued that officers' desire to treat offenders as individuals, despite management's attempts to impose aggregate risk management strategies, stems from the close contact that officers have with the offenders under their supervision (see also Simon, 1993).

The preceding discussion suggests that many criminal justice actors will view organizational reforms that limit their discretion and structure their responses through a cynical lens. The cynicism seems to result from personal sources such as the actors' loss of power and from their restricted ability to individualize responses to offenders and/or their situations (Sadd & Grinc, 1996; Stojkovic et al., 2003; Walker, 1993). Furthermore, cynical views may even be more salient among parole officers because of their level of involvement with individual offenders (Lynch, 1998; Simon, 1993). On the other hand, the available evidence also suggests that not all criminal justice actors are cynical toward reforms (Griffin & Wooldredge, 2001; Miethe & Moore, 1988). Variation in actors' perceptions of reforms could be shaped by additional personal sources such as individual characteristics, but attitudes toward reforms may also be influenced by organizational sources such as how reforms are implemented (Ferguson, 2002; Sadd & Grinc, 1996; Stojkovic et al., 2003; Wycoff & Skogan, 1994; for a more general discussion, see Clear & Latessa, 1993).

Training, for example, has been associated with more favorable perceptions of reforms (Fulton, Stichman, Travis, & Latessa, 1997; Glensor & Peak, 1996). Traditional approaches to offender supervision and organizational norms are difficult barriers to overcome (Stojkovic et al., 2003). Training with regard to the intent of reforms, their application, and their potential effects on the key stakeholders in the process (e.g., officers, offenders) could aid in overcoming resistance and improve actors' understanding and overall perceptions of the reform (Fulton et al., 1997; Sadd & Grinc, 1996; Stojkovic et al., 2003). Criminal justice actors who have a better understanding of the intended purposes of reforms may be more likely to view them in a favorable light (Latessa, 2004; Sadd & Grinc, 1996; Schafer, 2002).

In addition to training, involvement of line-level personnel in the development of reforms has been linked to a better understanding and more favorable perceptions of reforms (Lurigio & Skogan, 1994; Sadd & Grinc, 1996; Wycoff & Skogan, 1994). In their evaluation of multiple police agencies' transitions to community policing, Sadd and Grinc (1996) observed that many officers perceived that the reform was happening to them as opposed to with them. Such perceptions, in turn, fueled distrust of management and contributed to officers' cynicism about the reforms. Tyler and De Cremer (2005)

found that greater involvement in organizational decision making and the change process can make employees feel more respected because they may perceive that management acted in a procedurally fair way when implementing change. Lambert (2003) has reported that correctional staff perceptions of organizational justice (being treated fairly and respectfully by the organization) were related to both job satisfaction and commitment to the organization. Thus, criminal justice actors who feel more involved in, or at least respected by, their organizations' reform process may have a better understanding of reforms and evaluate them more favorably.

Officers' satisfaction with aspects of their job may also be associated with their understanding and evaluations of reforms. Researchers have uncovered relationships between criminal justice actors' levels of satisfaction with their coworkers and their attitudes toward reforms (Travis & Winston, 1998; Wycoff & Skogan, 1994). Subordinates' satisfaction with their supervisors may also be relevant because of the central role that mid-level and first-line managers play in implementing reforms (Glensor & Peak, 1996; Lurigio & Skogan, 1994). If supervisors are receptive of reforms, they can facilitate and support their implementation. By contrast, supervisors can also hinder the implementation of reforms and reinforce cynical attitudes among their subordinates (Glensor & Peak, 1996). Researchers have found links between supervisory influence and officers' attitudes (Engel & Worden, 2003; Wycoff & Skogan, 1994).

Officers' job responsibilities can influence their perceptions of reforms (Stojkovic et al., 2003). Officers who supervise larger caseloads may feel that some reforms affect them disproportionately because of the increase in workload that often accompanies reforms. Similarly, officers who supervise specialized caseloads such as sex offenders may feel threatened by reforms that seek to standardize officers' responses to violations. Specialized caseloads, at one time a reform in and of themselves, have become institutionalized in most large parole agencies because they are viewed as a direct response to offender types that are considered problematic for more general supervision approaches (Latessa & Allen, 2003; see also Crank & Langworthy, 1992, for their application of this idea to police organizations). Thus, the specialized caseload legitimizes the individualized treatment of some offender types. Officers who manage these caseloads often embrace this position and view their assignment as a legitimate, essential function of the parole organization. Reforms that require more standardized treatment of offenders challenge the existing ideology, may threaten the legitimacy of the specialization approach, and may prove "status costly" to specialist officers. Changes that are seen as impinging on the professional status or power of personnel are likely to be

resisted (Stojkovic et al., 2003; for a more general discussion, see Duffee, 1986). For these reasons, officers who supervise specialized or larger caseloads may view reforms less favorably.

With regard to additional personal influences on officers' attitudes, officers' length of service and their rank may be relevant to their perceptions of reform. Criminal justice actors who have been with the organization for longer periods of time may be more resistant to change because they are more entrenched in traditional approaches to their job (Lurigio & Skogan, 1994; Schafer, 2002; Stojkovic et al., 2003). Similarly, researchers of criminal justice organizations have observed differences in perceptions of reforms between supervisors and line-level staff (e.g., Schafer, 2002). Supervisors may have a better understanding of reforms because of their role in the organization (Lurigio & Skogan, 1994). However, supervisors' perceptions of the efficacy of reforms may vary with how the reform affects their supervisory capacity (Glensor & Peak, 1996; Stojkovic et al., 2003). If supervisors perceive that a reform limits their power over subordinates, they may hold more cynical attitudes toward the reform.

Individual characteristics such as officers' gender, race, or level of education may also influence their views with regard to reforms. More educated officers may have a better understanding of reforms and therefore hold more favorable attitudes toward them (Schafer, 2002). Minority and female officers may be more supportive of reforms that standardize responses to violations because they may perceive that members of minority groups receive unequal treatment. Griffin and Wooldredge (2001) found that individual characteristics did not affect judges' perceptions of sentencing guidelines. Similarly, Schneider, Ervin, and Snyder-Joy (1996) found that individual characteristics did not affect probation officers' perceptions concerning the use of an actuarial risk assessment instrument. Travis and Winston (1998) found that individual characteristics were not related to officers' attitudes toward community policing. In contrast, Lurigio and Skogan (1994) uncovered that female and minority officers were more supportive of the transition to community policing. Schafer (2002) also found that female officers were generally more supportive of community policing. The extent to which individual characteristics shape parole officers' perceptions of reform has yet to be examined.

Parole Violation Sanctioning Guidelines in Ohio

The state of Ohio has been a determinate sentencing state since 1996. Although the implementation of sentencing guidelines abolished discretionary parole

release, the guidelines still provided for post release control (PRC) supervision for those offenders who would have previously received parole and discretionary PRC placement for nonviolent offenders. The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) has the responsibility of supervising all adult felony offenders in the state of Ohio. Within the ODRC, the Ohio Adult Parole Authority (APA) is responsible for the release and supervision of adult felony inmates returning to local communities from prison. At the time of the study, the APA was organized into seven regional offices, each containing multiple supervision units. In addition to a parole services supervisor, each supervision unit contained roughly 5 to 10 parole officers.

In consultation with the National Institute of Corrections and the ODRC Bureau of Research, the APA developed the Ohio Adult Parole Authority Progressive Sanction Grid. The sanction grid was implemented in July 2005 as part of a larger policy addressing the sanctioning of offenders who violate the conditions of parole or PRC supervision. The policy revision was issued in response to perceived disparities in the treatment of offenders who violated conditions of supervision. Specifically, the policy was intended to

foster consistent procedures designed to promote public confidence, safety, and fair, objective decision making when the Adult Parole Authority imposes sanctions for violation behavior committed by offenders during their period of supervision. (ODRC, 2005)

The policy was also consistent with the department's larger reentry initiative that was published in 2002 and contained recommendations to develop a violation policy that was supportive of the department's reentry goals (e.g., reduce recidivism) and that structured and provided statewide consistency in the use of progressive sanctioning (ODRC, 2002).

More specific, the policy directs officers to consider both public safety and proportionality when addressing violation behavior and refers officers to the sanction grid to determine the most appropriate response to violations. Similar to state sentencing guidelines, the sanction grid groups offenders by risk and violation severity. Offender risk scores are based on a static risk assessment used to determine their initial level of supervision. Violation behaviors are grouped into three categories: major violations, high severity violations, and low severity violations. Major violations, including new felony offenses, weapons offenses, and threat behaviors, are not required to be addressed by the grid. High severity violations include behaviors such as absconding, certain misdemeanor offenses, and programming violations, whereas low

severity violations include reporting, employment, substance abuse, and other minor infractions.

Responses are determined by cross-classifying the risk and violation severity categories by the number of violation incidents that have occurred since the offender's release. Sanction options are then provided in terms of a level of organizational action, each including multiple sanction alternatives that are detailed in the policy. The sanction grid presumes multiple opportunities to impose unit-level sanctions before proceeding to a violation hearing. Violation hearings are presumed to be held out of custody, except in cases over-ridden by public safety concerns.

In general, the sanction grid is consistent with graduated sanctioning schemes that have been proposed or implemented in other jurisdictions across the United States (e.g., Burke, 1997; Taxman et al., 1999). Although scholars have suggested that graduated sanctioning schemes may increase the organizational goals of fairness and uniformity in sanctioning (e.g., Burke, 1997; Martin et al., 2009; Taxman et al., 1999), we are unaware of any quantitative studies that have examined parole officers' perceptions of these reforms. We add to the limited research on criminal justice actors' perceptions of organizational reform by assessing parole officers' perceptions of Ohio's transition to structured violation response guidelines.

Method

This study was designed to assess officers' perceptions of the ODRC's transition to the sanction grid. First, we conducted focus groups with line-level APA officers and semistructured interviews with parole services supervisors in four of the seven APA supervision regions. The focus groups and interviews were conducted to guide the development of a mail survey that was distributed to APA officers. The findings from the officer survey are reported here.

The target population for the officer survey included all the APA officers who had used the sanction grid during the course of performing their job duties. These officers include line-level parole officers who supervise parole and PRC cases, senior parole officers who manage parole and PRC cases but also perform some administrative responsibilities for their supervision unit, and parole services supervisors who are responsible for overseeing an APA supervision unit.

Similar to most large parole agencies, the job responsibilities (e.g., investigations vs. field supervision) of APA officers often change during the course of their employment. To adjust for the possibility that an officer had experience with the sanction grid but at the time of the survey no longer carried an

active parole/PRC caseload, the sampling frame included all the parole services supervisors, senior parole officers, and line-level parole officers employed by the APA ($N = 621$). Each officer was sent a survey through the mail, and follow-up mailings were sent in general accordance with mixed mode procedures described by Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2008). Each officer in the sampling frame was sent a survey and cover letter. The initial mailing was followed by an electronic mail reminder. Approximately 3 to 4 weeks after the initial mailing, a replacement survey and reminder letter were sent to each of the nonrespondents. Another electronic mail reminder was sent to nonresponding officers about 2 weeks after the replacement survey. Finally, a fourth and final follow-up letter and replacement survey were mailed to those officers who were identified by the ODRC as either a parole services supervisor or a parole/PRC caseload carrying officer at the time the sampling frame was generated. As such, this group of officers received four follow-up reminders, as opposed to the three reminders sent to the entire sampling frame. These procedures resulted in 470 returned surveys, a response rate of nearly 76%.

The information obtained from the surveys, along with the official data obtained from the ODRC, facilitated the determination of the number of officers who had used the sanction grid and should therefore be included in the target population ($N = 460$). The remaining APA employees were excluded from the study because they did not have experience with the sanction grid and instead performed duties such as transports, presentence investigations, or supervision of community control (probation) cases. Of the 460 officers who were determined to be the target population, 380 returned surveys, a response rate of nearly 83%. The final sample was further reduced to 373 officers because seven surveys were determined to be unusable due to substantial missing data. Univariate hypothesis tests revealed that the sample statistics for the variables age, race, gender, rank (e.g., parole services supervisor), and years employed by the ODRC were not significantly different from the corresponding population parameters generated from official data provided by the ODRC.

Measures

The survey included Likert-type response and other closed-ended questions. All of the measures included in the final models are described in Table 1, although a larger pool of potential predictors was initially considered for the analyses. The measures in Table 1 were ultimately selected after considering their theoretical relevance as demonstrated in the empirical literature, information attained from the focus groups and interviews, tests for (multi)collinearity,

Table 1. Sample Means and Standard Deviations

	\bar{x}	SD
Level 1: Officers ($N_1 = 373$)		
Female ^a	0.38	0.49
Non-White ^a	0.19	0.39
Education > bachelor's degree ^a	0.26	0.44
Years of service	10.24	7.02
Parole services supervisor ^a	0.13	0.33
Caseload size	76.22	25.38
Supervises sex offenders ^a	0.24	0.43
Satisfaction with supervisor ^b	0.00	1.00
Satisfaction with coworkers ^b	0.00	1.00
Satisfaction with regional administrator ^b	0.00	1.00
Professional respect ^b	0.00	1.00
Adequacy of training ^b	0.00	1.00
Primary intent ^b	0.00	1.00
Secondary intent ^b	0.00	1.00
Effectiveness ^b	0.00	1.00
Level 1: Officers ($N_1 = 338$)		
Case management adjustment ^b	0.00	1.00
Offender control ^b	0.00	1.00
Level 2: Units ($N_2 = 63$)		
Level 3: Regions ($N_3 = 7$)		

a. Dummy coded.

b. Factor (individual items listed in the Appendix).

the stability of coefficient estimates (influenced by the number of predictors relative to sample size), and the strength of the zero-order relationships.

Several of the measures, including the outcome measures, were created by factor analyzing the responses of multiple survey questions inquiring about the sanction grid. The scales were created separately via principal components analysis to permit examination of potential covariation between the concepts of interest (i.e., some of these measures were included as predictor variables in the analyses). The individual items that made up each scale, their individual component loadings, and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measures of sampling adequacy for each scale are described in the appendix.

With regard to the outcome measures, *primary intent* assessed officers' understanding of the purposes of the sanction grid and includes items such as increasing fairness in the sanctioning process and reducing disparate treatment of offenders. The other two outcome variables measured officers' views

with regard to the outcomes resulting from the transition to the sanction grid. *Effectiveness* examined the officers' opinions of whether the sanction grid achieved its intended purposes. *Offender control* is a more specific measure that assessed officers' perceptions about whether offender behavior has been easier to manage since the implementation of the sanction grid. Only the responses from officers who were employed by the ODRC before and after the implementation of the sanction grid ($N = 338$) were used to create this scale.

Based on the criteria described above, the predictor variables that were included in all of the models were whether an officer was *female*, *non-White*, had *education > bachelor's degree*, was a *parole services supervisor*, *supervised sex offenders*, the officer's number of *years of service* with ODRC, and each officer's *caseload size*. For the measure of caseload size, the values for parole services supervisors were created by standardizing the total cases assigned to their unit by the number of officers in their unit. Two scales assessed officers' views with regard to the implementation of the sanction grid. *Professional respect* measured the degree to which officers perceived that their views and skills were considered in the design of the sanction grid. *Adequacy of training* assessed officers' opinions with regard to the level of training they received on how to use the sanction grid. An additional scale, *secondary intent*, examined officers' perceptions with regard to other potential purposes of the sanction grid, such as reducing the prison population and reducing officer discretion.¹ Secondary intent was only included in the analyses of officers' perceptions of effectiveness and offender control. Scales tapping officers' level of *satisfaction with their supervisor*, *coworkers*, and *regional administrator* were also created to ascertain the influence of officers' perceptions of the organizational climate on their evaluation of the sanction grid. The same procedures as those described above were used to create the scales related to dimensions of organizational satisfaction. Descriptions of the individual items that make up each of the satisfaction scales are also contained in the appendix. Finally, a scale, *case management adjustment*, measured officers' perceptions with regard to the degree of change in routine case management that occurred as a result of the implementation of the sanction grid. Case management adjustment was only created for those officers who had been with the department before and after the implementation of the sanction grid. As such, this variable was only included in the analyses of offender control.

Statistical Analyses

All steps in the analysis involved multilevel modeling techniques due to the need to recognize the hierarchical structure of the data (officers nested within

supervision units and supervision units nested within APA regions). Tri-level data sets were created with officers at Level 1, supervision units at Level 2, and APA regions at Level 3. The tri-level data files allowed us to adjust for correlated error among officers nested within the same supervision units as well as for correlated error among supervision units within the same APA region (i.e., officers in the same unit and units in the same region are not truly independent of each other because they are all under the direction of the same individual, unit supervisor or regional administrator). The technique also facilitated hypothesis tests to determine whether significant variation in each outcome existed between supervision units or APA regions (e.g., Did officers' perceptions with regard to the efficacy of the sanction grid differ across supervision units or across the seven APA regions?). Using multilevel modeling, as opposed to pooled regression, permitted us to carry out these hypothesis tests at each level of analysis and base the tests on the appropriate N 's for officer versus units versus regions. (Raudenbush and Bryk [2002] offer discussions of other problems encountered when using pooled regression as well as a detailed treatment of the procedures involved in multilevel modeling.)

The continuous outcome measures were all examined with hierarchical linear regression using HLM 6.0 (Raudenbush, Bryk, Cheong, Congdon, & du Toit, 2004). The analyses proceeded in two stages. First, an unconditional model (with no predictors) revealed the variance estimates in each outcome at Level 1 (among officers within supervision units), Level 2 (between supervision units within APA regions), and Level 3 (across regions). Next, the Level 1 predictors were added to the model. Due to the limited numbers of officers within units (and units within regions), however, we could not examine the random effects of the officer-level measures across units (i.e., these effects were "fixed" or averaged across all units). In a multilevel model, the number of variance-covariance components to be estimated increases with the number of random coefficients that are included in the model.² Although there is no rule of thumb per se with regard to how many cases per aggregate are required for reliable random effects models to be estimated, the supervision units examined here only contained, on average, approximately six officers per unit, which is considerably below the number generally needed for reliable estimation of random effects (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). Even though the data restricted our ability to take advantage of a unique aspect of multilevel modeling, the Level 1 model intercepts were still allowed to vary randomly across supervision units and the Level 2 model intercepts were permitted to vary randomly across APA regions. All of the officer-level measures were centered on the means for each unit to reduce the odds of finding spurious Level 1 effects due to unmeasured supervision unit-level effects that

Table 2. Officer-Level Effects on Primary Intent of Progressive Sanction Grid

	Primary Intent	
	β	SE
Intercept	.01	.10
Female	.12	.10
Non-White	.28*	.13
Education > bachelor's degree	.07	.11
Years of service	-.02*	.01
Parole services supervisor	.42*	.20
Caseload size	-.01*	.002
Supervises sex offenders	.002	.18
Satisfaction with supervisor	.04	.07
Satisfaction with coworkers	-.04	.06
Satisfaction with regional administrator	.12	.07
Adequacy of training	.07	.05
Professional respect	.26*	.05
N_i	373	
Proportion variation within units	.90	
Proportion variation within units explained	.21	
Proportion variation between units	.06*	
Proportion variation between regions	.04*	

Note: Level 1 effects fixed across supervision units.

* $p \leq .05$.

might also be related to compositional differences in officer populations across supervision units or across APA regions.

Findings

The results from the analyses of primary intent are contained in Table 2. Recall that primary intent refers to the principal procedural objectives of the sanction grid such as standardizing the sanctioning process. Minority officers and supervisors were more likely to understand the primary intent of the sanction grid. Officers' years of service and caseload size were inversely related to primary intent, whereas professional respect was positively related to primary intent. These significant predictors accounted for 21% of the variation in primary intent. Officers' gender, their education level, whether they supervised sex offenders, their satisfaction with the dimensions of their work environment, and their perceptions with regard to the adequacy of training on

Table 3. Officer-Level Effects on Perceived Outcomes of Progressive Sanction Grid

	Effectiveness		Offender Control	
	β	SE	β	SE
Intercept	.03	.10	.02	.08
Female	-.14	.09	.02	.10
Non-White	.07	.11	.03	.14
Education > bachelor's degree	-.04	.10	-.13	.12
Years of service	-.01	.01	.003	.01
Parole services supervisor	.01	.17	-.36	.19
Caseload size	-.002	.002	-.002	.002
Supervises sex offenders	-.21	.15	.05	.18
Satisfaction with supervisor	-.11*	.06	-.16*	.07
Satisfaction with coworkers	-.05	.05	-.07	.06
Satisfaction with regional administrator	.22*	.05	.21*	.06
Adequacy of training	-.02	.04	-.03	.05
Professional respect	.26*	.05	.30*	.06
Primary intent	.45*	.05	.21*	.06
Secondary intent	-.03	.04	-.13*	.06
Case management adjustment	—	—	-.11*	.05
N_1	373		338	
Proportion variation within units	.91		.88	
Proportion variation within units explained	.46		.29	
Proportion variation between units	.05*		.11*	
Proportion variation between regions	.04*		.01	

Note: Level 1 effects fixed across supervision units.

* $p \leq .05$.

the sanction grid did not have an effect on their perceptions of the sanction grid's primary intent. Officers' perceptions of the primary intent of the sanction grid did, however, vary significantly across supervision units and APA regions, which suggests that there may be unmeasured organizational influences that affected the level of understanding with regard to the primary intent of the sanction grid.

Table 3 contains the results of the analyses of officer perceptions with regard to the outcomes of the sanction grid. Effectiveness refers to the ability of the sanction grid to achieve its intended outcomes such as making sanctioning more fair. Offender control is more specific to officers' perceptions with regard to the effects of the sanction grid on their ability to manage offender behavior. In general, the responses to the items that made up these scales

indicated that there was fairly widespread disagreement with statements concerning the effectiveness of the sanction grid and its ability to improve offender control. The multivariate analysis revealed that officers' satisfaction with supervisors was inversely related to their perceptions of the sanction grid's effectiveness. Satisfaction with the regional administrator, perceptions of professional respect, and primary intent were all positively associated with more supportive views of the sanction grid's effectiveness. These significant predictors accounted for 46% of the variation in officers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the sanction grid.

Similar findings emerged from the analysis of officers' perceptions of offender control. It is important to remember that these analyses were restricted to those officers who were employed by the ODRC both before and after the implementation of the progressive sanctioning grid. Consistent with the analysis of effectiveness, officers' satisfaction with their supervisor was inversely related to their perceptions of offender control. Also consistent with the analysis of effectiveness, satisfaction with the regional administrator, perceptions of professional respect, and primary intent were all positively associated with perceptions of offender control. Unique to this outcome, however, was a negative relationship between secondary intent and offender control. The measure of case management adjustment was also inversely related to offender control. The latter finding suggests that officers who perceived a change in the way they managed their caseload as a result of the sanction grid also perceived a change in their ability to effectively regulate offender behavior. All told, the relevant predictor variables accounted for 29% of the variation in offender control.

In general, the findings from these analyses indicate that organizational influences were important factors associated with parole officers' response to the sanction grid. First, the effects of professional respect, primary intent, secondary intent, satisfaction with supervisor, and satisfaction with regional administrator all support the notion that organizational influences shape officer perceptions. Furthermore, the analysis of variance in each outcome revealed that 5% of the variation in perceptions of effectiveness was between supervision units and 4% was between regions. Similarly, 11% of the variation in offender control was between supervision units. These findings indicate that unmeasured differences between units and regions accounted for significant variation in officer responses. In other words, officers in different supervision units and APA regions feel differently with regard to the outcomes of the sanction grid, which suggests that perceptions and assessments of the sanction grid may be linked to broader perceptions of the supervision unit or job satisfaction.

Discussion and Conclusions

Parole reforms that structure responses to violations have significant implications for parole officers. Although it is generally perceived that criminal justice actors are unfavorable toward policies or reforms that limit their discretionary power to sanction offenders (Bazemore, 1994; Walker, 1993), scholars have argued that line-level parole officers, in particular, will resist strategies that restrict their discretionary decision making because of their direct contact with offenders (Lynch, 1998; Simon, 1993). Yet, there have been few studies of criminal justice actors' responses to sanctioning reforms. This study contributes to this underresearched area by analyzing data collected from a statewide sample of parole officers who recently experienced the implementation of violation response policy reform that limited officers' discretionary capacity.

In general, this study of Ohio parole officers revealed fairly widespread resistance and cynicism with regard to the Ohio Adult Parole Authority Progressive Sanction Grid. Our analyses uncovered that parole officers were concerned about the restrictions the policy placed on their decision-making capacity. These findings are consistent with earlier studies of criminal justice actors' responses to organizational reform (e.g., Griffin & Wooldredge, 2001; Miethe & Moore, 1988; Sadd & Grinc, 1996).

Consistent with other studies of criminal justice reforms (e.g., Bazemore, 1994; Griffin & Wooldredge, 2001; Lurigio & Skogan, 1994; Miethe & Moore, 1988; Sadd & Grinc, 1996), we also uncovered variation in parole officers' perceptions with regard to the sanction grid. Similar to Schneider et al. (1996), our analyses revealed that very few officer characteristics had an effect on officers' assessments of the sanction grid. Our findings did, however, indicate that organizational factors influence officers' perceptions of the sanction grid. Specifically, we observed that officers generally felt that their opinions and skills were not considered in the design of the sanction grid. Officers who did feel that they were more respected as professionals, however, had a better understanding of the intent of the sanction grid and also were more favorable in their evaluations concerning its effectiveness (for a more general discussion, see Latessa, 2004). Similarly, officers who perceived the intent of the sanction grid as standardizing the response to offender behavior were more positive in their assessments concerning the outcomes of the reform. Conversely, officers who perceived that the intent of the sanction grid was to restrict professional judgment were less supportive in their evaluations of the sanction grid. For the most part, these findings are consistent with those derived from other studies of criminal justice reform (e.g., Lurigio & Skogan, 1994; Sadd & Grinc, 1996).

The findings also provided support for an organizational influence on officers' perceptions of the sanction grid that was linked to the chain of command. Officers who were more satisfied with their immediate supervisor were less favorable in their evaluations concerning the effectiveness of the policy. Officers who were more satisfied with their regional administrator, however, were more positive in their appraisal of the sanction grid.

We were advised that prior to the implementation of the sanction grid, the standard operating procedure was for officers to "staff" most sanctioning decisions with a supervisor or senior parole officer. In many of the officers' and supervisors' opinions, the staffing served as a check and balance system that helped to ensure a fair and progressive response to offenders' behavior. In the period following the implementation of the sanctioning policy, supervisors no longer guided the structuring of sanctioning decisions. Decisions were made in accordance with the sanction grid.

The result of this change in the sanctioning process could be that, much like many of the line officers, some supervisors felt less respected as professionals. Still, in most units, supervisors tried to support the department's initiative, which could have created friction between them and the officers under their supervision. Of course, conflict between supervisors and line staff may also have preceded the implementation of the reform, but regardless of when the conflict originated, these processes would contribute to the inverse effect we observed when examining the effects of satisfaction with officers' immediate supervisor on their perceptions of the grid.

The regional administrators were the only individuals who could override the sanction grid. It could be that the positive relationship we observed was a function of the officers' perceptions of the regional administrators' willingness to override the policy. In regions where it was perceived that the regional administrator was willing to override the sanction grid, officers may have been more favorable with regard to the reform. In these regions, the regional administrator's willingness to override the grid may have been perceived by the officers as support for their professional judgment. In regions where regional administrators were not perceived as willing to override the sanction grid, however, officers may have felt less supported. On the other hand, it is likely that officers who understood and agreed with the primary purpose of the sanction grid had less desire for overrides and thus were more likely to assess their regional administrator positively.

Although these data do not allow us to sort out the causal ordering of these processes, the data do seem to indicate that officers' feelings that their judgment was not supported may have contributed to a more negative assessment of the sanction grid. Moreover, the observed relationships between professional respect, satisfaction with supervisor, satisfaction with regional

administrator, primary intent, secondary intent, and officers' perceptions of effectiveness and offender control indicate that organizational factors are more important in explaining officer perceptions than are individual officer characteristics.

It is interesting that training was not related to officers' perceptions with regard to the sanction grid. This finding is inconsistent with what has been observed in other studies of criminal justice reform (Fulton et al., 1997; Glensor & Peak, 1996; Sadd & Grinc, 1996). The difference between our findings and those from other studies could be attributable to the content of the training. The responses to the questions that made up the adequacy of the training scale suggest that there was general agreement among officers that they were trained on how to *use* the grid. Yet, training was not related to officers' perceptions with regard to the *intent* of the grid. It could be that the content of the training was tailored toward how to use the grid rather than *why* the agency was going to use it. Indeed, there was considerable disagreement among officers with regard to why the policy was implemented, and a sizeable number were unaware of the procedural objectives of the policy. For example, more than 60% of the officers did not feel that the grid was intended to make sanctioning more fair, and approximately 40% of the officers did not feel that the grid was intended to standardize treatment across the APA regions. In light of the findings from this study and others concerning the importance of officers' understanding the intent of reforms (e.g., Sadd & Grinc, 1996; Schafer, 2002), criminal justice agencies seeking to implement reform may want to incorporate a component on the intent of the reform into their training curricula.

Finally, it should be noted that there was variation in perceptions concerning the effectiveness of the sanction grid across supervision units and across the APA regions. Although some of these differences can probably be attributed to the observations concerning the chain of command that were discussed above, descriptive information along with officers' responses to some of the survey questions not used in the analyses suggest other possible explanations. For example, units and regions who operated in primarily urban areas generally viewed the grid more favorably than those units and regions operating in more rural areas. The officers in these units and regions generally had more years of service and, therefore, may have had fewer officers who were familiar with the potential benefits of graduated sanctions. Recall that we did observe an inverse relationship between years of service and officers' understanding of the primary intent of the grid. In addition, officers in primarily rural areas may have felt that they did not have the resources to implement the grid effectively or that the grid could not effectively be applied to offenders without access to the resources available in more urban areas. In

partial support of these ideas, we revealed that nearly 50% of all the officers felt that their unit did not have the resources to use the sanction grid the way it was supposed to be used. Almost 60% of the officers felt that the grid could work if they had more sanctions to use and nearly half (46%) of the officers agreed that the policy could be made to work. Thus, from many of the officers' perspectives, the problem may not be with the policy per se but more so with the way the reform was implemented and the availability of resources to carry out the policy effectively. Furthermore, officers' opinions seem to have been shaped in part by their region and supervision unit.

In sum, the findings from this study point to the organizational dimensions of policy change. Even though the ODRC circulated drafts of the sanction grid and violation policy on the department's parole and community services newsgroup discussion board and convened a workgroup that included APA officers prior to the implementation of the sanction grid, most officers seemed dissatisfied with how the sanction grid was developed and implemented. Officers' perceptions concerning how the sanction grid was developed and implemented, in turn, influenced their perceptions concerning its purpose and effectiveness.

It is ironic that the policy was designed to make the sanctioning process more just, yet according to the majority of officers, the process by which the policy was implemented was unfair. More broad, these findings can also be considered within perspectives on process-based leadership (e.g., Tyler & De Cremer, 2005), which hold that when employees perceive that the organization or leadership acts in a procedurally fair way, it is viewed as more legitimate and competent. Perceptions of legitimacy and competence, in turn, make employees more accepting of organizational change. From this evaluation of the Ohio APA's implementation of progressive sanctioning guidelines, we observed that parole officers did not feel that they were involved in the development of the guidelines and they did not perceive that the sanction grid recognized their professional abilities. For most officers, these feelings contributed to the perception that the policy was illegitimate and, hence, ineffective. Given the encouraging findings for those officers who did feel involved in the development process and recognized by the sanction grid, other agencies seeking to implement broad organizational policy reforms may benefit from increasing the involvement of line-level employees. Involvement of line-level employees may encourage them to identify with the policy and thus become more accepting of the change. The success of any reform may depend on its acceptance by the line personnel who must implement it (Latessa, 2004). The analyses reported here revealed that this acceptance is probably conditioned more by organizational forces than by the individual characteristics of personnel.

Appendix

Individual Items and Component Loadings for Scales

Scale	Component Loading
Professional respect ($\alpha = .47$, KMO = .676, Eigenvalue = 1.95)	
The grid is based on research on effective discipline.	.633
Parole officers' opinions were considered in the design of the grid.	.806
The grid recognizes officers' professional ability.	.796
Using the grid has lowered officers' spirits.	.510
Adequacy of training ($\alpha = .81$, KMO = .802, Eigenvalue = 3.28)	
I received training on how to use the grid.	.687
I did not receive enough information to use the grid the way it is supposed to be used. ^a	.787
I have received ongoing training on how to use the grid.	.608
More training on how to use the grid would be helpful. ^a	.626
I understand how to use the grid.	.676
The grid is confusing. ^a	.710
The grid should be made easier to use. ^a	.680
Primary intent ($\alpha = .69$, KMO = .642, Eigenvalue = 1.86)	
The grid is intended to simplify the discipline process.	.821
The grid is intended to make sanctioning more fair.	.827
The grid is intended to reduce differences in offender treatment across the APA regions.	.707
Secondary intent ($\alpha = .56$, KMO = .601, Eigenvalue = 1.65)	
The grid is intended to reduce the number of hearings.	.769
The grid is intended to reduce the prison population.	.804
The grid is intended to reduce officer discretion.	.639
Effectiveness ($\alpha = .84$, KMO = .874, Eigenvalue = 3.60)	
Using the grid makes sense to me.	.705
The grid is useful in controlling officers' prejudices.	.709
The grid has helped me make sanctioning decisions.	.724
The grid effectively addresses offender risk.	.704
The grid treats offenders fairly.	.697
Using the grid has been helpful when I have gone to hearing. ^b	.783
The grid allows for offenders to change.	.690
Case management adjustment ($\alpha = .55$, KMO = .703, Eigenvalue = 1.98)	
I staff more sanctioning decisions now that I use the grid. ^b	.640
I go through more steps to sanction noncompliance now that I use the grid. ^b	.707
I give more written sanctions now that I use the grid. ^b	.723
I make more treatment referrals now that I use the grid. ^b	.531

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

Scale	Component Loading
Since I started using the grid, I have not changed how I manage my caseload. ^{a,b}	.512
Offender control ($\alpha = .71$, KMO = .735, Eigenvalue = 2.48)	
Since I started using the grid, I can respond to violations faster. ^b	.557
Since I started using the grid, it is harder for me to control offender behavior. ^{a,b}	.712
Since I started using the grid, my offenders respect me more. ^b	.709
Since I started using the grid, my offenders get away with less. ^b	.695
Since I started using the grid, I have had more offenders reoffend. ^{a,b}	.569
Since I started using the grid, I have more unnecessary paperwork. ^{a,b}	.597
Satisfaction with supervisor ($\alpha = .95$, KMO = .958, Eigenvalue = 8.96)	
My immediate supervisor does a good job using the staff and resources available to him or her for the effective supervision of the offenders. ^c	.844
My immediate supervisor is helpful in getting me what I need to do my job effectively. ^c	.857
My immediate supervisor encourages me if I do my job well. ^c	.828
My immediate supervisor often blames others when things go wrong. ^{a,c}	.686
My immediate supervisor helps me resolve problems when they arise. ^c	.841
My immediate supervisor listens to my suggestions on how to resolve problems. ^c	.851
My immediate supervisor listens to my suggestions on how to respond to violation behavior. ^c	.796
My immediate supervisor treats me fairly. ^c	.909
My immediate supervisor trusts me to do my job. ^c	.839
My immediate supervisor has not earned my respect. ^{a,c}	.692
My immediate supervisor makes fair decisions. ^c	.878
I would transfer to another unit if given the opportunity to do so. ^a	.543
My last performance rating was fair and accurate.	.554
The treatment I get from my superiors is about the same as the treatment from my coworkers. ^a	.652
My immediate supervisor asks me to work with fellow officers on job-related problems that need to be taken care of. ^c	.655
Satisfaction with coworkers ($\alpha = .81$, KMO = .860, Eigenvalue = 3.34)	
I get along with most of my coworkers.	.652

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

Scale	Component Loading
Most of my coworkers do their fair share of the work.	.795
Most of my coworkers are satisfied with their job.	.522
My coworkers volunteer to help handle problems when they come up.	.725
I do not trust my coworkers. ^a	.652
My coworkers treat the offenders fairly.	.719
I am proud to work with the staff in this unit.	.733
Satisfaction with regional administrator ($\alpha = .79$, KMO = .795, Eigenvalue = 3.21)	
The regional administrator is open to suggestions made by the staff concerning how to solve region problems.	.814
The regional administrator makes fair decisions.	.850
I am told promptly when there is a change in policy, rules, or regulations that affects me.	.572
It is often unclear who has the authority to make a decision. ^a	.544
It is not as important to know your job as it is to get in good with the people in charge here. ^a	.505
Hard work will typically lead to advancement or other rewards from the administration.	.659
The regional administrator and my unit supervisor are generally on the same page with regard to how policies should be applied. ^d	.717

KMO = Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy.

a. Reverse coded.

b. Parole services supervisors were asked to answer question in reference to their unit.

c. Parole services supervisors were asked to answer question about their regional administrator.

d. Parole services supervisors were asked to answer question about central office.

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Notes

1. Analysis of variance of these three scales revealed that perceptions of professional respect did not vary across supervision units, and only a modest, albeit significant, 3% of the variation in professional respect was between regions. Officers' perceptions concerning training and secondary intent did not vary between supervision units or between the Adult Parole Authority (APA) regions. These findings suggest that the attitudes held by APA officers concerning professional respect, training, and secondary intent were relatively widespread.
2. The formula for estimating the number of variance-covariance components in a basic two-level model is $m(m + 1) / 2 + 1$, where m is the number of random Level 1 predictors in the model (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002).

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Bios

Benjamin Steiner is an assistant professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of South Carolina. He holds a PhD from the University of Cincinnati.

Lawrence F. Travis, III, received the doctor of philosophy in criminal justice from the State University of New York at Albany in 1982. He is a professor of criminal justice at the University of Cincinnati, where he has been employed since 1980. Previously, he served as the research director for the Oregon State Board of Parole and as a research analyst for the National Parole Institutes. He is the editor of *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management* and has published extensively on a variety of criminal justice topics.

Matthew D. Makarios is an assistant professor in the criminal justice department at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. He holds a PhD from the University of Cincinnati. His research interests focus on evidence-based corrections and life-course criminology. He has had recent research appear in *Criminal Justice & Behavior* and *Justice Quarterly*.