

Proposal for (individual) paper presentation  
New Directions in Critical Criminology Conference  
University of Tennessee

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Title: "Breaking the rules the right way: Self-governance, resistance and reproduction within parole"

Abstract

*Individuals on parole occupy a liminal position; they reside in the community and are expected to manage their affairs yet legally they remain subject to penal custody and extensive regulation. Based on observational and interview data with individuals on parole in California, this paper explores how individuals on parole experience their complex, fractured subject position and the parole agency's efforts to govern conduct and personhood. I document that individuals frequently violate formal rules while simultaneously evincing a commitment to parole success and claiming they are "doing parole the right way." I contend that this seemingly paradoxical position reflects how individuals challenge penal logics, in particular, the assumption that paroled subjects are incapable of ethical self-governance and in need of remaking the self. Interlocutors perceived parole regulation as over-governance of private conduct and conceived of themselves as individuals capable of responsible, virtuous self-management. In this way, they were calling for the right(s) to exercise autonomy and be governed via circuits of inclusion, rather than exclusion (see Rose 2000). I also suggest that this resistance to parole logics reflects, at the same time, the reproduction of penal and social power writ large; resistance to the subject position of 'parolee' was undergirded by individuals' (self) efforts to become responsible, 'good' citizens.*

Rose, Nikolas. 2000. "Government and Control". *British Journal of Criminology*. 40: 321-339.

Keywords: governance, parole, subjectivity, community penalties, reentry/reintegration

