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# A Practice Perspective on Organizing Tension: The Study of a Compassionate Nonprofit

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“A PRACTICE PERSPECTIVE ON ORGANIZING TENSION: THE STUDY OF A  
COMPASSIONATE NONPROFIT”

by

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B.A University of Pittsburgh, 2012

A thesis submitted to the

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A PRACTICE PERSPECTIVE ON ORGANIZING TENSION

This thesis entitled:

“A Practice Perspective on Organizing Tension: The Study of a Compassionate Nonprofit”

written by ARIELLE KLEIN

has been approved for the Department of Communication

Date: May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015

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The final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.

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**Abstract**

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A Practice Perspective on Organizing Tension: The Study of a Compassionate Nonprofit

Thesis directed by Associate Professor Timothy Kuhn

Practice theory and identity have been of recent interest to organizational communication scholars, but not often are the two considered in tandem. In order to expand the view of what is academically considered as organization, work, and work practices this study applies a practice perspective, specifically structuration theory, to identity and identification in a tension centered research model. At the end of this study the following issues will be addressed: (1) how rules, resources, and structures influence identification and identity work; (2) which sort of identities seem to be preferred and by whom; and (3) how do nonprofit identity practices create, reify, or maintain organizing tension? This study will contribute to the academic inquiry of identity and explore the organizing tension found specifically in nonprofit organizations.

A PRACTICE PERSPETIVE ON ORGANIZING TENSION

*Dedicated to Anastasia, Tami, and Second Chances*

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## Chapter 1-Introduction

Nontraditional workers (workers outside of the bureaucratic organizations, often associated with white collar jobs that are paid from the hours of 9 to 5) and work practices have often been excluded from conversations in organizational communication (Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002 & Cheney, Christensen, & Dailey, 2014). In an effort to right this imbalance, scholars have turned an analytical eye towards new types of work prevalent in modern society: precarious work, part-time work, volunteer work, and uncertain work with the intent to expand the current understanding of organizational membership and the meaning of ‘worker’ (Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002; Burrows, 2013; Dempsey, 2012; Henly & Lambert, 2014; Kalleberg, 2000; & Kalleberg, 2009). One such flagship communication study by Ashcraft and Kedrowicz (2002) examined the significant lack of organizational study around volunteer members as opposed to paid workers and analyzed empowerment in the case of a nonprofit work environment. Although undeniably a useful corrective, Ashcraft and Kedrowicz enact a traditional distinction between groups within organizations, definitively and *a priori* separating staff members from volunteers, thereby disabling findings that could emerge across the groups in terms of identity, practice, and empowerment. These unknown findings regarding volunteer workers could have addressed the issues of practice and identification, which may have further developed an understanding of empowerment, from the worker’s perspective.

The Ashcraft and Kedrowicz (2002) article is a strong example of scholars examining largely uncharted territories; there are not many that follow in its path. Nonprofit organizations, however, have seen a huge influx in the past two decades and continue to crop up in discussions of organization and management. The solidified position can be shown by the journal *Nonprofit Quarterly*, instituted in 1999 to spread best practices throughout the sector,

specifically around issues of management. Communication scholars have begun to report on other facets of nonprofit work including tensions in nonprofit organizations as well as in cross-sector partnerships (Janssens & Streyvaert, 1999; Hardy, Lawrence, & Phillips, 2006; Lewis, Isbell, & Koschmann, 2010; & Sanders, 2012). Scholars have begun to scrape the surface of nonprofit organizing as something distinct and messy on its own terms, however analysis of nonprofit work practices remains scant.

In order to analyze nonprofit practices and the everyday struggles experienced by the volunteer workers, the role of communication must be clarified as one full of tension. While various definitions of communication may be appropriate for the study of nonprofit practices, the definition that will enable a detailed discussion of everyday struggles is as follows:

“Communication is a site where organizational members struggle for primacy for various meanings of truth and identity, as well as their material manifestations” (Trethewey & Ashcraft, 2004, p. 83). As can be seen from this definition, communication is contextualized within organizations and is considered a constant and individually experienced struggle--not a model of efficiency or effectiveness. Positioning communication as a struggle allows researchers to advance a tension centered approach. Tension-centered research (Ashcraft & Trethewey, 2004; Harter, 2004; Martin, 2004; Sanders, 2012; Tracy, 2004; & Trethewey & Ashcraft, 2004) adheres to the following assumptions: (1) tension exists within all organizations, (2) the purpose of studying tension is not to eliminate the tension but to explore how workers make sense of and live with the tension, and (3) communication is seen as the basis for organizing and is equally tension filled. In other words, “organizational communication is an inherently ambiguous and ironic process” (Trethewey & Ashcraft, 2004, p. 85). This ambiguity and irony comes from the constant contradictions or paradoxes that cause the tensions inherent in organizing.

Communication as described above does not present overly optimistic depiction of work, but one that captures the everyday messiness well known by organizational members, with an emphasis on practices.

Nonprofit work practices are especially interesting because the organization itself embodies a contradiction. Tensions are present within all organizations; however, as examined by Sanders (2012), nonprofits themselves begin from a contradictory space: “The tension between the financial imperatives of the market and the need to fulfill a social mission is an inherent characteristic of nonprofit organizing” (p. 181). This characteristic of nonprofit organizing is common within the nonprofit sector, although experienced differently based on each specific organizational model and social initiative. Because of its tension-filled and contradictory position in society, “the nonprofit sector is guided by an *organizing tension* that is an ontological feature of all organizations that are dedicated to fulfilling social missions and building civil society within market economies” (Sanders, 2012, p. 182). Additionally, contradictory messages often found in organizations, infuse tension into organizing.

Tracy (2007) outlined several reasons for tension filled organizing witnessed in prison systems, and for both prisoners and correctional officers competing narrative (the same competing narratives) caused these tensions. The competing narratives found in penal institutions are punishment and rehabilitation (Tracy, 2007). Although several other features of tension are discussed in Tracy’s (2007) article, the competing narratives surrounding correctional institutions are tensions she considered present in everyday correctional institutions at large. By looking at nonprofit organizing as tension centered one can better understand the organizing practices within them and the everyday struggles divulged within those practices, for the case to be discussed these tensions come double for the very nature of the organization as one directly

linked to a county jail and the relationship between the two organizations, both of whom profess to provide opportunities and resources for rehabilitation/skills needed to reenter society.

In my research I will examine the tension filled practices, specifically around the subject of identity, within a nonprofit organization in the arena of criminal justice run by volunteers. Organizational volunteers occupy a liminal space, straddling work and leisure, posing interesting messiness and complications in terms of organizational identity (Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002). Inspecting the identity practices within a tension centered site will provide insight into nonprofit organizing and the struggles to maintain, support, and reify both organizational and individual identities within that tension. I posit that in the case of a nontraditional organization that can entirely be characterized by volunteer work, using an organizational model that may be considered a 'compassionate organization' (Dutton, Worline, Frost, & Lilius, 2006; & George, 2013), that traditional methods of examining identity will prove to be insufficient. I argue that in the case of Resisting Recidivism (RR), a nonprofit, sustained on volunteer power, that the tension centered research model would advocate for a practice perspective of identity as opposed to a 'traditional' examination of identity. In a nontraditional organization such as RR, where communication can be analyzed as a struggle to develop and discover truth and identity, I find it problematic to begin research with an implicit assumption regarding the identity practices that 'will' be found. Instead, I would like to explore that very word, 'practice' as the crucial element in studying identity and nonprofit organizing characterized by tension.

In the following sections I conduct a literature review on the subjects of practice theory, structuration theory, and narrative identity theory. After a review of the literature, I propose research questions and account for my methods in the case of Resisting Recidivism.

## Chapter 2-Literature Review

### Practice Theory

Summarizing the basic principles of practice theory would be an easy task if in fact there were a unified version of practice theory. Practice theory, “emerges instead from the coming together of several distinct scholarly traditions” (Nicolini, 2012, p. 9). Practice theory swelled in empirical inquiry in the past few decades, but has existed theoretically long before then and has historical roots as far back as the Greco-Roman era (Nicolini, 2012). The traditional theoretical constructs (central to much of the communication field) established from the likes of Aristotle and Plato were later adopted by modern scholars such as Heidegger, Foucault, Bourdieu, Giddens, Marx, and Wittgenstein and were foundational to modern theories of practice (Nicolini, 2012; Nicolini, Gherardi, & Yanow, 2003; Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, & von Savigny, 2001). Despite its complicated origins, across the many versions of practice theory there remain certain common qualifications and assumptions which establish a cohesive framework for implementation.

At minimum, practices are “arrays of human activity” (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, & von Savigny, 2001, p. 11), but can be articulated in full as “an open-ended, spatially-temporally dispersed nexus of doings and sayings” (Schatzki, 2012, p. 14). The very conception of practices provides the centrality to all practice theories. Practice theory is concerned with the minutia, the everyday interactions, ‘the doings and sayings’, often considered unimportant in ‘the larger scheme of things’, and gives considerable meaning to those actions. Practice theory highlights the processual nature of reality, without debunking the existence of structures or a ‘solid reality’ (Nicolini, 2012). Instead, practices are always ongoing, forming and reforming shared meanings within fields of practice (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, & von Savigny, 2001). Due to the collective

nature of practices, a practice in one context may contain sharply different meaning than if enacted by different actors and in different settings. Context is inseparable from practice as the practices are considered the building blocks for social contexts. Feldman and Orlikowski (2011) described the relationship between practices and social reality as “*everyday actions* [being] *consequential* in producing the structural contours of social life” (p. 1241). From this tenet of practice theory, the academic focus on practices is indeed crucial, as it leads directly to our understanding of social reality.

The articulation of ‘the social’ is imperative in understanding the basic principles of practice theory. For example, Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, and von Savigny (2001) stated, “the social is a field of embodied, materially interwoven practices centrally organized around shared practical understandings” (p. 12). From this quote, several key components of practice theory are evident. The multiplicity of practices in any social field are delineated from particular contexts. Practices stem from shared understanding, shared activities, or routinized performances (Nicolini, 2012). Scholars applying practice theory are interested in the connection between the social, the material, and the embodiment of practices. Bodies and materials both have roles and influences in their relation to routines and their position within the development of shared understandings (Nicolini, 2012).

Although subtle, the interwoven nature of practices leads to an additional interest of practice theory, that of the rejection of duality. The interwoven, messy, and complex notion of a nexus of practices, alienates the subject-object paradigm that plagues many theoretical traditions (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011; & Schatzki, 2012). Because practice theory places emphasis on the relational situations and the dynamics of production and reproduction, practice theory “proves helpful in breaking down problematic dichotomies imposed by non-relational theories”

(Osterlund & Carlile, 2007, p. 92). Instead, there is a relational interdependence between common opposites, which find new meanings in the contexts, practices, and social conglomerates within which they appear--unhindered by the attributes of individual objects, ideas, or processes when not considered from a relational standpoint. Specifically in regards to the nature of reality, practice theory articulates reality as, "vague, with blurred edges, and in shades of grey" with research that is concerned primarily with, "how people through everyday activities divide up this grey matter" (Osterlund & Carlile, 2007, p. 94). Not only do practices construct shared social meanings, but they also encompass how individuals make sense of the inextricably complicated world they find themselves within.

In sum, a few of the foundational principles of practice theory are articulated above. Those principles include: the interest in the everyday sayings and doings, the connection between everyday activities to the construction of social reality, the focus on context and shared meaning, and the theoretical breaking of traditional dichotomies. Throughout the many versions and developments of practice theories, these components remain constant. Although there are many aspects of practice theory untouched by this summary, the untouched aspects lead into distinctions between several areas of practice theory and not the overarching nature of the perspective itself. Practice theory can be used as a meta-theory to incorporate several other theories within it, and in each articulation of practice theory the slight differences from the overarching framework encourages different theories or areas of thought to be examined within its larger lens. Next, I will describe structuration as it pertains to practice theory as a more specific theory through which empirical data may be analyzed.

*Practice Theory: Structuration*

Anthony Giddens' version of structuration theory provides one distinct and often used articulation of practice theory. Giddens is entirely concerned with practice as a matter of study, in fact he would state that in order to study social interactions, one must know the actors, what they do, what they said, and what it means in context. Practices and social contexts (like organizations) will be expanded in considering structuration theory.

The foundational principle behind structuration theory is the duality of structure. This phenomenon can be seen as the way in which social practices manifest structures, and reciprocally how action is structurally constituted. The duality of structure then is the creation of structure through practice and how practices are reified and given meaning through structure. It is important to note the word duality as opposed to the word dualism in this concept. Instead, structuration theory is, "one of several alternatives that go beyond the dualistic way of thinking, proposing a form of social analysis that avoids the historical division between determinist and voluntarist views, which helps to bridge the micro and macro levels of analysis" (Pozzebon & Pinsonneault, 2005, p. 1354). Giddens' theory illuminates the importance of concurring practices, realities, etc., as a way to account for both the micro and macro components of social reality. "A characterizing feature of structuration theory is that it goes beyond just looking at structures, or just looking at agents, or of giving an a priori primacy to one or the other. It emphasizes both" (Stones, 2005, p. 4). As Stones describes, the crucial 'duality' in Giddens' theory refers to the doubly existent nature of agency and structure, a recurring struggle for many scholars. For Giddens, structure is not something necessarily tangible; "Structure is thus a significant medium of agents.[...] Structure is also, however, the outcome of these practices of agents" (Stones, 2005, p. 5). Structure enables practices and practices produce structure. It is not

as simple as the rule printed out on a piece of paper and the participants' willingness to follow said rules, however: because structure and agents' practices are so interlocked, a duality of structure and agent is necessitated.

Structuration theory frames a certain view of the actors or participants in any academic study. Social actors or agents take action in ways that are knowledgeable and reflexive. These agents are aware, at least to some extent, of the rules and resources within their particular context, and are reflexive to the point that they can enact strategy and anticipate outcomes within that structure. To unpack this statement, it is important to understand what Giddens means by rules and resources. "Rules are generalizable procedures of action implicated in daily matters and need not be explicitly or discursively formulated" (Nicolini, 2013, p. 46). Again in this quote the material quality is prominent, but rules can also be nebulous and socially constructed. Similarly, "Resources include capabilities, such as organizing activities, structuring space and time, coordinating actors, and influencing the way in which people perceive themselves and their conduct" (Nicolini, 2013, p. 47). Two key factors are relevant in the definition of resources. First, Giddens' focus on time and space in the study of agents is highlighted. Second, resources may be in a material form or immaterial in the ways that they influence agent behavior. The importance of rules and resources is that in any particular context, rules and resources will be uniquely present and will constrain or enable certain kinds of practices, while never deterministically causing people to behave in certain ways. In other words, agents choose how to respond, use, and reify these rules and resources, but it is also apparent that certain practices are more enabled than others.

In looking at practices in terms of structuration theory, there appears to be a clearer picture about who these actors are and how exactly their practices interact with and create their

social world. “For Giddens, practices and their association extend themselves by continuously renewing the conditions that determine them” (Nicolini, 2013, p. 49). Nicolini describes Giddens’ version of practices as cyclical, and sees participants as constantly perpetuating the conditions for their agency as well as the conditions for their constraint. This practice perspective enables discussions of micro and macro organizational practices, actions, behaviors, and changes. In considering rules and resources it is important to note that the pointing out and naming the rules and resources for a given context was never Giddens’ aim. Rather, understanding how rules and resources enable and constrain the struggles of reifying current structure and create the context necessary for individual action contradicting those same structures was Giddens’ area of interest. In an effort to address the tension surrounding nonprofit organizational practices and how communication acts to construct, reconstruct, or to deconstruct social reality, structuration theory is the most appropriate branch of practice theory to apply.

One touchstone example of structuration theory applied to identity is Scott, Corman, and Cheney’s 1998 article, “Development of a Structural Model of Identification in the Organization.” In this article, structuration is used as a framework through which identity and identification as a process can be better understood in organizational contexts. Identification for these authors closely resembles a practice approach of analysis:

Identification, especially as expressed in symbolic terms, represents the forging, maintenance, and alteration and linkages between person and groups. Often made manifest in social interaction, identification in a structural sense represents the type of behavior produced by and producing identity. Thus identifications are situated in contexts of interaction in the presence of other society actors (Scott, Corman, & Cheney, 1998, p. 304).

Identification is the situated communicative process that reflects the major tenets of practice theory outlined above. Herein identification will be referred to as identity practices, as the two are synonymous, but to consider identification as a practice is crucial in understanding the connection between practice and structure and structure and agency. An expansion of the connection between identity and practices is discussed below, however, it is important to note here that Scott, Corman, and Cheney (1998) set this framework in motion as an original articulation to simultaneously consider the constructs of identity and structuration.

Rules and resources were also addressed in this article in a way that is especially helpful in understanding identity from a structuration background. According to Scott, Corman, and Cheney (1998) identity itself, as a communicative construct, can be considered a structure within an organization, “To adapt Giddens to our view, identity is usefully seen as structure; that is, each identity constitutes a set of rules and resources that may be drawn upon by organizational members” (p. 303). Emphasizing the norms and expectations established by identity in an organization brings to light the tension and connection between identity practices (identification) and identity. Identity may be seen as a larger structure and as such can point out the many norms derivative of rules and resources within an organization. These rules and resources are not important to the extent that they exist within an organization, but only as connected to identity and practice. Scott, Corman, and Cheney’s (1998) version of structuration and identity leads to the questions: What rules and resources fall within identity structures? Are rules and resources enacted within identity practices? Rules, resources, and even identity structures are important to the effect that they are reinforced, enacted, contradicted, or recreated.

This view of structuration presents the research with a unique opportunity, by observing the organization on both a micro and macro level new and heightened comprehension of

individual responses and behaviors may be accomplished. “Not only are identity and identification products of one another, but they make sense of each other” (Scott, Corman, & Cheney, 1998, p. 307). To more fully understand an organization and the practices therein one must also understand the structures influencing those practices and how studying both the micro and macro level leads to a fuller understanding of each. In their argument, the authors consider the identities readily available to organizational members as structures and then applied Giddens’ concept of regionalization to unpack those structures. They see identity as something that carries with it a set of norms and expected practices within an organization. Structuration is used as a tool to bring multiple identities from a particular context into conversation with each other and to understand the communicative practices and activities that couple them, separate them, or build tension between them.

The article discussed above presents a framework for scholars to analyze structuration and identities occurring in tandem in organizational contexts. This pairs well with tension centered research because of its ability to unwrap large scale contradictions in terms of their everyday routines. Structuration can address tension from multiple levels and guide an understanding of nonprofit identity practices.

### *Practice and Identities*

Practice theory is apt for understanding identities in organizational communication because both practice and identity are considered socially constructed phenomena in the workplace. “Practices are socially accomplished, even when they are attributed to individuals” (Nicolini, 2012, p. 214). In understanding identity from a practice perspective, the goal is not to understand identity as an entity, but identity as manifest in practice. Identity is still important,

but it is important to our everyday contextualized behaviors and communicative interactions, instead of important in it of itself. Practices build organizations and identities, and the permeability of practices invokes the presence of multiple complex identities throughout all contexts.

Organizational communication as a whole could benefit from a practice perspective of identity in the ways that it speaks to previous theories and opens new doors for organizational and communicative understandings of identity. Within research on identity, scholars have come to accept that there is no singular attribution of identity that creates an individual but, rather, that the self “can be seen as a dynamic, continuous and open-ended metamorphosis and intersection of heterogeneous narrative and experience that come to shape the different aspects of one’s identity” (Belova, 2010, p. 70). By complementing identity theories with a practice perspective, scholars may benefit from a larger spectrum of identity depictions and practices, especially as can be seen in nontraditional organizations depicted by necessary tension.

### Identity Theory

Scholars have been interested in identity since the early 1800s, and it is now seen “as a defining issue of the modern world” (Cheney, Christensen & Dailey, 2014, p. 2). For modern organizations, identity is paramount; it is the primary concern around which the building blocks for work practices are created. Modern organizations have embraced the concerns and prevalence of identity in the workplace by creating programs, models, and initiatives to define and encourage certain identities over others in order to enhance organizational missions.

Nonprofits are no exception to the conversation of identity, “as organizations seek to establish an identity with a broad and diverse public, they will need to communicate an identity that draws on

the meaningfulness of nonprofit work as well as the economic sustainability of their operators” (Sanders, 2012, p. 183). This quote reveals the tension permeating into issues of identity practices for the nonprofit volunteer worker, and shows the importance of studying identity outside of conventional organizations. Due to the tension filled nature of the organizational model and the little work done to unravel their work practices, volunteer workers, predominately found in the nonprofit sector provide an interesting launching point for organizational scholars. Within the field of communication, the three most prominent theories of identity are the cognitive (Tajfel, 1978; Deaux, 1993; Hogg, 2000), narrative (Giddens, 1991; Kuhn, 2006; Wieland, 2010), and subjectivity (Deetz, 1994; Holmer-Nadesan, 1996; Torronen, 2001). Each of these three theories presents a distinct view of identity as well as an implicit understanding of communication’s role in constructing identity. As can be seen from the Scott, Corman, and Cheney (1998) article, Giddens’ narrative identity can be easily transposed into conversations of practice and structuration. Because of the common foundations, that I will explore below, between structuration and narrative identity theory, I feel this to be the best identity theory for exploring nonprofit identity practices. In the following section, I briefly outline the foundational concepts of narrative identity theory.

### *Narrative Identity*

Identity as narrative emerged out of the work of Giddens (1991) and Mead (1967). Both scholars deviated from the previously prominent cognitive fixation of identity and instead perceive identity “from the standpoint of communication as essential to the social order” (Mead, 1967, p. 1). Specifically, Giddens (1991) described identity as a reflexive project. In his book, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Giddens (1991) defined

identity as a self which, “consists in the sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives, takes place in the context of multiple choice as filtered through abstract systems” (p. 5). Narrative identity is the ever-changing personal narratives situated within specific constraining contexts. Identity within this perspective falls into the area of communicative construction and is not preexistent to those communicative contexts.

Another novel assumption of this perspective is that there is no real or authentic self, but rather a thoroughly performative and socially constructed self (Downing, 2005 & Mead 1967). Mead (1967) established that there is no “you” other than what gets produced in interactions with others, meaning that outside of communication there is no pre-existing self. In his work, Mead (1967) distinguished between the concept of “I” and “Me”. The “I” is what a person tells him or herself they are, giving one the sense of being a unique person. The “Me” is the internalized attitudes of significant others—a conventional and habitual individual. “Me” is a product of norms, expectations, the visions of other people (Mead, 1967). Both the “I” and the “Me” are crucial to the entire construction of the narrative self. Here, the self is not inherent, and it is equally important that “I” have an internal sense of self as well as an external performance of self and that the two may contradict, collide, or reinforce each other.

Narrative identity (combining the “I” and the “Me”) speaks to both contextualized roles and norms as reflected by others and the internalized sense-making around those performances. McAdams (1999) inspected narrative identity theory and stressed the importance of temporal instability and how an individual’s motives, goals, and experiences may drastically alter his or her understanding of the current self and the past self. Identity as narrative embodies a discursive theory of social phenomenon in which ‘realities’ are mutually constructed and maintained through discursive coherence (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Coherence, or the logical

plot in a narrative identity, recognizes multiple identities and realities, but frames them in a way that can be embraced by the individual amidst the many identities. The individual must make logical sense of the many identities, without simultaneously disregarding the existence of any of them. Identity is not a behavior in reactions to others, rather it is in the capacity to keep a narrative going (Giddens, 1991). The narrative *is* the identity.

Upon initial construction of a narrative self, individuals will (both consciously and unconsciously) reflect upon the societies, cultures, organizations, and groups to which they subscribe. Each of these sources presents expectations and ideologies within which a narrative can be formulated. Wieland (2010) noted, “To attend closely to how values and expectations shape identity constructions, we might consider how ideal selves—expectations for what a good person should be—act as resources for identity construction” (p. 504). These resources for identity construction and how one attempts to regulate identity to match that construction, establishes not only a communicative sense of self, but is a view of identity that takes on a communication based world view--a view that social “reality” finds meaning in and through practice. Narrative identity can be seen as one’s constant venture to manifest the influences of both higher order (big ‘D’) discourses and localized (little ‘d’) discourses. A person constantly reflects upon the ideals of ‘higher order’ discourse and then recreates, reiterates, or rejects these ideals within localized discourses (Wieland, 2010). Again, due to the fact that there is no ‘real’ self, an individual is free to behave in ways that preserve the coherence of the identity narrative. Much of this process is attributed to individual agency, the ability to do identity work and the constraining power of identity regulation.

Identity work refers to the choices a person actively makes in an effort to construct a consistent and rational concept of self. Watson (2008) defined identity work as “the mutually

constitutive processes whereby people strive to shape a relatively coherent and distinct notion of personal self-identity” (p. 129). This work must also be considered within a context in consideration of the various identity regimes (or structures) present and available to that context. Individuals continually and communicatively uphold their identity narratives in everyday life. Identity work is important theoretically because it, “highlights the ways that the individuals author their self-identities” (Wieland, 2010, p. 56). By highlighting the individual as the self-author, agency is illuminated. Despite the ‘big D’ discourses present to constrain and enable identity, it is the individual that is the author, not the larger discourses. The contextual pressure put upon the author is considered identity regulation which encompasses, “the more or less intentional effects of social practices upon processes of identity construction and reconstruction” (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002, p. 625). Identity regulation, oftentimes the reasoning for identity work, brings to light the discourses not controlled by the author of the narrative self.

Throughout academic, and especially in the area of organizational communication, scholars have theoretically advanced the concepts of identity work and regulation (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Brown & Toyoki, 2013; Kuhn 2006; Scott, Corman, & Cheney, 1998; Watson, 2008) and empirically applied narrative identity to organizational contexts (Downing, 2005; Brown, Humphrey, & Gurney, 2005; Humphreys & Brown, 2002; Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann, 2000).

### *Research Questions*

Based on the literature outlined above and the nature of my research site, the following research questions emerged.

1. What organizational rules, resources, and identity structures are discursively used by individuals, and what identity work is being accomplished in using them?
2. What sort of identities appear to be ‘preferred’ and by whom? How are identities regulated through organizational practices? How does that align with the larger organization and how do individuals accomplish identity work to maintain or challenge those norms?
3. How do nonprofit identity practices display, interact with, reify, and/or challenge the ‘organizing tension’ often found in nonprofits? How do these tensions inform or relate to each other?

By addressing these questions, I will gain a better understanding of nonprofit work practices and how, by looking at both micro and macro influences, organizing tension can be understood through these practices. Nonprofit organizational practices have much to be explored and by taking account both of the large scale discourse along with the everyday talk, a cohesive and encompassing picture of the work practices may be established.

### Chapter 3-Methodology

#### *Theoretical Backdrop*

A practice perspective of identity encourages certain methods of data collection for organizational research over others. The theoretical bounds of identity as practice favors the methods of ethnomethodology and ethnography over interviewing (Nicolini, 2012).

Ethnomethodology and ethnography allow for participation in and real time observance of practices rather than references to practices within an interview data. Due to the contextual nature of practices, taking an individual out of the context being researched in order to reflect upon their practice may depict a limited version of their everyday interactions. Kuhn and Jackson (2008) voiced a similar claim in their call for a practice perspective for knowing, “Because communication performs framing and reframing functions as well as problem-solving functions, access to actual interactions rather than reports of interactions is desirable” (p. 472). This quote displays the shortcomings of interviews from the common desire to infuse organizational research with a practice perspective. Instead, research from a practice perspective is encouraged to have extended participant observation as a main method of inquiry.

Similarly, identity theorists have echoed this view of methodology, outside of a practice perspective. Alvesson and Willmott (2002) in their study of identity concurred with the methodological turn advocated by practice theory, “Methodologically, our discussion suggests the relevance of in-depth and longitudinal studies based upon participant observation, or at least semi-structured interviews, for investigating processes of identity regulation rather than, say, survey-based research or closed ended interviews” (p. 638). Again, this presents the need to move away from the survey/interview context and towards a more ethnographic and situated approach to studying identity.

Structuration adds to this methodological backdrop, a concern for the context from a large scale perspective and a favoring of long-term participant observation. It will be important to collect organizational documents, to gain an understanding of how the organization has been situated over time, and how the organizational members are positioned against and with other nonprofit organizations as well as the jail with which they work directly. One must examine how the different organizational missions of the jail and of RR create tension amongst members of RR working with the jail, and jail employees volunteering at RR. Overarching organizational agendas should be understood in order to see if those are used, reframed, or contradicted in the everyday interactions at RR.

### *Site Exposition*

In the case of RR, a practice perspective of identity will enable research to unpack the situation in a way that fully captures the tension of the organization as well as the organizational practices around identity. RR formed in 2005 as a nonprofit organization that aims to reduce recidivism through mentoring individuals who have recently been released from jail. The organization is comprised of 9 (unpaid) board members, 2 part time staff, 3 interns (each working about 10 hours a week, one of whom is myself), a “stress manager” (in the form of an office pet), about 20-30 volunteer mentors (at any given time), and liaisons working directly from the jail. It is important to note that the only paid figures in the organization, the staff members, act as volunteers as well outside of their weekly work hours.

In an introductory study, Koschmann and Peterson (2013) depicted the organization as one “created around the idea of empowering the self. For many ex-prisoners, their notions of self-empowerment have been eroded by the criminal justice system, substance abuse, destructive

behavior patterns, lack of family and social support, and other circumstances” (p. 6). The mission of RR is unique in that it teaches, believes in, and advocates for a certain depiction of identity--an identity that has the capacity to transform. It is noted on several organizational documents at RR that all people are good, and buying into such a philosophical statement enables or disables participation in the organization.

The mentor’s goal, as described by the organization, is to present mentees with opportunities to experience normalcy in order to successfully reintegrate into society, and as such are encouraged to enact identities outside of the scope of the organization. As explained by Koschmann and Peterson (2013), “Mentors and mentees go out for meals, go hiking, go to the library, go shopping, do volunteer work, and so on. These activities encourage prosocial behaviors and provide a context for productive conversations” (p. 7). What is alluded to in the term ‘productive conversations’, are conversations rich with the opportunity to reestablish identity practices, on both sides of the conversation. Both mentors and mentees are screened heavily before being accepted as a member of RR and are paired based on the factor of age, gender, life experiences, and personality (as observed and determined by staff members).

### *Data Collection*

It is important to note that due to the highly contextual nature of this study, that the results concluded herein cannot be directly applied to other nonprofit organizations, or other organizations around the issue of recidivism. Instead, the design of this study may be applicable to other studies of organizations in terms of identity, structuration, practice, and tension from a theoretical standpoint. The goal of this research is not to create generalizable claims for all nonprofits working with criminal justice, but to provide an example from which others may take

influence. In order to accomplish this goal I proceeded in the following manner to obtain data. After first obtaining permission from the organization as well as my university's institutional review board, three areas of data collection ensued (1) collection of documents internal to RR; (2) interviews with mentors, staff, board members, and jail liaisons; and (3) participant observation and the recording of those experiences via field notes.

Organizational documents were collected, both internal and public, in order to gain the perspective of the organization as explicitly sought out by the organization's guiding principles and how they manifest in material documents. Although only a few people had a hand in creating the documents/materials (likely staff or board members), the dissemination to the larger group imbues these items with meaning with respect to organizational values and matters of identity. At first these documents only consisted of training materials, but they were subsequently expanded to documents perceived as relevant to this research once analysis began.

Interviews were conducted across several levels of the organization. Board members, interns, mentors, mentor advisors, and jail associates all participated in an interview regarding their experience working with RR. In total 16 interviews were conducted encompassing 2 staff members, 2 interns, 2 jail associates, 3 mentors, 3 mentor advisors, and 4 board members. The aim of these interviews was to encompass as many people as possible from all levels of the organization however, recruitment for participants was heavily influenced by an organizational member whom acted as my supervisor. An email from this individual endorsing my research project was only sent to board members and not to any other organizational members. After a few weeks I followed up and asked to be introduced to many more organizational members. My request was granted, however some individuals were continuously left out of these communication for personal and organizational reasons that were never fully explained. This

process for gaining interview participants may have skewed the interview sample and certainly made obtaining interviews outside of that chosen group challenging, although not impossible. An interview protocol was created with several open ended questions that tried to encourage interviewees to respond by reaching into their own experiences as opposed to organizational knowledge.

Once interviewing began another obstacle emerged—one that directly affected the individuals interviewed and the content of those interviews. Within the first few interviews it was voiced by participants that they were highly concerned with anonymity. Participants repeatedly asked if other members of the organization (and one specific member by name) would be able to read this study. The repeated hesitation from the organizational members directed me to reflect on my interviewing practices and to make some changes in regards to who would have been involved in reviewing this study at the university and organizational level. In order to ensure anonymity further all interviewees were assigned a number, this number is random and reflects the inmate's number given to offenders entering the jail which they then associate with their identity. Additionally, an informal meeting was conducted with my supervisor to discuss some patterns revealed in the interviews as opposed to being given a copy of the study. Informing the participants of these steps to secure their organizational anonymity increased participation in the interview process.

The primary method of data collection was participant observation and the reflexive field notes recording and unpacking those observations. Over 200 hours were spent participating as an organizational member in RR. I participated in training provided by RR (15 hours) as well as the training required by the jail (3.5 hours) in order to study the organization as a participant observer. In addition, I volunteered as an intern for the office staff in order to observe their daily

work practices, and worked for 10 hours a week in the first 15 weeks, and then for 7 hours for the remaining 15 weeks. Once I was assigned an individual in the jail system to mentor, I switched my weekly hours over to my role as a mentor instead of office staff. I've been an acting mentor since March, 2015, and the vast majority of my experiences with RR come from my time spent as the intern to the program manager.

### *Researcher Positioning*

Participant observation is considered the primary source for data collection due to the fact that a practice based perspective highly encourages participant observation over interviews. Additionally, the duration of the participation can show an understanding of practice as occurring over time. My positioning within the organization as an intern gave me a unique view of the organization as a whole. Once I became a mentor (fully integrated as an organizational member), it was much more challenging to impartially observe work practices at RR as those practices directly affected my work helping an individual reenter society. That role of mentor, a complicated and emotionally challenging one, left me more reliant on RR than my position as an intern and made reflexivity increasingly difficult. As an intern I spent several hours a week working with a team of three to four individuals to maintain the day to day processes of the RR office. Within that daily work I was given access to information on all of the mentors, mentor advisors, and organizational documents that constantly needed updating. It was part of my position as an intern to read and review weekly reports submitted by mentors as well as reports sent from the jail to RR which provided information about inmates that showed interest in the RR program. Interns at RR serve as the initial gatekeepers of information and due to the high quantity of these reports and the informality of this role, it was fairly simple to separate the

researcher and participant roles. Most of my work as an intern resulted in the creation of documents for staff and board members, through which I could glean information about RR that is not accessible to volunteers or mentors. While acting as a mentor I felt that my participation was dictated by the desire to be present for my mentee, to truly be in the moment as a mentor, complicating the process of reflexivity I had previously established as an intern.

Aside from the organizational documents that I created which added and altered the organizational processes which I studied, I also observed a large amount of reactivity in the months following my research. Reactivity, or the effect a researcher has on behaviors of the researched (Given, 2008) often limits accuracy of research findings. However, at my site, all major changes were exhibited after all interviews and participant observation had been conducted. My actions, processes, and research methods may have acted as a catalyst for several of the changes enacted after my leave. In asking various individuals about what changes they would like to see in the organization, various discrepancies in practices, attitudes, and personnel were revealed. Only some of these frictions were evident in my further research, but remained important to organizational members which spurred change. These alteration in organizational processes may have taken place without my presence, however, that cannot be known for certain as I was there immediately before these changes. The data herein solely focuses on the information collected before a major rift and organizational change, which maintains the accuracy and stability of the culminating findings.

### *Data Analysis*

Data analysis occurred throughout my time at RR and then occurred a second time once all data was collected. I transcribed interviews throughout the data collection process, and each

transcript ranged from six to fourteen pages in length. These interviews were transcribed on a basic word level of content. While reviewing my field notes, interviews, and organizational documents I used categorization (Lindolf & Taylor, 2011) taken from larger organizational phenomena, specifically thinking about the structures, rules, and resources at the macro levels of the organization. After constructing some loose categories I analyzed rich points and patterns revealed in interviews and field notes that substantiated, negated, or in some way commented on those larger categories. In analyzing data, I drew on Scott et al's most basic premise, "we argue that agents draw on a plurality of structural identity resources in making certain identifications" (1998, p. 302). The plurality of identity resources, which Scott et al (1998) argued to be a structure in it of itself, was the first item I attempted to sieve out of the data. Upon recognizing the identities referenced frequently (a mentor identity and a non-mentor identity), I delved into how those identities were referenced in the data, and specifically if the reference of identity indicated notions of organizational procedures (rules) or capabilities as associated with organizing (resources). This analysis pulled directly from the idea of identity structures as seen in Scott et al (1998) and Giddens' traditional conception of rules and resources. Those two theoretical concepts were applied to participants' conceptions of identity and practice, which proved consistent throughout various levels of data. The rules and resources identified in the data act as a way to understand the tension between agency and structure and points to practices in the ways that individuals makes sense of these larger categories.

Due to participant observation being the primary data collected from this research, I construct my analysis in a way that shows my personal involvement in the organization strongly. In this analysis, it is my aim to delve into the organization RR from a practice perspective, and although I do not mean to bring an auto-ethnographic lens to the study, the first hand experiences

reflected in field notes consist of a large chunk of data. I will also follow in the framework laid out by Scott et al. (1998) in that I will address various identities as structures in the organization. This is not to say that everyone ascribed to particular identities, however, there were particular identities prescribed by the organization. Specifically, I will look at the mentor identity and the identity of an organizational member outside of mentoring. At no point did I assign individuals to these two identities in my interviewing practices, instead I used questions that allowed each participant to self-define their involvement with RR. There are individuals (including myself) who flow between these two structures of the organization; however, in responding to interview questions, most responded from one particular identity structure, at times unaware that I knew about their multiple identities within the organization. Again, these structures come from within the organization and furthermore from the talk of the individuals within it and present a platform through which to explore the topic of tension in a nonprofit environment. In the following analysis my goal is to further understand the identity practices as seen throughout the various data collected at RR with an eye towards understanding the tension present in those practices.

## Chapter 4-Analysis

*“When you change your life, you have to change your behavior, your thoughts, your speech. You mourn the loss of your friends.”* (Field notes, pg. 12, spoken by #7549)

RQ1: What organizational rules, resources, and structures are discursively used by individuals, and what identity work is being accomplished in using those rules and resources?

### Structure #1: Mentor Identity Structure

The mentors and the mentoring program are a source of great pride for the organization, and as such, the mentor identity structure is substantiated by a multitude of organizational documents and everyday practices. Mentoring is considered the foundation for the entire organization, the program upon which the organization was formed, and without which the organization would cease to exist. On RR’s website mentors are considered the “key to our success” as an organization. The mentor identity as a structure is one reinforced constantly by organizational members and maintained and supported through organizational rules and resources. As an identity structure within the organization the mentor identity may have the most resources substantiating it over any other identity. In this section I will discuss Motivational Interviewing and Mentor Guidelines (which act as both resources and rules in organizational enactment) and their use in maintaining the mentor identity structure. These two categories recurred in everyday interactions which were reflected in field notes, and were voiced in interviews both indirectly and directly.

*Rule/Resource #1: Motivational Interviewing*

Every member of the organization, from interns, to mentors, to board members, undergo the same RR training, including a curriculum that has received so much recognition that most training sessions include members from other nonprofit organizations unable to provide such substantial resources. Due the fact that this training is offered equally across the organization, the training materials act as a unifying resource and the enactment of those policies as rules serve as a central artifact for all organizational members. The training session lasted for three consecutive days and covered the topics of ‘Procedures and Policies’, ‘Motivational Interviewing’, ‘Mental Illness and Substance Abuse’, and ‘Learned Helplessness and Resilience’. From this three day intensive training the only topic seen in organizational practices is Motivational Interviewing.

What is Motivational Interviewing? Most mentors have never before encountered this skill, and quickly learn that it is a vital component of the mentoring experience. According to the accredited website for Motivational Interviewing:

Motivational Interviewing is a form of collaborative conversation for strengthening a person’s own motivation and commitment to change. It is a person-centered counseling style for addressing the common problem of ambivalence about change by paying particular attention to the language of change (Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers, 2013).

This quote provides a definition of the resource taught to RR members, however, learning the definition and tradition of Motivational Interviewing is not the goal of training. In training, individuals are not taught *about* Motivational Interviewing, but rather *how to* Motivational Interview. The subject is taught as a toolbox (specifically for the mentors) with some of the most basic components including: open questions, reflections, affirmations, summaries, and of course

listening. Motivational Interviewing provided a lesson on how to talk and specifically what mentor talk practices should sound like. This component of training is considered so crucial that every four months there is a Motivational Interviewing booster in place of a Monthly Mentor Meeting (which will be discussed later in this section).

In my time with RR, the Motivational Interviewing booster had the highest attendance of any monthly meeting and was unique in that it was attended by both mentors and staff (considerably more than the average staff involvement). The purpose of the meeting is to reflect upon and discuss individual practices over the past few months, recognize weaknesses and strengths, and set goals for the months to come. Internally, Motivational Interview 'buddies' are assigned and asked to keep in touch regarding the practice of Motivational Interviewing in between boosters, however, to my knowledge those roles were not enacted. The presence of such an assignment, does however, indicate how rules and resources are strategically put in place to maintain the practice of Motivational Interviewing.

Motivational Interviewing as an organizational resource is used by some more than others and expected in some situations over others. Mentors are expected to use Motivational Interviewing when 'doing' mentoring, but not necessarily when in the office or when interacting with other mentors. Similarly, non-mentors are not expected to use Motivational Interviewing within the office, although if interacting with a potential client Motivational Interviewing may be used as an exception to everyday interactions. Additionally, although Motivational Interviewing was offered to all organizational members, no members who were not mentors mentioned Motivational Interviewing in the interview process.

Organizational members' enactment of Motivational Interviewing is expected in interactions with mentees and the reflection of these practices is often discussed as its own

organizational practice. According to the organizational documents, to accomplish Motivational Interviewing is to embody the Motivational Interviewing Spirit, which includes “collaboration, evocation, and autonomy” with the results of accurate Motivational Interviewing projected as “increase problem recognition, increase engagement, increase motivation, and decrease substance abuse”. Motivational Interviewing reflects the identity of a successful mentor (according to organizational standards), one whose mentee is less likely to recidivate than another mentor’s and therefore raise the organization’s “success rate”. The practice of Motivational Interviewing is to be a mentor, and while it is encouraged to use the practice with family, friends, and romantic relationships, the practice is discouraged within work practices.

As Motivational Interviewing is used to elicit change, organizational members do not practice Motivational Interviewing in everyday work contexts. The material resources include a power point presentation available to all organizational members, free access to an online book on the topic, various documents given by the trainer upon each visit to RR, and the trainer herself. Motivational Interviewing gives some insight as to the encouraged practices for mentors and begins to address the question ‘what is a mentor’ through answering ‘how does a mentor mentor?’ According to the documents presented at training, the following practices block the road to change, “ordering, directing, warning, threatening, advice giving, making suggestions, providing solutions, persuading with logic, arguing, lecturing,” to name a few. This is the exact list of all the practices that Motivational Interviewing is not, and by additionally, what mentor identity is not. Motivational Interviewing begins to frame mentoring in terms of practices, while additional organizational rules/resources provide additional qualifications for the mentor identity structure, specifically the Mentor Guidelines.

*Rule/Resource #2: Mentor Guidelines*

The Mentor Guidelines resource is a document also distributed in the initial training session within the ‘Policies and Procedures’ segment, the first day of training known for a high amount of paperwork. The document is around five pages in length and is one of two documents given relevance in practice after that day of training (the other is the mentor/client contract which acts as a formal and binding document). Mentor Guidelines present two lists of do’s and do not’s for mentors, one list for working with the client and one list for working with the jail. Mentor Guidelines as an overall resource/document is rarely discussed by organizational members, however the do’s and do not’s are used as rules and frequently voiced by organizational members. As training only occurs every three to four months, it is likely that incoming mentors will experience these tenets as rules before being handed the resource in full document form.

An abbreviated list (the first sentence of each itemized behavior in the Mentor Guidelines) of how a mentor should work with a client is as follows:

1. “Refrain absolutely from sharing specific personal information about yourself, other members of RR, etc. with your client.”
2. “Regular visits with clients should be 1-2 times per week for 2-3 hours whether the person is in jail, a halfway house or released, on or off probation.”
3. “There are exceptions to these regular visits when mentors are asked to spend extra time if they are able (if not, a staff member will attend).”
4. “During your first visit there are two forms which you should read out loud with your client and then have them sign.”
5. “There are certain behaviors you should avoid in relationship to your client:
  - Do not drink or indulge in drugs with client.

- Do not have physical contact with your client except for a handshake, pat on the back or on the arm.
  - Do not personally give client money.”
6. “Do not run errands for a client in jail or a hallway house unless you are sure there is no legality involved, i.e. restraining order.”
  7. “Do not side with the client against jail or probation staff.”
  8. “You will be provided with an RR cell phone is your client is out of jail.”
  9. “RR should receive a Weekly Mentor Report shortly after each visit, completed on the RR website.”
  10. “There are many resources for you and your client.”

Of this list of ten, the rules most often reiterated in conversation are #1, #5, #6, #7, and #9.

Similar to Motivational Interviewing this resource provides insight into the ideal mentor identity by prescribing desired behaviors. This list also outlines the staff responsibilities in the process of mentoring. Staff provide mentors with support, resources, and sometimes substitute as mentors in certain circumstances. Although Motivational Interviewing is how a mentor should practice mentoring, this list contains more of the ‘shoulds’ for the organization to run smoothly. Items like #2, #4, and #9 are required behaviors in order to continue to participate as a mentor. These rules are enforced by staff members and unlike Motivational Interviewing practices, are easily checked as they have material outcomes. The Mentor Guidelines serve to direct the mentor towards the desired relationship between mentor and client and mentor and support staff.

Considering there seems to be four key identity structures presented in the Mentor Guidelines: mentor, mentee, support staff, and jail staff, it seems pertinent to focus on organizational identity structures available outside of mentorship.

### Structure #2: Non-Mentor Identity Structure

For the mentor identity discussed above there are close to 75 pages of organizational documents, acting as rules/resources, maintaining the organizational structure of the mentor specifically. Alternatively, for the organizational member identity structure, there are no documents that provide rules for behavior directed at someone whom acts as an organizational member outside of mentorship. The only resource that provides an overarching view of organizational membership is the mission; however, this document is in no way unique to the non-mentor identity. In fact, this document is never given to the organizational members, however, it is expected that individuals have encountered this document online, via the RR website. The mission explicitly describes the mentor relationship with the mentee and the success rate that the RR method has accomplished in the past five years. In terms of organizational rules the mission also states, “Ultimately, the philosophy behind the work of RR is that there are no ‘throw away’ people”. This is the overarching claim that RR emanates at all levels of organizing, the saying is the screen saver on the office computers and is espoused frequently by staff members to individuals looking into RR for the first time. Outside of the constant presence of this saying, little everyday practices are resultant of this resource.

The lack of rules and resources for organizational members (non-mentor identity structure) was something that I personally struggled with during my first few months as an intern for RR. Some things that effected my everyday interactions were the lack of regulation of identity practices, the lack of weekly business hours, the lack of clearly defined responsibilities, and the lack of resources to turn to in completing tasks assigned to me:

Reflecting on this further, I really don’t know what my role is in the office. I have a project that I could be working on, but every time I come in something has emerged that needs to be dealt with immediately. It’s not always administrative either. It has included, spreadsheet making, website updating, scanning, bike repairing, bike transporting, pro

bono work negotiating with other nonprofits, and neighborhood canvassing. I really never know what to expect when I come into the office and I feel as if it is the same for #2347 and #9119. Their work is based upon the emergent necessity, problem, or issue that I have seen them both, multiple times forget to submit time cards or do weekly commitments that presumably would be regular practices. (Field notes, pg. 5-6)

The confusion expressed in my field notes comes from the lack of rules and resources dedicated to organizational member identity structure, making this identity structure much more derivative of practice and in some ways elusive. In order to maintain my identity within RR I began to see my identity differently than what I originally assumed (which was that interns complete administrative tasks), and tried to reframe my interactions that made sense of the lack of rules. For example, I had a conversation with #2347, whom acted as my supervisor throughout my time at RR, admitting my confusion and frustration regarding my duties in the organization. #2347 assured me that everyone is confused at first and that this work isn't predictable. She commented that if there was anything that I didn't feel comfortable working on that I should just let her know and that she would reassign me. My expression of discomfort happened frequently in my work; however, I was never reassigned to a new task, as can be seen below:

The idea of being pushed into a job that you aren't really capable of comes up again in my volunteer work for RR. [...] Work is always appraised on the standards of-it's as good as we can do. There is the constant comparison to this potential work that could be happening if we had the resources, the man power, or the expertise outside of our own. One example of this happened within my first week volunteering. #2347 asked me if I was comfortable making flyers or using Microsoft publisher. I told her I wasn't really comfortable and that I had never used that system before. She explained that another intern had made a flyer and that it was so hideous that there was no way I could make something worse, so she wanted me to try anyways. This is probably the most agonizing thing I have done while working at RR, because I really had no knowledge in this arena. Despite this, the need for the work was present, and so I had to bend and try to fit/satisfy this organizational need. (Field notes, pg. 4)

Most identity work, as can be seen from this excerpt, came from the acceptance that there were no other qualified volunteers, there was no one else with the explicit knowledge to complete the

task, there were no rules to maintain my separation from the task, and so identity work consistently revolved around the current need, whatever that may be.

At first I understood my lack of clear identity structure or identity practices as due to my inexperience with working with the criminal justice system and the fact that I had joined the organization fairly recently. The interviews I conducted much later in my time at RR showed that my inexperience with criminal justice issues was not a factor in the confusion depicted in my field notes. Some other non-mentor organizational members commented on the lack of rules and resources in terms of role confusion as follows:

*#7539: I'm just. Um. I don't know. I'm just part of the staff. I mean I help with policies and procedures. Some. Um. And volunteer. I don't know what my current roles is. I'm just there to facilitate and answer questions I guess.*

*#6667: Um. Ok, well I think technically a marketing intern. To be honest and I don't understand that because I don't know anything about marketing and I don't really do any marketing-so that's I think like my technical title. But I think for myself, I kinda see myself more as like a, I want to say like, staff assistant.*

*#2347: [You have to be] willing to know that a lot things-of situations just come up and it's hard to really plan for this type of work. Yeah. Especially with this population*

These interviewees encountered similar confusion within their work at RR, however, all have had vastly different timelines with the organization. #7539 has been involved with RR for about seven years, and initially graduated from the mentoring program and then transitioned into a volunteer/staff position. On the organization's website this individual is deemed the 'consultant', however the expectations around that title were never detailed. Conversely, #6667 joined as an intern shortly after myself, and because her internship acted as credit for her undergraduate institution her given title was "Marketing Intern". This title reflected an identity that she had no previous experience with and ultimately had minimal everyday repercussion in her behaviors and practices within the organization. Finally, my supervisor #2347 sites the confusion as emergent

from “this type of work”, as something unavoidable when working with offenders. Even in her paid role, there is still a lack of clear understanding of her identity within the organization due to the nature of the work. Although the solidity of an organizational member identity structure seems questionable, the expectation for such a structure to exist permeated my discussions with organizational member. Organizational member practice presented a significant amount of identity work in order to account for the lack of rules or resources within the organization.

Identity work towards organizational membership was in no way uniform throughout individual experiences. What was common was the lack of rules and resources in establishing an identity of organizational membership and the struggle to account for the disconnection between practices and internal expectations. While there are resources for the overarching scope of the organization, these resources seemed to have minimal enactment in everyday interactions, despite the position one inhabited or the time period associated with the organization. In looking at how individuals explain their understanding of the lack of rules and resources for organization membership, specific practices and identity work are revealed that led me to view organizational practices as emergent.

Mentor identity structures and organizational member identity structures are certainly situated differently through the maintenance and existence of organizational rules and resources. The identity work from individuals working within the two identity structures accomplish opposing facets of the structures, due to the vastly different amount of rules and resources allotted for the two identity structures. Individuals whom self-identified as mentors consistently presented identity work in order to communicate their maintenance and awareness of the rules and resources or directly challenged the rules and resources provided. Organizational members’ practices seemed to provide more to the structure than any rules or resources. These emergent

practices caused frequent shifts in identity work as either maintaining or resisting the emergent practices. In addressing the second research question regarding identity regulation and preferred identities, both of these identity structures will be seen as sources for regulation and organizational norms.

RQ2: What sort of identities appear to be ‘preferred’ and by whom? How are identities regulated through organizational practices? How does that align with the larger organization and how do individuals accomplish identity work to maintain or challenge those norms?

In every interview, participants were asked the question “How would you describe your current role in RR?”. Below are excerpts from the three individuals who self-identified as mentors. In describing his or her role, each participant referenced the Mentor Guidelines and Motivational Interviewing either directly or indirectly. These excerpts represent a range of ages, genders, and occupations outside of mentorship. Again, it is important to note that other interviewed members participated in mentoring; however, it was not indicated in their interview answers. The first interview excerpt comes from a graduate student who is volunteering as a mentor in order to complete a required practicum, or field experience, for her Master’s program. The second interviewee volunteers outside of any organizational requirements. The two interviewees both comment on the implied meaning behind Motivational Interviewing and the Mentor Guidelines as it maintains or constrains the mentor identity structure:

*#5659: Um. As a mentor, um, I see myself, really-it’s really actually kind of hard for me being in a therapy program to kind of understand, at first to understand the difference between being a mentor and a therapist because I’m like, for me, as this is my practicum, I was like well um I have to use my-like this is why I’m doing this, this is why I’m in a practicum, I need to use my therapy skills. But now that I’m actually doing it, I-I’m*

*seeing the difference. And I'm seeing me leaning more towards the mentor than the therapist, I am using some of those skills, but um as the mentor.*

*#4698: As a mentor. That-I'm still trying to find that. ((laughter)) Because I'm more-I'm more trying to relate to her on an equal level when I know they want me to be more of a guidance instead of just uh her friend. So that's-that's kind of difficult for me. Cuz I look at her as my friend now and-and what would I do for my friend. And not-so having boundaries I guess is something I have to work on a little bit more.*

Interestingly, the practice of doing mentorship is described most prominently by the behaviors that are not considered mentoring. In some ways this type of identification is supported in the Mentor Guidelines as most of the rules reinforced in everyday interactions are those that mentors should refrain from doing.

Both members #5659 and #4698 address behaviors they would like to alter in their mentoring practice. #4698's use of 'they' shows her interpretation of the organizational preference of the mentor identity to be enacted in a different way than what she articulates as a 'friend' or 'equal' identity. The practice she understands as problematic in order to distinguish friend from mentor is 'boundary setting'. The identity work demonstrated by #4698 shows a conscious awareness of the mentor identity structure and her communicative work towards accomplishing that identity, even though it is something that she struggles with in practice with her mentee. Similarly, #5659 showed identification as a mentor to be challenging as it conflicts with her pre-existing identity as a therapist in training. #5659 noted her accomplishment of the mentor identity, as maintained by RR, as something that she consistently worked towards achieving. It was not as simple as signing on to be a mentor, but required an extended period of time which included constantly comparing her experiences with the expectations set out by the organization. This identity work shows identity as something to be accomplished through repeated actions and not merely a given through context and assigned 'role' as well as the awareness of organizational preference.

The depictions of what a mentor is not given by #5659 and #4698 speak to both the resources of Motivational Interviewing and the Mentor Guidelines. First, several of the behaviors discouraged in the Mentor Guidelines are those often associated with friendship-lending money, running errands, physical contact, etc. Additionally, the aim of Motivational Interviewing is not to establish equality in the reciprocal way that indicates interpersonal closeness. Instead, Motivational Interviewing is considered a counseling tactic, one centered upon the interviewee that does not require the mentor to disclose personal information (also seen in the Mentor Guidelines). The struggle experienced by #5659 is problematic in that Motivational Interviewing encourages self-motivated change and does not easily allow for the application of the therapeutic skills her educational institution encourages her to explore through her practicum experience. However, the identity of therapist is one discussed even amongst other mentors whom do not feel the tension from another organization to enact therapeutic methods. Organizational members often comment on this directly, ‘we don’t expect you to be therapists, which is exactly why we provide you one for free’. Many issues that emerge from mentoring are recommended to be addressed by the organization’s therapist. RR’s therapists acts as a resource for the mentor identity structure as well as an organizational attempt to separate the practices of therapy from mentoring.

Both of these interviewees express mentoring as something different from their pre-existing or current identities. #4698 does see herself having an identity of ‘friend’ with her mentee, and it is challenging for her to be told that she should not be an identity she has already established with her mentee. #5659 also struggles with her pre-existing identity as her experience with RR is being used as a requirement for her degree in therapy. The existence of multiple identities for mentors is not one acknowledged by the organization as anything other than external factors that

need to be hidden or kept away from the mentee. One of the Mentor Guideline rules discourages the sharing of personal information (like one's last name) with a mentee, and similarly most discussions around the mentor identity by organizational members address the importance of separating or shielding those other identities from the mentee and never how to enact multiple identities simultaneously in the mentoring practice.

All of the depictions of the mentor identity as given by the mentors of RR through interviews point towards the spirit of Motivational Interviewing, however, they do not highlight the practice at a skill level. In other words, no mentor simply aligned Motivational Interviewing with mentoring, saying that a mentor is one who performs the practice of Motivational Interviewing. Although it was the skills that RR mentors were taught in orientation, it was the spirit of the practice that became reiterated in their actions as mentors. The interview excerpts display identity work in their articulation of the mentor identity structure as preferred at an organizational level. This identity work is often influenced and altered by the identity regulation contributed by other organizational members as well as other mentors. Within the organization there is a designated rule/resource that acts to enforce/reiterate identity regulation. That rule/resource is the Monthly Mentor Meetings. Attendance at the monthly mentor meetings includes all mentors, mentor advisors (whom often are also mentors), and staff members (usually only one or two). Mentor Meetings take on a variety of topics including learned helplessness, the first 72 hours, Motivational Interviewing booster, and Review Board.

At each meeting the mentors begin by going around the room, introducing themselves, and talking about the current state/challenges experienced by their mentee. During the Review Board meeting this is the only activity, with each mentor and mentee discussed in great detail. Following the updates given by individual mentors the group is welcome to comment or question

the update which includes the behaviors reported by the mentor as well as the mentee. Staff members often partake in this meeting with the goal of identity regulation in order to ensure that mentors are maintaining the identity structures laid out by the organization. For example, at one mentor meeting a mentor (#1827) brought up the fact that his mentee wanted to discuss the Bible, at which point a staff member jumped into the conversation to remind everyone that RR is not a religious organization and it is against its mission to proselytize any religion. The staff member would then be expected to explain how to ‘properly’ handle a situation in which the mentee shows interest in religious affiliation. If a mentee initiated a discussion of joining religious organizations, mentors should support their actions, but mentors should not be the ones to bring up this topic in any form (this particular identity regulation occurred frequently in the past few months). This is but one example of the identity regulation practices with the month mentor meetings. Mentors experience similar corrections regularly on the topics of advice giving, boundaries, and setting realistic expectations. In all of these acts of identity regulation or corrections, an organizational member will use language similar to “we don’t do that.” Mentors will also correct each other, although at times more delicately stating, “I didn’t think we did that.” The ‘we’ referenced in both statements points to the organizational mission, as opposed to any one identity structure, even though the mentor identity is the one under scrutiny.

Certainly the mentor meetings serve an important role in community building for RR, however, it also acts as the main source of identity regulation for the mentor identity structure maintained by the larger organizational rules and resources. The preferred mentor identity is one embodying the spirit and skills of Motivational Interviewing and upholds the mission, guidelines, and skills provided by the organization. These moments of identity regulation also occurs for the non-mentor organizational members, but in very different ways.

The lack of rules and resources described above present the non-mentor organizational member at a cross roads of behavior, with little guidance. Considering this identity as one that is not substantiated by the organization, understanding which identities are preferred and by whom is a challenging one. Through analyzing organizational practices, compassion seems to be the key component taken from the organizational mission which provides a framework for interactions as well as a preferred identity. Compassion organizing, in many ways reflects the emergent practices observed in RR. “Compassionate organizing reflects organizing that is attuned to the needs of vulnerable others and the alleviation of their suffering” (George, 2014, p. 8). This organizing practice, as I’ve described it, is in no way represented through material rules or resources in RR, but in reflecting upon the work practices and identity work of the organizational members, compassion organizing provides an explanation for the behaviors which aligns with the overall mission of the organization as the primary resource.

An initial component of compassion organizing is the innate human response to the suffering of another, which can be described as empathy, sympathy, or feelings that are focused on the other instead of the self; with the second component being “making decisions and behaving in such a ways that reflect care and concern for others” (George, 2014, p. 7). Essentially, the two parts are nominal, exhibiting compassion and then organizing around those feelings. The resource of the mission statement comments not only on compassion, but who deserves compassion. In the mission statement, offenders are recognized as a population that rarely encounters compassion, and RR as an organization espousing beliefs that everyone deserves compassion, and more than that, a second chance. Individuals in the organization reflected upon compassion as a crucial component to their work when asked why they chose to join the organization:

*#5659: Um, I think just just helping people in general because that's kind of my passion, just being able help people in need.*

*#4698: I have a heart for people that are hurting and just need somebody there.*

*#4715: Um, I actually have a family member who went through a lot of substance abuse and addiction issues and, uh, jail and prison situations as a result of that. And so, I appreciate the (3) um, the immensity of the obstacles that face people who are trying to break out of- that system once they are in it.*

These are but a few examples of participants whom highlighted the emotional component of the work they do with RR. Others mention compassion in a way that points at the problem of recidivism, which still revolves around the injustice of the suffering of another, but not in such an emotional way. The compassion described in the mission and in the individual reflections, although organizationally directed towards inmates and offenders, cannot be isolated to just one group, but shifts to whomever is perceived as suffering at that moment. Often in the organization, the individual suffering is a fellow organizational member, and the suffering occurring is the result of working to alleviate the pain of another. In other words, an organizational member will work to the aid of a mentee, and then other organizational members work to alleviate the burden of extra work on the organizational member. For lack of a better metaphor, this activates a chain of suffering, one person suffers, in helping that person another suffers, and so on, causing compassion to permeate every individual's practice within the organization.

In investigating the practices observed in the setting of the office with largely non-mentor organizational member, the practices of RR can be understood as more purposeful when compassion is considered the preferred identity, rather than something constantly changing with little to no resources and rules to make meaning of those practices. For example, one long-time volunteer and intern at RR described her role as follows:

*#3639: My job is to try to ease the load on the plates of Executive Director and Program Manager, so the work I do tends to not be unique to the organization. However, I have been getting involved with the County Jail Garden with the support of RR, which was not recognized at RR prior to me joining.*

This articulation of her work does not address any role or identity outside compassion organizing, or easing the suffering of other organizational members. Working at RR for #3639 ultimately means being the individual available to pick up any work that has been left behind due to the emergencies that frequently occur within the mentoring program. Some of these emergencies include situations like, a mentee has gone missing, a mentee is in a bad situation which requires immediate intervention, or the jail changed policies no longer allowing mentors to visit mentees during certain hours of the day. #3639 also describes her personal side project, working with the Jail garden, and this program works specifically to relieve some of the isolation and discomfort of the inmates. Although simply acknowledging that an organizational member has a full plate does not indicate clear suffering, other organizational members commented on this same phenomenon in a more dramatic light. #1775, a liaison from the jail stated:

*1775: they're drowning. And they're literally killing #2347.*

In this excerpt, the 'they' used by #1775 is in reference to the organization as a whole, and more specifically to the board members and supervisor directly in charge of member #2347. #1775 continues to explain what she means by this 'literal killing', for her this entails being overworked, under paid, and taking on too many responsibilities. This topic was addressed by member #2347 on my first day at the organization (recorded on page 1 of field notes), however, she described it as "burn out", and provided the topic as an explanation as to why most organizational members have not been involved with the organization for more than a few years.

Organizational member #2347 (the individual perceived as being killed) is often considered the first responder for the suffering of the mentees as well as struggling mentors. The

mentors call or email #2347 with the emergency their client is having and #2347 creates a plan and then delegates tasks to other organizational members (at all levels of the organization) to alleviate the suffering of that individual. In my interview with #2347 she explained how problems experienced by our clients (the mentees) are perceived by the organization:

*#2347: And so one of those-I mean I see that when we do the work when we work with our offenders like when our offender has a problem it becomes an RR problem.*

#2347 does not separate the problems of the mentee from the organization. It would be simple to understand a mentee's problem as an issue that needs to be reconciled by their individual mentor, but that is not how the organization perceives individual problems. Instead, individual problems are immediately perceived as the problems of the whole.

The preferred identity for an organizational member is one who can easily drop all of the current tasks before them and activate a compassionate plan of action. This is the same identity preferred throughout all level of organizational membership, with the aid being directed to the organizational member directly above them (with clients at the top of the chain). Organizational members understand compassion organizing as the rationale to partake in "this type of work", even though most are aware that it is the same element that produces the negative effects of "burn out". Such reliance on compassion seems to eliminate work practices outside of those necessitated by the emergent crisis at hand. Although compassion is the desired practice for organizational members, there are certain presentations of compassion that are deemed organizationally inappropriate.

An identity that is staunchly dis-preferred by the organizational mission is a religious identity. There are several faith-based organizations that do similar work with individuals reentering into society; however, RR stands by the mission that everyone deserves a second chance, not just those individuals who subscribe to particular religious views. Again, it is never

stated in the words of the mission that the organization is non-religious, but has been taken up as implied meaning by long-time members of the organization whom knew the founder and presumably her intentions creating the organization. Buddhism would be the only religious perspective that the organizational occasionally resembles, and staff members actively avoid the fact that the programming at RR was designed based on Buddhist principles.

*#2347: Like we have this Buddhist grant we get. We're not a Buddhist organization but the founder was and a lot of the things that are--you see it flow through in training and the policies we've had you'll be shocked like yeah those are Buddhist principles. So yeah we're not this Buddhist org but we get funded by this Buddhist foundation.*

Even though the organization receives funding from a Buddhist grant, the board and staff still refuse to describe the organization as a religious one. While RR most clearly resembles Buddhism in its organizational model, the identity regulation around religion in the present day conversation is directed to Christianity and the Christian members of the organization.

The struggle against being a more religious organization is one being fought by the board members specifically in advocating ways to grow RR as an organization. On the board there is a strong Christian majority and those board members have recently been using their church as a place to advertise RR and to recruit new mentors and volunteers. Individuals working at RR attribute many of the identity struggles to the lack of resources like money and manpower. By bringing a megachurch to the conversation, many of RR's problems could be solved.

*#7375: Cause he and I--we've been trying to start a ministry at this huge church. It gets 20,000 people at its service to give you an idea of how big it is. And he well-it turns out that three of us on the board all go there. And we saw it as an opportunity to find more volunteers to come be mentors for RR. And I dunno maybe he could read them better than I could, but I felt like I was out there all by myself trying to make things happen.*

As #7375 describes, even within the Christian members of RR, not all approve the strong hand of the megachurch being used to elicit volunteers and mentors. Despite that lack of unified action

the inroads into the church have been made which has brought a distinctly Christian group of mentors and volunteers into the organization. Previously, most mentors were gathered from universities, nonreligious community groups, and individuals volunteering at nonprofit that wanted a more hands on role in helping offenders. The infusion of religious individuals into RR has brought religion to the fore at several mentor meetings as well as board meetings, while staff and other organizational members try to discourage the combination of mentoring and religion.

One mentor who was recruited from what I will refer to as the megachurch, explained how #7375 reached out to the church group and how she sees the church's mission as being quite similar to the goals of RR.

*#4698: I go to [mega]church and I was trying to get involved in a group and I saw that it was a prison ministry and then um got a hold of her and got told that there was two options, one was to go into the prison and do presentations every week or do the one on one. [Several minutes omitted] They call it a 'me too' church. So they say, um just like they did yesterday, are you struggling? I am too. Do you question god? I do too. So I think it's drawn-it's a huge church and I think it's drawn in the community because we all are in the same boat basically. And it's neat that they're there to go into the prisons and places like that that most people will turn away from.*

#4698 views the church and RR as two organizations that are both working towards helping individuals who are usually not given compassionate consideration by larger society. In the rest of our discussion, #4698 continually brought up the opinions and values of the megachurch and how it has led her to be a person who has the courage and support to work with 'this population'. #4698 was recruited at the church, brings her mentee with her to church (something that was heatedly discussed in a mentor meeting when it was discovered that many mentors bring their mentees to this same church), and sees the act of mentoring as encompassing part of her church community since there is so much cross over between the two.

The Christian identity and its newfound presence in the organization acts as a divider for the board. In an interview with organizational members #8853, a long time board member for

RR, I asked her how working with RR was different from other organizations she's been involved with in the past. Her response reveals this dis-preferred identity of religion:

*#8853: More of the members are a lot more religious than the other non-profits and agencies I've been involved with. I can't think of anything else.*

Considering this is a strictly non-religious organization (which of course is not supported or maintained through any material rules or resources), her response pointed me towards the larger divide across the board, which is not something many non-board members are even aware of occurring. In everyday interactions organizational member #9119 even went so far as to refer to the RR members from the megachurch as “#7375 and her lunatics” (Field notes, pg. 17). The combative nature between these two groups is often hidden from organizational members, however, the newfound concern for the Christian presence within the organization has led to much more direct identity regulation regarding religion for the mentors.

Identity regulation towards mentors presenting religious identities to their mentees is consistently present in the mentor meetings, however, in non-mentor organizational members there seems to be less direct regulation. The biggest concerns for the religious identity is that it would harm the work being done with offenders coming out of jail, that it would alienate the mentees in some ways and make the program too similar to a faith based organization. Within the non-mentor community (board, volunteers, and interns), there is little regulation around the religious identity as it does not directly affect the mentees. As there are no rules or material resources directing the behavior of non-mentor organizational members, there is nothing explicitly problematic about the religious insurgence of new members.

Compassion can be seen as a crucial component reflecting the preferred identities and practices across the organization. Mentors are expected and in some ways required to perform mentorship in ways that create a separation between the mentor and the mentee. However, the

identities mentors feel constrained from enacting, friendship and counseling, are ones emanating from the construct of compassion from the foundational idea that there are “no throw away people”. Mentors are discouraged from doing compassion in ways that are not previously provided by the organization. On the other hand, organizational members are also influenced by the concept of compassion and what compassion means in terms of organizing. For many organizational members, compassion means adapting to the constantly changing needs of ‘this population’. This constant flexibility and affordance provided in order to respond quickly to emergencies, in some ways eliminates daily practices that would act to stabilize the organization outside of those emergencies. Additionally, compassion is discouraged from crossing over into a religious message or mission. This identity regulation has only been evident in the past few months of the organization, but provides a standard for appropriate and inappropriate forms of compassion. Despite the organizational preference, a multitude of organizational members with common religious experiences has penetrated the organization. Several organizational members see this change as both positive and negative for the organization, positive in that the organization is gaining more resources and negative in that the organization is gaining a religious tilt along with these resources. For whatever reason attributed to the influx of religious members, the lack of clear rules and resources around the organizational members presents some question as to the level of identity regulation available for the dis-preferred identity.

RQ3: How do nonprofit identity practices display, interact with, reify, and/or challenge the ‘organizing tension’ often found in nonprofits? How do these tensions inform or relate to each other?

Taking on the spirit of the mentor, abiding by the rules and resources set out by the organization, causes organizing tension for many. Mentors often find tension with the co-existence of the mentor identity alongside pre-existing identities of friend, enabler, or therapist. This can be seen from the explicit direction away from behaviors that the organization deems as ‘enabling’. An example of the tension between ‘enabling’ and mentoring was expressed in my field notes after the first day of training:

The biggest thing people seemed to struggle with was the idea of not being an enabler but being a mentor. An enabler is someone that makes the situation worse, who encourages co-dependency instead of self-sufficiency. The leader of training today mentioned that anyone willing to do this sort of work was a big hearted person, and big hearted people are the ones that also fall into enabling. We want to do everything for them. They seem concerned that we will be taken advantage of, that we will give them money or a place to stay at our home or something ending terribly. You can tell that all of these people truly want to help others and I think it hurt some of them a little bit to be told that helping too much (enabling) can be detrimental to the person they are trying to help. (pg. 2 Field notes)

When someone asks for help, it is instinctual to immediately provide help, and exactly the behavior that a mentor is discouraged from. A mentor is ‘supposed’ to offer ideas as to how the individual can help himself or herself in terms of fixing or solving the problem. Making coherent sense out of the mentor identity along with the identity of someone that wants to help another, infused by the organizational desire for compassion, can cause organizing tension for the mentor.

Another mentor #1827, when interviewed, provided a strong reiteration of the Mentor Guidelines in describing his role as a mentor but in his practices acted in potentially ‘enabling’ ways:

*#1827: My role as a mentor is to be supportive of him. I’m not a resource-I’m a resource for support, not for help in any material way. I’m not to provide him with money. I might drive him here or there. Uh but he hasn’t asked me for any material support. I’m even supposed to get reimbursed for any driving I do. So I see my role as providing as much let’s call it psychological support or moral support as I can to him. And he seems to accept that.*

This excerpt is interesting, outside of the excerpt itself, and in considering the practices enacted that contradict the strong conviction of #1827's words. In this excerpt, #1827 appears to have the strongest alignment of all mentors interviewed to the Mentor Guidelines and does not express a struggle between pre-existing identities and the mentor identity. Later in the interview, this same individual described all of the ways in which he bypassed the rules he noted from the Mentor Guidelines in ways that are organizationally acceptable. #1827 mentioned a gift certificate that he received for the holidays to a store that he does not frequent. Although his is not allowed to hand his mentee money, he is 'allowed' to donate that card to the organization and have the organization give the gift certificate to his mentee's family. #1827 was also incredibly concerned about this mentee's family, as the mentee usually worked to support his wife and five children. In order to ease the struggle of the mentee's family and therefore ease the anxiety of his mentee, #1827 found a church that agreed to sponsor the mentee's family for the holiday season. The church donated a Christmas tree, lights, and gifts for all five children. Finally, #1827 listed several books (including a children's Bible) that he has given to his mentee to foster his educational growth in his effort to teach his mentee English. Evident in these incidents is the identity of one whom wants to help, one who is willing to provide the solution instead of allowing the individual to discover the solution on their own, or what the organizational members would constitute an enabler, but in acceptable ways. #1827 never expressed the identity work or organizing tension addressed by his fellow mentees, however, he may not have experienced the same tension in finding a way accepted by the larger organization and maintain both his enabler and mentor identities. All of these behaviors were recognized by the organization as successful mentoring practices that #1827 should be proud to have accomplished, especially the sponsorship by a local church. #1827 was never the individual handing the money

or material resources to his mentee, and therefore acted appropriately according to organizational standards of mentorship.

#1827 is not alone in these practices. #4698 also described a time in which her mentee needed a bike for her work-release program, and so #4698 donated her old bike to RR and instructed them to give the bike to her mentee. Although these practices may seem resistant to the mentor identity, the resistance is afforded to mentors by the organization. It is never advertised or encouraged that mentors give anything more than their time; however, if a mentor comes into the office concerned about his or her mentee's wellbeing, then the mentor will be informed of the opportunity to provide the mentee with an anonymous donation. Not many mentors seem to reach the point at which the organization will bring up with 'allowed' enabling, but those who do may find a release in the tension from the many organizing practices they may not partake in as mentors but may enact as anonymous donors.

Unsurprisingly, many mentors never fully transition from their pre-existing identities into solely a mentor identity. For those who can't resist the urge to enable, to give what they have to their friend in need, they have an outlet provided by the organization that makes it appear as if the client is receiving a random donation. Organizationally, because these donations are accepted from mentors, a mentor is never fully expected to be rid of their enabler identity. What is organizationally preferred is that the mentee never experiences this identity from their relationship with their mentee. In other words, the mentor may embody the enabler identity as long as it is never seen in full view by the mentee. Although this struggle has (slightly shadowed) organizational bypasses, many still struggled with adhering to the mentor identity structure, to the point that some ignore proponents of the Mentor Guidelines, often times to their own

detriment. Those example then become the warning stories, the past mentors that prove the importance of the rules.

Mentors also experience tension in their interactions with their mentees due to the fact that most find the mentor identity structure and the practices expected by mentors to be unfamiliar and unnatural. This is commented on often in Motivational Interviewing training, with even the trainer acknowledging that people don't walk around in their everyday lives 'talking like this.' Even those who abide by the mentor spirit may discover tension in implementing Motivational Interviewing into their mentoring practices. Motivational Interviewing, as a skill, as something that needs to be consciously implemented, may cause tension not simply with pre-existing identities that the mentor is aware of, but may cause tension with unconscious or 'natural' ways of speaking and therefore expressing identity.

#5659 discussed her personal tension with forgetting to implement Motivational Interviewing practices. In responding to the question, "What are some of the major challenges you face as a mentor?" interviewee #5659 stated:

*And also (6) honestly the motivational interviewing. That's a big challenge for me because I kind of-it's it's hard for me to have somebody my age and not talk to them like it's somebody my age and always remembering that to have that in my mind-you're the mentor you have to-you know-you can't just have a conversation like 'hey what's up'? You know-you know something casual. You have to constantly have to be motivational interviewing and that's a big struggle for me because with it being somebody my age I'm always so used to it being like a casual conversation and stuff and granted we can still have that but not all the time.*

This excerpt from #5659 (which was echoed by #4698) describes the performative tension around Motivational Interviewing. It's a performance for #5659 and not something that comes naturally when speaking with her mentee. The spirit of mentoring is not questioned here, but simply the skill as opposed to natural behavior. Member #5659 proceeded to tell me a story of a time in

which she did not use Motivational Interviewing, one that she regretted. The interviewee became emotional when revealing this story; to her it was a moment that taught her the need for

Motivational Interviewing. An excerpt of the story follows:

*#5659: And I said, 'so S--- I'm supposed to meet with you-I think I'm supposed to meet with you like for two to three hours but that really sounds like'-I was trying to be silly like trying to be casual but it came off like shit. Because I said 'but that sounds like a really freaking long time'-is what I said. And she goes (2) she just looked at me like straight faced. And I was like ((gasps)) oh shit. I was like I didn't mean it like that so I'm really sorry I didn't mean it like that and I said I hope you didn't take it like that but I just meant that I didn't know if you wanted to see me that long. And didn't-not realizing that-not thinking about her being in jail she's got nothing-nothing-I mean this is a big big deal for her to like get out of the dorm room and to come out and talk to somebody. It feels really good to talk to somebody about your shit.*

For #5659 this was a formative moment in the achievement of her mentor identity. It shocked her that the words she considered to be so casual and comfortable, could be so insensitive towards the person that she was trying so hard to help, her mentee. Talk and identity are strongly tied and although #5659 meant no harm with her talk, the identity her talk presented was not one aligning with the goals of a mentor. Motivational Interviewing practices are impossible for the larger organization to regulate, as those moments are privately shared between the mentor and mentee. Accordingly, not as much organizing tension is expressed around Motivational Interviewing, if a mentor does not practice the skill it is unlikely that anyone in the organization would find out. However, the lack of tension and regulation of the practice can lead to moments similar to the experience of #5659 in which the talk practices of the pre-existing identities contradict and build tension against the preferred mentor identity. For #5659 and her mentee this was tension that they were able to overcome in a productive way, but #5659 regretfully noted that this tension filled moment wouldn't have happened if she had been consciously Motivational Interviewing. Although #5659 followed most of the rules for mentoring in her interaction, the lack of

Motivational Interviewing practice led to a moment that could have presented her identity as so casual that it contradicts the supportive mentor identity structure as understood by the mentee.

For the mentors, issues of tensions arose specifically around talk and conceptions of alternative or multiple identities that do not always align with the mentor identity structure as supported by RR's rules and resources. The organizational affordances around enabling speaks to the overarching theme of compassion across the entire organization. Non-mentor organizational members experience similar tensions as it appear to be derivative of the practice of compassion. However, the non-mentors the tension enacts more from the practices themselves, and not from the emergent of pre-existing identities experienced by the mentors.

Compassion is crucial to the daily office practices of RR, with everyone working to ease the suffering of another being the primary mode of organization. The significance of the practices of compassion provide tension for the non-mentor organizational members. In one interview, member #2347 revealed a highly personal story, explaining a serious illness that often makes it difficult for her to work. She told the board and staff about her illness and their response upheld all of the tenets of compassion described in the organizing practice of RR.

*#2347: And one of the things they did was like you know don't ever be worried about your job or worried about you needing to take time off RR understands and will let you do whatever you need from us. And like it's always-and it's not like it just stops there it's not like this business deal it's like they'll call you on the weekend and be like how are you feeling today? You know? So like I donno as someone coming from Arizona and not having family in Colorado RR has very much become my family.*

For #2347, compassion organizing was the reason she wanted to stay with RR even longer than she planned. Compassion as organizing is something she considers more familiar in the context of family, and not a "business deal" or a business practice. This is an example of the success organizational story, when one organizational member suffered and the members around them

organized in a way to come to their aid. For many, this is a celebrated work practice, although the lack of routines practices does lead to strong tension in the organization.

Part of the tension of having compassion organizing as the primary organizational practice is that no one, and simultaneously everyone is responsible for work to be completed. There is no clear division of labor, and no clear sense of what labor is necessary on a day to day basis, or really any specific allotted of roles. Saying that everyone is accountable for doing their fair share when a crisis emerges and that the role boundaries are fairly permeable, means that accountability remains unchecked when one individual is doing more or less of their 'fair share'.

Compassion practices have caused so much tension in the organization that individuals have considered working against the compassion organizing, to the detriment of the larger organization, in order to create more regulated work practices. One small example of trying to resist that compassion organizing inclination was attempted by #2347 the same individual quoted above exemplifying the benefits of compassion in organizing. #2347 also experienced the negative effects of compassion, in the form of lack of organizational member accountability. The organizational member (#2347) attempted to alter the accountability in the daily office proceedings by refusing to send out the reminder email for the monthly mentor meeting.

#2347 gave #9119 the task of sending out the reminder emails for the monthly mentor meeting. #9119 has not done this task and it has severely hurt the attendance of said meetings. Other mentors at the meeting also complained about it to #9119 herself, but she seemed largely unaffected. #2347 told me that she was sitting there in the office waiting for #2347 to mail out the email and how #2347 refused to send out the email herself even though it would only take a couple minutes. "I want her to see the repercussions of not holding up her end of the work. But then, more people came than I expected to this month, and it actually bothered me. Damn." (Field notes, pg. 15)

In the final quote from #2347, the organizing tension is evident. Even though she knows that it is beneficial for the organization overall to simply send out the email herself, she chose to put some

accountability on #9119 and refused to complete the task on her behalf. Previously, the same thing had happened with #2347 sending out a reminder email about thirty minutes before the meeting was planned to begin. With this being the first time #2347 did not send out a last minute email she was hoping that attendance would be as low as usual, however, more mentors came to the meeting than she expected (which was still less than the ideal number of attendance). #2347 expressed her frustration with the situation as well as herself in the admittance that seeing a fair attendance at the mentor meeting irritated her, because it wouldn't communicate to #9119 the necessity of completing the task delegated to her. After the event I asked #2347 why she didn't reach out to the board regarding the lack of accountability. Her response was, "You can't complain about your mom to the board" (Field notes, pg. 13). The compassion organizing that made #2347 feel like she had family, is the same practice that makes her unable to change organizing practices for the better of the organization.

Flexibility, initiative, and awareness of what everyone else is working on has become the desired qualifications for individual organizational members working within the office. Compassion and the huge reliance on each other has lead the identities associated with individual roles within the organization to disappear in the day to day interactions. Instead, rules and resources are trying to be implemented that would put more accountability on individuals and individual work practices that are now going against the norms of compassion organizing. This organizing process, because it has been reiterated for years in everyday practices, is challenging to alter as it is not considered a rule of the organization but has become the primary organizing practice.

While it appears that the tensions experienced by the mentors regarding their identities outside of the mentor identity structure have been premeditated by organizational processes in

such a way as to afford resistance, many mentors never access the opportunity to relieve that tension. In no other way than the anonymous donations do organizational members ever concede the challenge or potential challenge likely through enacting a strict adherence to the mentor identity structure, or the impossibility of maintaining sole adherence to any single identity structure. Tension within the non-mentor organizational members comes from compassion as well as the lack of rules and resources to maintain or even initially construct the organizational member identity. Accountability has been lost due to the constant renegotiation of workplace roles leaving little room to renegotiate these practices in ways that would still uphold the “compassion” component holding together the very loosely defined identity structure.

## Chapter 5-Discussion

In this study, I have applied a practice perspective and the notions of identity and identification as presented by Scott et al (1998), to the case of a nonprofit which helps individuals recently released from jail reintegrate into society. By exploring identity practices and organizational preferences through the research questions and findings outlined above, organizing tensions can be addressed both in the context of this organization and possibly to other similar organization. In this chapter I will discuss the implications of these findings, in response to the literature referenced earlier in this study, concentrating on Sanders' (2012) conception of organizing tensions in nonprofit organizations and Scott et al.'s (1998) model of identity and identification. After addressing implications to theory and research I reveal potential limitations to this study, and then conclude with a summation of my work herein.

### *Implications*

One major contribution of this work is presenting the empirical necessity of structuration theory when coupled with the methodological constructs of practice theory. Structuration as a heuristic allowed for the simultaneous analysis of both the micro and macro, of structures and agents, and how rules and resources enact, challenge, or maintain existing structures. As a theory, structuration is often critiqued for its inability to be applied to empirical work, however, this study shows that from a practice perspective, incorporating a structuration lens, produces rich and valuable findings regarding organizational practices. Additionally, in terms of theoretical implications, this study demonstrates how identities can be studied from a practice perspective, in a way that accounts for both organizational structures and individual practices. By

putting rules and resources into conversation with identity work and organizing practices, a more holistic depiction of RR develops, one that incorporates all levels and individuals within the organization. Identity and organizing can be usefully analyzed by primarily focusing on contextualized practices through extended fieldwork that then speak to organizing tension.

Theoretically pairing the practice perspective of structuration to the topic of identity allows scholars to address identity in a more nuanced and emergent way than more traditional approaches to studying identity. Scott et al. (1998) critique traditional identity studies in the creation of their structuration model of identification, “Virtually all empirical studies of identification report a general and presumably stable measure of the construct that ignores specific contexts or changes over larger periods of time” (p. 319). Practice theory, and the identity centered structuration model developed by Scott et al. (1998) confronts this problem by infusing discussions of identity with the tenets of practice theory which recognizes the importance of space, time, context, and methodologically encourages longitudinal research. The combination of a practice perspective with a focus on identity can also inform academic understandings of organizing tension as pertains to nonprofit organization in this case, but to tension centered research more broadly. With tension centered research coming to the fore of organizational research, a practice perspective will enable contextualized studies of localized tension accounting for both micro and macro influences, as seen in this application about organizational identity. In the case of RR, findings revealed tensions across two predominant identities within the organization, originating from various contradictory messages. These findings speak to the topics of identity and identification, compassion organizing, and nonprofit organizing tension which will be explored below.

Empirically, Scott et al.'s distinction between identity and identification thematically recurred throughout the findings of this study. For clarification, Scott et al. described their distinction of these terms as follows, "we shall endeavor to use the term 'identification' when we mean interaction or other behaviors illustrating one's attachment; we shall speak of 'identity' as a set of rules and resources that function as an anchor for who we are" (1998, p. 303). In the case of RR, the mentor identity is anchored by various rules and resources as distributed and maintained by organizational members. This anchor, however, is not one that is easily attached to by organizational members. Several members expressed their struggle to adhere to the mentor identity structure, and instead sought out ways to incorporate identities discouraged by said rules and resources. Mentors understood their identities outside of RR to be inherently contradictory to the mentor identity structure, as it was avidly maintained and defined through organizational practice. The identities of friend, enabler, and therapist were actively discouraged by organizational members but consistently regarded as instrumental in the mentors' enactment, understanding, and resistance of the mentor identity.

Some mentors were more easily able to navigate the tension between pre-existing identities and identification to the mentor identity structure than others. Like mentor #1827, some enacted the discouraged pre-existing identities in ways that were made possible by the organization. By making anonymous donations to RR directed towards the needs and suffering of their mentee, the mentors were able to maintain some separation between the mentor identity and various 'enabling' identities, while not denying the existence and influence of those pre-existing identities. In this way RR designed an appropriate avenue for identity resistance for their mentors, although it was not openly discussed or made easily available. Others, like #5659 who altered her identification as a mentor after the contradictory messages impacted her

interactions with her mentee, consistently worked towards enacting the mentor identity as opposed to various pre-existing identities. In these findings, tensions are apparent not only in the understanding and acceptance of the rules and resources, but also in the mentoring practices. Although identity regulation occurred frequently in mentor meetings, the mentor identity is an identity enacted almost entirely outside of the organization, in interactions solely with the mentee. Due to the acceptable context of mentor practice being unseen by other organizational members, identity regulation proved difficult to maintain by organizational members.

One commonality between all of the potentially infringing pre-existing identities as expressed in interviews and everyday interactions was the compassionate nature of those identities. In other words, although the identities were discouraged at the organizational level, the identities presenting the contradictions and tensions for mentors were identities that revolved around aiding the mentee in some way, in congruence with the organizational mission. This characteristic of compassion in identities and practice can be seen beyond the mentors and as a form of organizing throughout various levels of the organization.

The compassion organizing practices found throughout the organization (an unexpected practice discovered in this study) is an interesting and unusual practice that also contributes to organizing tension in RR. Compassion organizing as a practice is not necessarily preferred or overwhelmingly desired at RR, but one that has gone unregulated for so long that it appears to be the only means to accomplishing work or organizing. This requires further examination into what is considered compassion organizing outside of the observed practices of RR. Some of the characteristic feature of compassion organizing includes:

By themselves, compassion activation and mobilization are mutually reinforcing and are the 'engine' for a process of compassion organizing. But compassion organizing is also

shaped by emergent features, both structural and symbolic, that shape the evolving process and pattern of responses. Emergent structural features consist of created roles and improvised routines, while emergent symbolic features consists of leaders' actions and caring stories (Dutton, Worline, Frost, & Lilius, 2006, p. 81).

The description by Dutton et al. emphasizes the emergent properties of the organization as well as the constantly changing and often improvised roles and routines consistent with the findings above. Compassion organizing requires the emergent nature of identities and activation of organizational resources in response to an incident in which one is perceived as suffering (Dutton, Worline, Frost, & Lilius, 2006). Reflecting upon the data which includes various accounts of organizing practices at RR, compassion organizing appears to be the primary organizational practice. This leads me to distinguish RR as a compassion organization, as both its mission and organizing practices reflect the enactment of alleviating the suffering of others. Interestingly, in the literature, compassion organizing focuses on the individual or small group level and is not considered a large-scale means of organizing (George, 2014). Why? Is this because compassion organizing is considered a dis-organized and therefore unsustainable model or because of the conception that organizations could never entirely organize through compassion due to the financial burdens and necessities? Considering these questions, RR provides interesting insights as an organization that does not necessarily have the rules and resources that enforce organizing in this way, but a practice of compassion organizing that activates the procedures of the organization as a whole.

George (2014) made several calls to action in his address and recognition of the newfound academic interest in compassion organizing, some of which are pertinent to this study. For example George (2014) stated, "organizations could be studied that really do seem to have

social welfare concerns as important goals and objectives” as well as encouraging researchers to explore the tensions in compassion organizing and what organizational conditions lead to compassion organizing practices (pg. 12). Unintentionally, this study has stumbled upon a potential context which answers many of these questions posited. According to the findings, it appears that to increase compassion organizing, minimal rules and resources establishing how organizational members should act in their daily interactions may influence the compassion organizing process, while not deliberately imposing it. Several organizational members commented on their role confusion, as their role was never distinguished through rules and resources. This same confusion, however, enabled organizational members to view their role as emergent along with the impromptu plans activated in order to alleviate suffering. Minimal enforcement of roles and the lack of rules and resources may have provided organizational members with a great ability to respond to the calls for mobilization, as some members indicated that availability to help with a present need as their role in the organization.

In an effort to begin to study tension in compassion organizing, another implication of this study is that accountability acts incongruently with organizational practices. Reviewing the findings above shows that not having a specified role may have increased ability to conduct compassion organizing, however, the lack of role distinction also made organizational member unable to hold others accountable. Member #2347 struggled with implementing new organizing practices that would delineate responsibilities to individual members, due to the loose nature of organizing practices usually experienced within RR. In order to keep roles and organizing practices open to constant compassion organizing, accountability for day to day organizational maintenance seemed to go missing. This is not to say that it is impossible to do compassion organizing while still maintaining organizational accountability, but in this case in which

compassion organizing emerged naturally, accountability was not a byproduct of the practice, even when it was sought out by an organizational member.

An initial question this study addressed was the tension posited by Sanders (2012) regarding the pre-existent tension in all nonprofit organizations. This tension, according to Sanders (2012), comes from the contradictory messages of the nonprofit mission and the financial needs of the organization. In this study, issues of tension and dis-preferred identities may be colored by this *a priori* nonprofit tension, but exhibitions of Sanders' tension were not the primary tension found. For example, reviewing the religious identity emerging within the organization, one questions if RR is in a financial position to truly enforce identity regulation towards religious members and if that influences how that dis-preferred identity is maintained. One crucial resource for the organization is staffing, and to alienate a large segment of individuals who affiliate with the megachurch would be devastating in terms of organizational resources.

The tensions described by Sanders (2012) cannot be discounted in this study, although tensions resolutely emerged that were not directly indicative of the financial-mission tension. Purposefully, this study did not seek out tensions and contradictions evident in other studies, but allowed its own tensions to arise through examining practice. One interesting finding is that in terms of identities and tensions experienced by organizational members and mentors, rules and resources seemed to cause tension due to opposing constraints. For the mentor identity it appears that individuals felt constrained by the rules and resources and the regulation practiced around them, to the point that many of their co-occurring identities were discouraged. In terms of non-mentor organizational members, the lack of rules and resources that would distinguish organizational roles also created tension in identification. These two issues of constraint, one

from the enforcement of rules and resources and one from the lack of enforced, regulated, or maintained rules or resources (or even an identity structure for non-mentor organizational member), presented the two instances in which individuals expressed the most tension. The availability, reification, and maintenance of the identity structures of the organization and how they are experienced in ways that are constraining lead to various tensions experienced by organizational members through reflection and practice.

### *Limitations*

In my theoretical construction of a practice/structuration approach to narrative identity, several of the limitations of structuration, although not all, were eliminated. For example, taking a practice perspective provided a methodological approach to empirical research that the heuristic nature of structuration cannot afford. Moreover, this empirical study advances the applications of structuration theory by providing an application in a longitudinal study. Some features of structuration, however, were not taken into account in this study as they could not all simultaneously be accounted for within the confines of a singular study. Issues of agency, time, space, and the full knowledgeability of the participants was not addressed. However, using a structuration model of identification directed my analysis away from many of these constructs, an analysis without a focus on identity may have been able to grapple with at least some of these issues in the case of RR in a much deeper way than my analysis provided. Additionally, Scott et al.'s negotiation of identity structures is not one that would be wholeheartedly agreed upon in the literature of Giddens. In combining the application provided by Scott et al. and the theoretical foundations of Giddens, it is possible that certain structures, rules, and resources were ignored in an effort to focus on identity structures. To this end, Giddens may have encouraged an analysis

away from identity, but towards the complexities of actions and structures, looking further into how structure and agency interact. Larger structural analysis may have been desired through a purely Giddens' articulation of structuration which would have been more able to address issues around the relationship with the jail, RR's relationship with various other nonprofits, and the organizational change experienced by RR across time and space.

Time and scope within this study can also be considered limiting factors. Obtaining participants in this study (effecting the scope) proved to be smaller than ideal. The organization did not encourage a full range of interviewees to participate, and instead only notified those that certain individuals believed would be 'appropriate' to be interviewed. Additionally, as the organization was experiencing an internal upheaval at the time of interviews, many individuals appeared hesitant in revealing too much information that would appear to critique RR. Even more unfortunately, this upheaval was not one that I fully understood at the time, and information regarding the unrest amongst the board may have directed my analysis towards different identities and an alteration of my interview protocol. Although the length of the study, could have been extended, it represents a strong attempt at longitudinal ethnographic research, however, my time as a participant observer could have also been negotiated in a way that allowed me to experience various avenues of the organization that remain unexplored here. For example, much of my experienced occurred outside of the jail, while there are individuals at RR whom work within the jail on a daily basis. Additionally, an observation of board meetings (if that were allowed) could provide insight into how identity regulation and the maintenance of rules and resources were addressed in practice by that group within the organization.

If more time and interviews had been encouraged by the organization, a second round of interviews specifically addressing compassion organizing found within the interviews I initially

collected could have led to a more substantial claim on tension and compassion organizing in this nonprofit organization. Because I did not expect to find compassion organizing in my initial casing of RR, most of my interactions, interview questions, and field notes do not directly address that body of literature. If a second round of interviews were permitted by the organization, I would have been able to speak much more fully into compassion organizing practices, the exact nature and extent to which they occurred in RR, and the organizational characteristics that may have influenced said practices.

### *Conclusion*

In this study of a small nonprofit organization several organizing tensions were found, most stemming from issues of identity and identification. By applying Scott et al.'s structuration model of identification, a narrative version of identity was studied in a way that also interpreted the interactions between practices, rules and resources, and organizational structures. Tensions were not found that manifested Sanders (2012) depiction of the necessary tension of nonprofit organizations caused by the contradiction between organizational missions and financing. Overall, this study contributes to organizational literature by theoretically addressing the areas of identity and practices in a way that situates identity as important in terms of its actuation in practice and its negotiation with identity structures. This study began a discussion on compassion organizing that should be continued in future research involving nonprofit organization, practice, and tension.

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## Appendix A

### Interview Protocol

1. When did you first hear about RR?
  1. What caused you to want to be involved in the creation of RR?
  2. What caused you to want to have an active involvement with RR?
  3. If you have been involved with RR since its creation, how has RR changed since 2005?
2. Could you describe your current role/relationship with RR?
  1. How has that role/relationship changed over time?
  2. How is what you do in RR unique within RR?
  3. How is what you do in RR unique from other organizations you've been involved with in the past?
3. How would you describe RR to someone who isn't familiar with the organization?
4. How would describe the atmosphere at RR?
5. What are the major challenges a RR member faces?
  1. Could you describe a particular experience of yours when you have experienced one of these challenges?
  2. Does your involvement with RR have a presence in other areas of your life? Other jobs, home-life, hobbies, etc.?
6. How does the larger community view RR as an organization?
7. What is RR' relationship with the larger nonprofit community?
8. How would you describe RR' relationship with the County Jail?
9. Is there anything that you would change about RR or your personal involvement with RR?