Correctional Officer Training and the Secure Containment of Risk and Dangerousness in a Canadian Provincial Jurisdiction

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Researchers argue that prison systems have become increasingly punitive since the 1970s. However, the literature on Canadian provincial prisons has yet to document how punitiveness characterized by the rise of risk and concerns about dangerousness has been incorporated into penal practice. Using data collected during a 9-week participant observation study of provincial correctional officer (CO) training and semi-structured interviews with COs, this dissertation argues that CO training depicts prisoners as risky and dangerous by characterizing prisoner misconduct as antagonistic. This conceptualization helps to legitimize the use of physical forms of control. The use of force is positioned as the most important mechanism that COs use to manage antagonistic behaviour. The development of a security orientation premised on the use of force is achieved within a masculinized training regime designed to produce competent officers. I argue that competency is a gendered process where male and female recruits are differentially sanctioned when they fail to show toughness and emotionally stoicism. The amount and type of force used must be reasonable. Reasonableness is tied to how well COs document use of
force incidents and how they use force in camera friendly ways. These are positioned as accountability measures designed to reduce excessive force. However, I suggest that these accountability measures actually shield COs from being responsible for the force they use. Force is conceptualized as a legitimate response to prisoner behaviour and COs are taught how to administer high levels of pain without being caught for using force. So long as a CO can justify and document his or her actions, the institution and the officer are absolved of liability associated with the use of physical force. This creates the environmental conditions necessary to keep COs in control by ignoring the social and contextual causes of antagonistic behaviour.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Criminologists and sociologists alike have documented a shift in how punishment is conceptualized and administered across jurisdictions since the 1970s. The push toward “tough on crime” policies supported, in part, by the ascendance of risk has reoriented the purpose of prisons from sites of redemption and rehabilitation to sites focused on the identification and containment of dangerousness (Garland 2002; Feeley and Simon 1992). As a result, many jurisdictions, including Canada, have moved away from a correctionalist system toward one focused on security and control. This is especially true in Canadian provincial systems.

The desire to keep prisons safe and orderly is not new; however, across jurisdictions there has been a concerted focus on enhancing penal security and control. The rise of risk and the need to manage dangerous populations emerged alongside the development of punitive crime control rhetoric and neoliberal forms of governance (Feeley and Simon 1992; Garland 2002; Rose 2000). In fact, predicting and managing risk often dominates criminal justice discourses (Feeley and Simon 1992; Garland 2002; Maurutto and Hannah-Moffat 2006). Within this dynamic, prisoners are no longer conceptualized as individuals in need of treatment, but as risk subjects that must be contained (Feeley and Simon 1992; Rose 2000). As Rose (2000) notes, the prison has become the privileged location for the secure containment of risk. Even though the prison is a disciplinary institution designed to produce compliant and self-governing subjects (Foucault 1995), penal environments that restrict prisoner movement and limit rehabilitative programing under the guise of improving prison safety actually reduce opportunities for prisoners to learn how to self-govern. The perceived success of disciplinary power rests on front-line officers’ ability to monitor risk and to reduce potential sources of danger in prisons. From the perspective of correctional officers (COs hereafter), prisoners represent the most important threat to prison security (Drake 2012). In this regard, prisoners are not seen as people who can be corrected, but as risks that need to be controlled.
The punitive tone of the “tough on crime” period is characterized by the implementation of draconian crime control policies, such as the development of mass incarceration resulting from the war on drugs, the implementation of mandatory minimums and three strike laws, the use of long term and supermax segregation, the increased reliance on highly restrictive penal environments that limit prisoner access to meaningful rehabilitation programs, and the use of prisons as warehouses for risky and dangerous populations (Garland 2002; Rose 2000; Bosworth 2010). These more austere conditions of confinement are a salient part of the penal experience, in spite of research evidence suggesting that punitive modes of confinement exacerbate the pains of imprisonment (Sykes 1958; Drake 2012; Haney 2006; Haney 2008; Haney 2009). Even though Canadian correctional practices retain some commitment to rehabilitation, I show in this dissertation that punitive logics and practices dominate in Canadian provincial institutions (Moore and Hannah-Moffat 2005).

The extent to which punitive punishment has eclipsed rehabilitation is a common topic among punishment scholars (Goodman, Page, and Phelps 2015; Goodman, Page, and Phelps 2017; Maurutto and Hannah-Moffat 2006). Feeley and Simon (1992) and Garland (2002) locate the punitive turn in the development of actuarial justice and the political, social, and economic upheaval of the 1970s. Feeley and Simon (1992) argue that a “new penology” centred on the need to identify and classify offenders according to aggregate risk factors developed out of the demise of rehabilitation. Garland (2002) similarly suggests that the demise of penal welfarism and the development of a culture of control emerged out of concerns that prison rehabilitation programs failed to solve the problem of recidivism. However, Maurutto and Hannah-Moffat (2006) argue that punitive strategies and actuarial forms of justice have not resulted in an abandonment of rehabilitative goals in Canada. They argue that rehabilitation remains part of Canadian correctional practices but has been repackaged as risk and needs.

Canadian researchers point out that Canada has not implemented retributive and punitive punishments to the same degree as the United States (Meyer and O’Malley 2005; Doob and Webster 2006). The Canadian justice system has a number of protective factors, such as a lack of penal populism, an appointed judiciary, lower incarceration rates, and general public support for rehabilitative measures, which have limited the extent to which punitiveness has
been incorporated into penal practices. Despite these protective factors, punitive logics do exist in Canada (Moore and Hannah-Moffat 2005). One example is the use of solitary confinement for people with mental health issues (Hannah-Moffat and Klassen 2015).

In light of research evidence that punitive rhetoric and practices have become commonplace across penal systems, it remains unclear how salient punitiveness, as characterized by a preoccupation with risk and dangerousness (Feeley and Simon 1992), is in the way correctional officers learn to manage prisoners as security subjects. CO training is the conduit through which officers learn “who” prisoners are and how they behave. COs must implement and follow correctional policies and practices focused on identifying risk and containing dangerousness. It is conceivable that the logics of the punitive turn have become the primary working orientation for correctional officers. This dissertation looks specifically at how concerns about risk and dangerousness are institutionalized during CO training to entrench punitive punishments in provincial jails. I will argue that the correctional environment in Canadian provincial jails is punitive in tone and practice. The production and reinforcement of punitive logics is situated within an institutional framework designed to maximize CO control over prisoners. I will demonstrate how CO training reinforces a highly pejorative depiction of prisoners as risky and who must be swiftly dealt with to keep prisons secure. This creates a level of intellectual ignorance among COs of the suffering experienced by prisoners, while simultaneously creating a cognitive orientation toward justifying coercive management strategies that privilege the use of force over less restrictive tactics. This disregard for prisoners’ suffering and the resultant lack of empathy is an outcome of how CO training socializes new officers to anticipate violence, to respond to conflict with violence, and then to off-load accountability for this violence back onto prisoners.

1.2 Canadian Provincial Penal Environments

Correctional officers across Canada work in unionized environments. Even though scholars have documented the power and influence that labour unions in the United States have had
in shaping penal practice (Page 2011), the unions in Canada do not seem to have the same kind of power. Correctional officers in the provincial jurisdiction examined in this dissertation often report that their union is not an effective advocate for safer working conditions for front-line staff. They feel the union has more of a symbolic role because it lacks the necessary influence to affect penal policies.

Over the past few years, there has been growing concern across provincial jurisdictions that the working conditions of prison officers are deteriorating. For instance, in 2013, Alberta correctional officers went on strike to bring attention to dangerous working conditions at the newly opened Edmonton Remand Centre (CBC 2013). Similar concerns have been expressed in Ontario. In 2018, the union representing Ontario provincial officers lobbied the Ontario government to hire more COs because there had been an increase in the number of violent outbursts directed at officers (CBC 2018). Ontario officers argue that staffing shortages and rising prison populations have made working in jails more dangerous. COs generally want more resources to be devoted to improving safety and security in prisons (Page 2011). The COs I interviewed said staffing levels, the lack of resources to manage mentally ill prisoners, and prison over-crowding are the chief concerns CO unions have brought to provincial authorities. Ultimately, the provincial government controls penal policies and regulations, and COs feel that the union has not been able to leverage enough lobbying power to improve their working conditions.

Canadian penal environments are divided between provincial and federal jurisdictions. Prisoners sentenced to two years less a day are confined in the provincial system, and those with longer sentences are sent to the federal system (Ricciardelli and Perry 2016). The distinction between federal and provincial jurisdictions has become important over the past few decades because of the rise in the prison population at the provincial level. Much of this expansion has been attributed to the increased use of remand and the upsurge of parole and probation violations in the provincial system (Juristat 2017). The remand population is challenging to manage, as these people have not been tried or sentenced for the charges they face. This lack of resolution makes serving time in custody difficult because these prisoners have no clear understanding of when their cases will be resolved. Moreover, much of the remand population has a history of drug and alcohol abuse, untreated mental health
problems, a history of abuse and trauma, a high level of social and economic marginality, gang affiliations, and an experience of revolving door cycles of incarceration (Field Notes May 19, 2014).

Managing remand prisoners makes prison work more difficult because prison officers are working with an “unknown” population. COs often note that the high turnover rate in the provincial system limits their ability to develop productive relationships with prisoners, and they simply presume that remand prisoners are problematic and risky. As a result, remand prisoners are regularly given maximum-security designations as a safety precaution when they enter the remand facility, regardless of the charge against them. Prisoners classified as maximum-security are subjected to more restrictive conditions of confinement with limited movement, reduced access to treatment programs (if they are available), constrained access to family and friends, and more restrictive forms of physical control because they are depicted as risky.

The provincial system also includes sentenced prisoners who serve, on average, three to eight months. The brevity of the sentence length also limits officers’ ability to forge meaningful levels of rapport and to get to know the people they are working with (Field Notes May 20, 2014).

Interestingly, the focus of the training program examined in this dissertation is geared toward the management of remand prisoners, even though the trainers did not make a meaningful distinction between remand and sentenced populations. All prisoners were depicted as a homogenous risk group, in part, because most of the trainers were employed in remand centres across the province. The way the prison environment was depicted and the management strategies used to contain risk and dangerousness were influenced by their experiences dealing with remand prisoners.

1.3 Research Questions and Central Arguments
1.3.1 Research Questions

In light of previous research arguing that penal systems across jurisdictions have become
decidedly more punitive, this research examines how and in what ways punitive logics/rhetoric of risk and dangerousness have been incorporated into how correctional officers are trained to manage prisoners in Canadian provincial jails. To address this primary research question, this research explores how CO training produces competent officers capable of managing prisoners, the way COs’ conceptualize prisoner behaviour, the strategies they learned to deal with prisoner misconduct, and the mechanisms in place to hold COs accountable if and when they use physical force to manage prisoner behaviour.

1.3.2 Central Arguments

This dissertation argues that CO training legitimizes and entrenches punitive forms of punishment by producing a criminogenic penal environment focused on dominance and control. I argue that CO training reinforces the notion that prisoners are inherently risky and dangerous. I contend that prisoner misconduct is characterized as antagonistic, which reinforces the conceptualization that prisoners are the “dangerous other” to legitimize the use of physical forms of control. The use of force is positioned as the most important mechanism that COs use to manage antagonistic behaviour. The development of a security orientation premised on the use of force is achieved within a masculinized regime designed to produce competent officers. A competent officer is one who must be able to use force to control prisoners. I argue that competency is a gendered process whereby male and female recruits are differentially sanctioned when they fail to conform to the masculinized image of a CO by being tough and emotionally stoic. The ability to use force is not without some measure of accountability. However, I suggest that the accountability measures discussed during training to prevent the excessive use of force actually work to shield COs from being responsible for the force they use. Force is conceptualized as a legitimate response to prisoner behaviour, and COs are taught how to inflict high levels of pain without being caught for using force. So long as a CO can justify and document his or her actions, the institution and the officer are absolved of the liability associated with the use of physical force. This creates the environmental conditions necessary to keep COs in control by ignoring the social and contextual causes of antagonistic behaviour.
1.4 Literature Review

Penal research generally concentrates on the impact of imprisonment on prisoners. The experience of being confined has been well documented by the criminological literature (Haney 2003; Haney 2006; Haney 2009; Reiter 2016; Rhodes 2004; Sykes 1958; Hannah-Moffat 2000; Hannah-Moffat 2001; Ricciardelli 2014; Liebling and Maruna 2005; Reiter and Koenig 2015; Shalev 2009; Irwin 1980; Weinrath 2016; Bosworth 1999; Garland 2002). It is very clear that the rigidity of the system is physically and psychologically painful for prisoners. This is especially true for prisoners with mental health and cognitive disorders because they spend more time in segregation as a result of their disruptive behaviour (Haney 2006; Haney 2009; Hannah-Moffat and Klassen 2015; Rhodes 2004; Arrigo and Bullock 2008; Kilty 2012).

The literature on the “pains of imprisonment” since Sykes (1958) is robust, but the literature on COs remains limited. There is a developing body of scholarship on correctional officers, as I outline below, but the understanding of how the experiences of officers are shaped by the type of training they receive is underdeveloped. The literature does not consider the training academy as an important locus for the development of punitive attitudes and prisoner management strategies.

Correctional officers occupy a unique position in the jail. They are the primary intermediary between prisoners, management, and penal policy (Crawley 2011). Even though officers have more structural status and power than prisoners, COs and prisoners do not function in isolation. In fact, quite the opposite is true. The institutional conditions of confinement for prisoners are also the structural conditions within which COs must work. Both must honour the rituals of a highly structured environment, while dealing with the perceived dangers associated with such a space. For COs, these dangers are related to the perceived level of risk and volatility associated with working with prisoners.
1.4.1 Correctional Officers’ Attitudes and Orientations

Since maintaining prison order is a priority for COs, the ways officers act and understand prisoner conduct needs to be addressed. Scholars have argued that COs are the main drivers of the penal system because they are accountable for implementing penal policies (Lerman and Page 2012; Vuolo and Kruttschnitt 2008; Garland 1990). According to Garland (1990), prison officers are the “primary bearers of … penal culture, and the agents who do the most to transform cultural conceptions into penal actions” (p. 210). As Liebling (2011: 485) notes, “[p]rison work is all about the use of power and authority deployed through human relations.” Liebling (2011) and Liebling, Price, and Shefer (2011) argue that the attitudes of prison officers shape how prison life is experienced for prisoners. Research in this area examines the correlations between CO attitudes and management orientations (Lerman and Page 2012). Scholars consistently find that when COs express negative and stigmatizing attitudes about prisoners, they are more likely to support punitive and coercive forms of control, including the use of force (Liebling 2011; Ricciardelli and Perry 2016; Farkas 2000; Jurik 1985). Liebling (2011) finds that officers who express higher levels of cynicism and who are narrowly focused on rule compliance and safety tend to support more austere forms of control to manage prisoner behaviour, including the use of force and segregation.

Liebling (2011) also finds that prison officers who respectfully negotiate with prisoners are more likely to support rehabilitative efforts and less likely to use force to get compliance from prisoners. However, whether COs support rehabilitative ideals often depends on how well rehabilitation fits into their security duties. In more punitive regimes, COs show less support for rehabilitation (Lerman and Page 2012). As Drake (2012) points out, the implementation of security regimes tends to limit opportunities to establish and sustain rehabilitation programs. The restrictions placed on prisoner movement and the ability of prisoners to make meaningful life changes is eliminated in environments designed to reduce risk and danger. Since COs are expected to identify and neutralize safety risks, this positions the CO as a risk manager, not a rehabilitation facilitator.

Researchers argue that COs create a “working personality” that is highly suspicious, cynical, and committed to a deeply held social division between COs and prisoners (Lerman and Page 2012, Liebling 2008; Skolnick 1966; Jacobs and Retsky 1980; Farkas 1999). There is
some recognition that COs prefer not to use force, but according to Wooldredge and Steiner (2016), there are always threats of coercion. Force is used when non-violent means fail to get compliance. Wooldredge and Steiner (2016) argue that the type of control used by COs depends on their attitudes. Their surveys of COs indicate that officers working with high risk populations (usually maximum security), who are younger and less experienced, and those with lower levels of formal education are more likely to endorse and use coercive types of power. Similarly, Ricciardelli and Perry (2016) find that the communication style and management strategies of COs relate to prisoner responsiveness to rehabilitation efforts. Officers lacking cooperative communication styles tend to use intimidating, domineering, and combative strategies to gain compliance from prisoners.

Researchers have also examined the correlations between behavioural orientations and various demographic characteristics, such as gender. Some scholars have found that women tend to be less punitive (Lambert, Paoline, Hogan, and Baker 2007; Tewksbury and Collins 2006) and favour more counselling/rehabilitative orientations than strictly security ones (Jurik 1985; Farkas 2000; Griffin 2001; Griffin 2002). Other scholars; however, say women are not less punitive than men. In fact, female officers can be more aggressive toward disruptive prisoners (Tewksbury and Collins 2006). When tested against their male counterparts, this heightened aggression in women is not significantly different from the levels of aggression displayed by male correctional officers (Tewksbury and Collins 2006).

Moreover, these researchers tend to focus on maximum-security male institutions and assume that the attitudes and behaviours of COs are developed on the job. They have not considered the role of training. The lack of distinction between male and female COs in the field may actually be a function of how they are trained. The training environment examined in this dissertation is a masculinized space. It is important to recognize that if a woman is to be taken seriously as physically competent, she must navigate the male-centred dynamics of training. Female recruits are expected to display the same levels of competency when using force as male recruits. Women often have to display their toughness more overtly than men. To be successful in this program, male and female recruits must demonstrate that they are capable of using physical control strategies to manage disruptive prisoners. As I discuss in Chapter 3, women have to adopt a male-centred orientation to complete their training. This
includes altering their physical appearance to obscure their femininity. Furthermore, there is a disproportionate privileging of male-dominated skills and abilities, such as the use of physical control over prisoners. Given the amount of training devoted to custody and control of prisoners, it is not surprising that new COs have a working orientation geared toward rule enforcement and control.

In addition to gender differences, researchers have looked at age, seniority, and work-related factors, such as quality of supervision, role conflict, and the fear of victimization as possible explanatory variables for COs’ orientation. They find younger officers are more punitive/custody oriented (Griffin 2002; Farkas 2000; Jurik 1985), while officers with more experience and seniority tend to be less punitive and more rehabilitative (Griffin 2002; Farkas 2000; Jurik 1985). Job stress, burnout, and role overload all seem to produce punitive and security-related orientations (Lambert, Cluse-Tolar, and Hogan 2007; Callahan 2004; Carlson, Anson and Thomas 2003; Tewksbury and Mustaine 2008). In fact, in the Correctional Service of Canada’s report on correctional officers’ attitudes, Lariviere and Robinson (1996) find that COs are the least empathetic, least rehabilitative focused, and most punitive of all correctional staff members.

1.4.2 Perceptions of Risk and Harm: Locating the Dangers of the Job

There is a growing literature that examines the working conditions of correctional officers (Baker, Gordon, and Taxman 2015; Lambert 2003; Lambert et al. 2006; Lambert et al. 2007; Taxman and Gordon 2009; Worley and Worley 2013). Scholars, typically using survey methodology, consistently find that working in jails is a highly stressful and fear provoking experience (Gordon and Baker 2017; Cullen, Link, Wolfe, and Frank 1985; Dowden and Tellier 2004; Stichman and Gordon 2014; Griffin 2001). Contributors to higher levels of job stress include the demanding work load stemming from staff shortages, rising prison populations, the lack of autonomy in decision making processes, and the lack of resources to manage difficult prisoners (Schaufeli and Peeters 2000; Finney, Steriopoulos, Hensel, Bonato, and Dewa 2013; Martin, Lichtenstein, Jenkot, and Forde 2012). Each of these increases the possibility that COs will develop higher levels of cynicism and a greater desire
to avoid interacting with prisoners (Schaufeli and Peeters 2000; Finney et al. 2013). When prison officers have higher risk perceptions, they adopt punitive working orientations that decrease their willingness to engage in counselling roles (Ferdik 2018).

Scholars routinely find that violence and victimization are pressing concerns for COs (Gordon and Baker 2017; Martin et al. 2012; Ferdik 2016; Dowden and Tellier 2004; Ricciardelli and Gazso 2013). Ferdik (2018) argues that COs work in a very dangerous environment where the risk of harm is always present. COs work with people who are often disgruntled, have oppositional orientations toward authority figures, and can be disruptive. COs are exposed to a number of physical and psychological dangers, including exposure to disease, verbal and physical abuse, and exhaustion (Schaufeli and Peeters 2000). Since COs are primarily responsible for maintaining security, those who are overly concerned with safety issues tend to predict a higher risk of harm from prisoners (Ferdik 2016; Viotti 2016). In these situations, they are less willing to use cooperative solutions with prisoners and they resort to more punitive forms of control to reduce their risk.

Researchers have argued that predictions of risk have a strong influence on how COs conduct themselves at work. When COs perceive the environment as dangerous, they are more likely to use self-protective strategies to reduce the threat. This can include the use of force. In their study of provincial correctional officers in Canada, Ricciardelli and Gazso (2013) find that officers perceive the potential of being assaulted by prisoners is a constant source of threat. Officers note that this perception of threat is a result of prison overcrowding, a lack of staff, and low co-worker cohesion (Ricciardelli and Gazso 2013). Ricciardelli and Gazso (2013) limit their study to male COs working solely with male prisoners, but other researchers find that female COs have higher levels of fear perceptions than male officers when all other variables are held constant (Garcia 2008; Gordon, Proulx, and Grant 2013).

Even though the literature clearly states that the fear of violence and victimization is a salient part of COs’ job, it does very little to identify the source of that fear or to consider how concerns about risk and danger are embedded in the way COs conceptualize their environments. Since these studies only examine officers currently working in the field and
usually those working in higher security facilities, my dissertation adds to the literature by focusing on the training environment as the primary antecedent variable in the perception of danger. I argue that the description of prisoners as antagonistic leads COs to anticipate violence when they return to work. The perception of victimization and the fear of violence are reinforced and institutionalized during recruit training. The use of physical force to ensure prisoner obedience is the primary strategy officers learn to position themselves as defenders of safety and order and to avoid victimization.

1.4.3 Moving Beyond Perceptions to Identifying Behaviour

As Goffman (1961) demonstrates, total institutions can re-orient prisoner identity to be in line with institutional goals without using force. This process is what Foucault (1995) refers to as disciplinary power. The goal of disciplinary power is to produce conforming and docile subjects who comply with orders without the need for force. For Foucault (1995), disciplinary power is productive rather than repressive because it can create the subjects it governs. As well as looking at recruit training as an important site of socialization and institutionalization of COs’ attitudes and beliefs, in this dissertation, I will engage with research on conceptualizing prisoner behaviour. I also use aspects of disciplinary forms of training outlined by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* (1995) to understand how COs are produced as security-focused subjects.

The literature on prisoner resistance is helpful to explain how new COs understand the nature of the people with whom they work. The research on prisoner resistance consistently finds that prisoners will engage in behaviours that help them manage the elements of total institutions by skirting the disciplinary regime. Resistance is always possible when government at a “distance” fails to produce compliance (Hannah-Moffat 2000; Foucault 1995; Bosworth 1999). However, there is some debate about why prisoners are non-compliant. Some scholars argue that prisoners engage in certain behaviours to counter or subvert the penal regime (Bosworth 1999; Rhodes 2004). These researchers argue that prisoners’ motivation for misbehaviour is inherently political and can include riots, hunger
strikes, and formal grievances (Thompson 2016). As Bosworth (1999) and Rubin (2015) demonstrate, resistance does not have to be violent to be effective. Rubin (2015), for instance, argues that most misbehaviour is not politically motivated at all. She refers to these acts of defiance as everyday behaviours that prisoners engage in as a function of living in prisons.

The conceptual literature on prisoner non-compliance makes an important contribution to how scholars understand the dynamic interplay between prisoners and penal regimes. Goffman (1961) and Foucault (1995) suggest that total institutions and disciplinary regimes functionally eliminate resistant behaviour by creating rigid conditions of confinement, but research on prisoner conduct reminds criminologists and sociologists that the agency-structure debate sheds light on how imprisonment is experienced by prisoners. However, until now, these dynamics have not yet been related to COs. My dissertation fills this gap by considering how COs are taught to conceptualize prisoner behaviour. I will argue that COs are uninterested in why prisoners behave the way they do, but rather the misbehaviour is viewed as a product of the individual’s risky nature. This characterization of prisoners as risky connects their behaviour to a range of negative and pejorative classifications such as dangerous, malicious, manipulative, and threatening. With this in mind, the prisoner is not as viewed as someone who needs help, but as someone who personifies danger.

In Chapter 2, I argue that COs identify and classify prisoner behaviour as antagonistic and as direct threats to their position of power or to the security of the jail. This conceptualization is the filter through which COs see prisoners as risky and dangerous by nature. COs must identify disruptions quickly before major security breaches occur. Ultimately, it is the COs who are responsible for keeping order. They determine if an act of non-compliance needs a response, and if so, they respond. By viewing behaviour as antagonistic, COs are trained to see non-complaint behaviour as a security threat, institutionalizing a desire to reduce risk and contain danger. This dissertation provides insight into how the perception of risk and danger are taught and internalized by new recruits. This situates the working orientations and attitudes of COs not within the day-to-day working environment of jails, but in the dynamics of recruit training.
Since the research on COs is typically quantitative and lacks a clear conceptual orientation, in this dissertation, I engage with both conceptual and empirical literatures to provide a more nuanced and theoretically rich examination of CO training and the production of COs as penal subjects in their own right. The dissertation is inspired by Foucault’s (1995) conceptualization of discipline. Specifically, Chapter 3 incorporates Foucault’s discussion of the “means of correct training” from *Discipline and Punish* (1995) to show how the use of successive segmentation helps to normalize the use of force so that COs are able to use force as if it were natural when faced with prisoner disobedience. Recruits are sanctioned when they fail to display competent use of force, either by not displaying enough aggression or by expressing too much emotion. In Chapter 3, I also argue that competent officers are masculinized subjects capable of using force to control prisoners.

Studies that look specifically at the structure of military and police training academies as paramilitary organizations are helpful for understanding the structure of CO training. However, the literature on policing and military training does not examine the underlying implications of how programs are structured. Much of the work focuses on what is being taught, not why it is being taught or the consequences (Marion 1998; Prokos and Padavic 2002; Chappell 2008). For instance, when Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce (2010) observed police officer training to determine how paramilitary organizations influence police training, they found that the paramilitary structure of training reinforced the authority and control aspects of policing over community policing initiatives. They suggest that this entrenches an "us vs. them" orientation by separating “real” police work (crime fighting, defensive tactics, and car chases) from community policing. This study is unique among policing studies because it uses an ethnographic methodology to study the experience of paramilitary training rather than interviews or quantitative surveys.

Unlike Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce (2010), in this dissertation, I explore the development of COs’ working orientations and conceptualizations of prisoners by more than observation. My study used embedded participant observation as a form of ethnographic methodology, which allowed me to immerse myself in the training as it occurred. Observations are helpful for getting a sense of the dynamics of training, but if they are not immersed in the training regime, researchers will have a limited understanding of the depth and power of the
socialization process. My dissertation provides a deeper understanding of how training shapes and produces officers working with diverse and potentially difficult to manage populations.

1.4.4 Context Matters: Penal Spaces are Criminogenic

It is important to recognize that the structural arrangements of penal spaces influence how people behave over and above the intricacies of micro-level interactions. The Stanford Prison Study provides powerful evidence of how prison conditions can produce dehumanizing behaviours when power and control are severe and unchecked (Haney and Zimbardo 1998). Haney (2008) extends this argument in his examination of supermax prisons in the United States. He argues that the harsh prison conditions and the punitive control tactics used by COs in supermax prisons exacerbate problematic and risky behaviour by creating a culture of toxicity and harm (Haney 2008). He suggests that the structural arrangements of supermax prisons reinforce COs’ perception that prisoners are dangerous people (Haney 2008). This assessment legitimizes the dehumanizing treatment of prisoners, while failing to consider how the environment may be producing the dangerous behaviour that COs are expected to contain. Haney (2008) contends that this creates a vicious cycle of violence involving both parties, making the prison environment more violent, volatile, and dangerous. In this context, he argues that the punitive management style used in supermax prisons is criminogenic (Haney 2008).

This dissertation extends Haney’s (2008) argument that penal environments are criminogenic to include correctional officer training. It shows how the structural environment of CO training reinforces and entrenches punitive forms of control in provincial jails. I suggest that the training academy not only provides new COs with the skills and tools deemed necessary to perform their security duties, but it also fundamentally shapes how they think about and respond to prisoners as risk subjects. The context of the training environment and the control logics that underpin it are important to an examination of how COs learn to perceive prisoner behaviour and respond to it. CO training is the vehicle through which a culture of toxicity is produced when COs are preoccupied with risk and
dangerousness. It plays a fundamental role in developing what Haney (2008) calls “ideological and ecological toxicity” wherein prisoner suffering is ignored. I will argue that the prominent position of the use of physical control tactics in the training program creates the conditions of opportunity necessary to normalize and rationalize physical force as a justifiable strategy to preserve prison order. This creates the expectation among new COs that force is a reasonable reaction to prisoner misconduct. Even though Canadian provincial jails are not as restrictive as supermax prisons, the kind of management strategies used to contain risk and danger via physical force may create similar outcomes.

By privileging force over less restrictive forms of control, I will argue that COs may unintentionally be creating the types of risky and dangerous behaviours that they are trying to prevent. Haney (2008) argues that the prison environment is criminogenic when COs focus solely on rule enforcement and punitive management styles. I will suggest that CO training creates the conditions necessary for COs to think that the best way to stop antagonistic behaviour is by using force swiftly. If the purpose of training is to prepare new officers to keep prisons safe, then CO training may actually be setting new officers up for failure. Since the purpose of using force is to stop disruptive and dangerous behaviour, it may not actually be able to achieve this. Research has shown that when prisons are managed with coercive tactics alone, that the overall level of violence and misconduct actually increases (Ricciardelli and Sit 2016; Griffin and Hepburn 2013).

1.5 Methodology

1.5.1 Correctional Officer Training – Embedded Participant Observation

Penal scholars have noted that prison systems in both the US and Canada are “permeated by a defensive and managerial orientation” (Rhodes 2009:1; Watson 2015). Research on the conditions within correctional institutions by academics is perceived as threatening and dangerous to institutional gatekeepers (Rhodes 2009). Scholars argue that the protectionist and insular culture of corrections has eliminated the ability of outside researchers to get “into
the belly of the beast” (Wacquant 2002; Watson 2015). Wacquant (2002) contends that prison ethnography has been relegated to the margins at the very moment when in-depth evaluations of prisons are most needed. As Jewkes (2012) notes, ethnographic studies have been overshadowed by a heavily quantitative focus in prison research. This is particularly obvious in the research on correctional officers. In response to the dominance of quantitative criminology, Wacquant (2002) urges researchers to re-incorporate ethnographic research methodology into prison studies to better understand how imprisonment is experienced.

Rhodes (2009) expresses a similar sentiment, saying that a lack of ethnographic observations has created a void in the criminological literature. She contends that scholars know very little about how prisoners are managing prison sentences in the era of punitive crime control and mass incarceration. Ethnographic studies offer deeper understandings of institutional processes and provide valuable insights into the prison complex that cannot be adequately assessed through quantitative methodologies (Rhodes 2009; Ugelvik 2014). Ethnographic methodologies also provide scholars with the tools they need to examine local organization and knowledge production, how people experience the social world, and the cultural logics that support institutional regimes (Rhodes 2009).

The primary source of data for the dissertation is a 9-week embedded ethnographic study at a Canadian provincial training academy. Access to the training academy was achieved by emailing the head of the academy to ask for permission to observe some of the training sessions. I initially asked for access to mental health and interpersonal communication sessions. About a week later, the head of the academy contacted me to discuss my research and request. She forwarded my request to the training sergeants to gauge their willingness to have me observe the training. The lead training sergeant contacted me and expressed his excitement about having me observe their program. However, he suggested that just observing would not give me a real sense of how the program works. It would be much better, he said, if I actively participated in the training, just like the other recruits. Arrangements were made at the academy for me to participate in the next training class, between May and July 2014. This training program is the primary space where COs learn how to be COs. It represents the best approximation of how the provincial jurisdiction
determines how COs should manage prisoners. It is also indicative of the way penal policy and practices are transmitted and internalized by new COs.

The training included a combination of in-class lectures, practical skills training, and live-action scenarios. Some of the lectures were conducted by experts in the fields of mental health, occupational health and safety, multiculturalism, privacy and freedom of information, and law, but the academy trainers conducted most of the in-class training. The latter were trained in principles of adult education and correctional management. The lead sergeants were permanent employees of the academy, but all had previously worked as COs in the same jurisdiction. Most of the modules on the use of force and interpersonal communication were conducted by guest trainers selected by the head of the academy based on their demonstrated proficiencies in these areas. At the end of the training program, recruits participated in a week of live action scenarios (see Chapter 4) during which they were required to demonstrate their ability to resolve conflicts with prisoners. The prisoners in these scenarios were played by COs who also worked in jails across the province. These role players got training at the academy on how to act like prisoners and how to modulate their behaviour in response to the actions of the recruits.

The training program included intensive instruction on the use of force techniques and the legal and civil obligations of correctional officers. It also included instruction on interpersonal communication and cultural sensitivity, mental health and FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder), as well as a diverse set of practical on-the-ground skills that officers that must learn. These included writing reports, evaluating the environment for threats and disruptions, evaluating the legitimacy of a prisoner’s concerns, and responding to emergency codes professionally. Table 1 outlines the number of hours spent on each of the training tasks as per the official syllabus given to officers at the beginning of the training.

The training class contained 21 male and 4 female recruits, including me. Ages ranged from 21 to 58, with most recruits in the 20-30-year-old group. A majority were Caucasian, but four self-identified as non-white. Most recruits only had a high school diploma or some introductory police foundation courses, but no university level education was required. Two recruits had previous military experience, and one had municipal policing experience. All
recruits, except me, had previous experience working in correctional centres. Most worked between six and 18 months at provincial institutions across the province before coming to training.

Table 1: Training Time Allocation by Topic Areas (N= 333.5 hours)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of Force and Control Tactics</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Studies</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drill</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Training and Testing</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Training</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defensive Driving</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace Condition</td>
<td>18.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health/FASD/Excited Delirium</td>
<td>12.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Communication</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Supervision</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note Taking/Disciplinary Hearings</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Awareness and Multiculturalism</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contraband/Searches/Escorting</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impeding Disturbances/Riots</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Student Assessments</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Ceremony</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Codes and Counts</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This ethnographic fieldwork included approximately 410 hours of full active participation and field observations during the nine-week training program. My identity as a researcher was made explicit at the beginning of the study to the primary training staff and the recruits. My identity was not revealed to guest lecturers and trainers. This decision was made by the head of the training facility to give me a more realistic and authentic experience. Even though recruits were not given a chance to object to my participation, I quickly became a figure of interest when my identity was revealed on the first day. Most of the initial interest

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1 This table does not include time allocated for lunch and breaks (50.25 hours). Total hours spent in the training for recruits was 383.5 hours. Total number of research hours was 410.
2 This includes discussions about stress, shiftwork, health and safety, union orientation, ethics, respect, infectious disease, and freedom of information policies.
was uncertainty about my underlying motivation. Many recruits approached me and asked me why I would want to be part of the training if I had no intention of becoming an actual officer. I tempered these inquiries with my personal concern for the welfare of officers and the lack of understanding scholars have about correctional work in Canadian provincial systems. At no time did anyone mention concerns to me directly, and, to the best of my knowledge, the training academy had no complaints about my participation. I integrated with the group very quickly. As soon as the fitness test was completed on the second day, I was no longer “the professor”, just “recruit Klassen.” I was treated like any of the other recruits by the training sergeants and my classmates. I was subjected to the same code of conduct, use of force training, pepper spraying, and examinations (formal and informal) as the other recruits. I compiled detailed hand-written field notes for each training session.

The training academy is part of a wider carceral state, which up to this point has not been researched. I contend that the training academy is a vital agent of socialization that not only reinforces dominant discourses on crime and punishment, but also serves as an important gatekeeper for how new COs understand their job, how they manage prisoner conduct, and how they enforce power. Being able to experience the day-to-day socialization of officers was a valuable way to explore how social processes unfold. To the best of my knowledge, no other Canadian researcher has had such unrestricted access. The nuanced data triangulates with the other forms of data collected for this project, especially the interviews I conducted with officers working in the same jurisdiction.

1.5.2 In-Depth Semi-Structured Interviews

As part of my data collection, I conducted 30 in-depth semi-structured interviews with currently employed correctional officers in the same jurisdiction as the training academy. Given the difficult and administratively arduous process of applying for official approval from the province (1-2 year application process with no guarantee of success), I chose to forgo formal institutional pathways. Research participants were recruited through the local provincial union representing COs using snowball sampling. All interviews were voluntary
and conducted in the officers’ free time to protect their anonymity. The ethical protocols guiding this research were discussed with the union leaders and all participants. They were assured that confidentiality would be protected. Union personnel expressed enthusiasm for the study and thought it was a good opportunity for officers to have their voice heard. Within a few weeks of the initial contact with the union, the study documents were sent to union members across the jurisdiction. I conducted initial informant discussions to gauge the important issues facing correctional officers working in the provincial system. Formal recruitment and interviews began with the approval of research ethics.

Interviews were conducted in person and over the phone lasting approximately 2-3.5 hours. Table 2 below outlines the main demographic characteristics of my sample. Participants were asked questions about their job experience, the types of prisoners they had worked with, the types of behaviours they found disruptive, types of prisoners they liked and disliked working with, how the daily routine on the floor worked, whether they worked with remand or sentenced populations, their experience with female/Aboriginal/mentally ill offenders, how they managed disruptive behaviour, and how often they used physical force. Most interviews were conducted over the phone because of geographical distance between the researcher and the interview subject and as a way to protect anonymity. Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Only one participant declined to be recorded. Detailed notes were complied during the interview and clarification was frequently sought to ensure that the participant’s views were accurately recorded. Identifying characteristics of all participants were removed to protect their identity.

Table 2: Interview Sample Characteristics (N=30)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Officer Characteristic</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-30+</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Institution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentenced</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remand</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Qualitative interviewing methodologies allow researchers to collect rich depictions of the phenomenon under study without stipulating formal hypotheses in advance (Rubin and Rubin 2005). Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders offered me the best chance of learning how COs understand their work and people they work with. These interviews provided a better understanding of the dynamic nature of CO work than would have been possible using classic quantitative surveys. These interviews also yielded valuable insights into how COs conceptualized prisoner behaviour and the implications of these depictions on the strategies they used to maintain prison security. One of the advantages of semi-structured interviews is that they can be adapted during the research process when new themes and constructs emerge (Creswell 2008; Creswell 2009; Rubin and Rubin 2005). They allowed me to guide the interview process while allowing the participant ample space to elaborate and explain the day-to-day management of difficult prisoners in ways that I may not have anticipated when the interview began.

1.6 Data Analysis Strategy

The data for this dissertation were analyzed using an open coding method. The initial round of codes was developed after reading the data for themes. The overarching themes included risk, danger, force, discipline, professionalism, respect, accountability, responsibility, and prisoner management. Once I had developed a list of the main themes, I re-examined the data. This round examined how each of the main themes was depicted and discussed during the training and interviews. I created a detailed synthesis of each theme.

1.7 Chapter Overviews

Each chapter examines the ways punitive punishment is entrenched in CO training. Chapter 2 addresses how COs are taught to conceptualize prisoner behaviour as antagonistic and how this depiction shapes their view of non-compliant behaviour. Chapter 3 focuses on the production of competent officers able to manage these antagonistic behaviours. Chapter 4
examines how the use of force is deployed and escalates as a reasonable response to prisoners’ antagonism. This chapter also considers the role of accountability in how COs are able to avoid responsibility for the amount of force they use to restrain prisoners. Chapter 5 sums up the overall contributions of the research.

1.8 Chapter Summaries

In Chapter 2o, I examine how recruits are taught to understand prisoner misconduct. I argue that prisoner behaviour is depicted as inherently antagonistic to officers. This depiction focuses on how COs are to understand the behaviour, not the intention of the prisoner. COs are not trained to be concerned about why prisoners behave the way they do, but rather to conceptualize disruptive behaviour as risky and dangerous. Prisoners are conceptualized as risk subjects and as “dangerous others.” They represent a threat to the security of the prison and the safety of the officers. In this chapter, I show that prisoner antagonism is depicted along a continuum of threat from disrespectful and immature behaviour to potentially deadly physical assaults. I contend that prisoners with mental health and cognitive impairments pose unique challenges for COs. The limited attention to providing meaningful management strategies for this population leaves COs with few alternatives other than using force or being creative. As I demonstrate with a “ninja” example, COs with effective interpersonal communication skills can adopt creative strategies but creativity is not taught during training.

Chapter 3 examines how CO training produces security-focused officers. I argue that the training program is a masculinized regime that uses elements of discipline to produce officers who can efficiently and proficiently use force. I suggest that use of force training is like a choreographed dance, where the disciplinary strategy of successive segmentation is used to institutionalize the use of force as normal and natural. Competence is determined by how well officers are able to apply use of force techniques and keep their emotions under control. These attributes reinforce a masculinized depiction of competent COs. Recruits who fail to show toughness and emotional regulation are sanctioned. Competence is always being evaluated during training. Recruits are subjected to informal and formal evaluations of their
ability to use force. Informal examinations reinforce the gendered nature of “being” a CO. Formal examinations assess how well recruits can actually use force skills properly.

Chapter 4 focuses on the application of the use of force principles and techniques in live action scenarios. This chapter expands on Chapter 3 by showing that recruits are taught to escalate their use of force. Recruits who use less restrictive forms of control are routinely sanctioned for their lack of physicality. However, using physical force has limitations. The use of force must be reasonable, but I argue that reasonableness lies in how it is documented and how it looks on security cameras. Both are important accountability measures designed to place limits on the use of force, but I argue that the purpose of documenting force incidents in writing is to construct a narrative that makes prisoners responsible and justifies a CO’s use of force as a response to the prisoner’s antagonism. I use the example of surveillance cameras to demonstrate how new COs are trained to administer pain to gain compliance. I suggest that the training provides new COs with strategies that resist the gaze and accountability power of the cameras by using force in camera friendly ways. The accountability measures put in place to discourage the excessive use of force do not accomplish this very well.

Chapter 5 gives an overview of the key findings and contributions of the dissertation. I find that CO training reinforces punitiveness by conceptualizing prisoners as a threat to COs. CO training plays an important role in institutionalizing a stigmatizing and highly pejorative image of prisoners to justify punitive management practices. By depicting prisoners as dehumanized risk subjects who must be managed using physical force, CO training creates an officer core unaware of how the conditions of confinement and/or an officer’s actions may contribute to prisoner misbehaviour. This reinforces and entrenches punitive punishments by creating a penal environment predicated on identifying risk and containing danger without considering the impact of force on prisoners. I suggest the training exacerbates the criminogenic nature of prisons by creating the very conditions that support prisoner misconduct.
1.9 Aims of This Dissertation

This dissertation sheds light on how punitive correctional practices become reinforced and entrenched in the Canadian provincial prison system. To better understand how and why prisons function as they do, I focus on CO training as the vehicle through which punitiveness is developed and maintained. Punitive correctional practices are embedded within the wider carceral system; therefore, this dissertation contributes to a deeper understanding of how the conditions of confinement, as represented by how COs interact with prisoners, is intimately tied to how COs are trained to view prisoner behaviour and how they learn to manage that behaviour. It demonstrates that prisons are punitive spaces, in part, because COs are trained to internalize coercive tactics and punitive rhetoric as normalized and reasonable ways to deal with prisoners.

Even though Canadian prisons still speak about rehabilitation, the dissertation shows this is more of an ideal than a practice. Punitiveness has assumed a prominent position in correctional practice. COs must follow the policies set out by the provincial ministry responsible for correctional services. The training program for COs represents the most important avenue for new officers to learn “who” prisoners are and how they behave. The program fundamentally shapes how new COs will approach their working environment after training. The way COs learn to manage prisoner misconduct ultimately conditions the penal environment in which they engage. Punitiveness becomes a self-sustaining and self-reinforcing process by institutionalizing risk logics and concerns about danger. Arguably, the culture of corrections is premised on keeping prisoners in positions of powerlessness. CO training creates the perception that prisons can only be safe and secure when COs use physical force. Paradoxically; however, using force may actually increase the risk by creating a level of toxicity that promotes violence over cooperation. In many ways, the training program may actually increase and deepen the criminogenic effects of imprisonment.
Chapter 2
It’s “Us vs. Them”: Conceptualizing Prisoners’ Antagonistic Behaviour as a Security Threat

2.1 Introduction

During the rehabilitation era, the prison was conceptualized as a space for reformation and redemption. Prisoners were individuals requiring treatment and re-socialization so they could be productive and crime free upon release (Garland 2002). However, the emergence of risk-based and punitive practices has reshaped the purpose of imprisonment (Feeley and Simon 1992; Garland 2002; Kemshall 2002). Prisons have been re-envisioned as sites of punishment and the containment of risk (Rose 2000). Penal regimes have increasingly supported restrictive and harsh conditions of confinement, in part because prisoners are considered risky and dangerous, not people in need (Reiter 2016). Concerns about safety and security have dominated penal discourses (Drake 2012). The security of the institution and the safety of fellow officers and prisoners are the responsibility of correctional officers (COs). To do that, COs must ensure that these risk subjects comply with institutional policies and practices.

Despite the rigidity and punitiveness of penal environments, scholars argue that prisoners still engage in acts of agency that do not comply with institutional rules (Bosworth 1999). Some argue that prisoners will be non-compliant simply to critique the conditions of confinement (Bosworth 1999) or to alter the structure of confinement (Bosworth 1999; Bosworth and Carrabine 2001). Other scholars suggest that most non-compliant behaviours are not politically motivated, but are everyday actions that are by-products of the environment. They are not designed to criticize or disrupt penal regimes, but to help prisoners manage life in restrictive spaces (Rubin 2015; Rubin 2017). Even though the literature provides a good understanding of how prisoners manage imprisonment as active agents, it lacks conceptual clarity as to the meaning and intention of non-compliance and it does not explain why COs view prisoners as security threats requiring punitive management.
Critical scholars argue that the punitive orientations of COs exacerbate the pains of imprisonment by subjecting prisoners to coercive and abusive treatment when they are not compliant (Haney 2008; Weill and Haney 2017). These scholars have argued that prisons are criminogenic because of how COs engage with prisoners. Haney (2008) suggests that the prison environment conditions COs to interpret prisoner non-compliance as a product of the prisoner’s “deviant” character, not as a by-product of the restrictive penal environment. He contends the conceptualization of prisoners as the “worst of the worst” helps justify coercive punishment because dangerous prisoners do not deserve empathy or compassion. To this, Weill and Haney (2017) add that by blaming and condemning prisoners for their behaviour, punitive prison systems produce morally disengaged COs who lack an appreciation of the powerful effect that the prison environment has on producing disruptive behaviour. They argue that the structural environment in prisons creates the opportunity for prisoner abuse when COs condone the use of physical forms of control not only as morally justified, but also as absolutely necessary for the preservation of prison order and security (Weill and Haney 2017). The work of Haney (2008) and Weill and Haney (2017) provides an important contextualization of the impact of punitive rhetoric and practices on the conditions of confinement, but it does not explore the origins of the rhetoric and practices.

This chapter situates the development of COs’ punitive orientation within the recruit training experience. The training program acts as a vital agent of socialization that teaches recruits that prisoners are security threats because they are risky and dangerous. In this chapter, I offer an alternative conceptualization of prisoner misconduct that does not rely on prisoner motivation and intention, but rather focuses on how COs learn to conceptualize these behaviours as antagonistic. I argue that the training curriculum instils a pejorative and stigmatizing depiction of prisoners as risky, dangerous, and often devoid of essential human qualities as the primary criteria for the identifying a range of antagonistic behaviour as threatening. I examine four primary categories of antagonistic behaviours (disrespectful/immature behaviour, verbal threats and altercations, property damage, and physical altercations) to show how COs are taught to conceptualize them as security risks that need to be contained. I argue that the reinforcement of perceptions of risk and dangerousness during recruit training creates the decontextualized and morally disengaged
attitudes that Weill and Haney (2017) suggest are used to justify punitive management strategies.

2.2 Conceptualizing Prisoners’ Disruptive Behaviour as Antagonism

Drake (2012) argues that one of the primary concerns that shape how prisons operate is how effectively COs manage prisoners. Security regimes are designed to inhibit the opportunity for prisoners to escape or to engage in disruptive behaviour. Restrictive control measures are implemented in prisons to monitor prisoner behaviour, to identify non-compliant conduct swiftly, and to stop disruptive behaviour before major security breaches occur. Security regimes position the prisoner as an oppositional subject who can and will disrupt prison order if given the opportunity Drake (2012).

2.2.1 Framing Prisoners’ Misconduct as Resistance and Friction

Scholars have documented various ways that prisoners manage themselves within correctional facilities (Goffman 1961; Sykes 1958). The classic studies of Goffman (1961) and Sykes (1958) demonstrate how prisoners adapt to prison environments so that they can retain a sense of self and manage the restrictive conditions of confinement. Other researchers suggest that despite the strict level of control in prisons, prisoners do not fully orient their behaviour to institutional goals. They will engage in non-compliant behaviour to make their confinement more palatable (Bosworth 1999; Rubin 2015; Rhodes 2004). Such behaviour can question, challenge, and subvert the totalizing control in prisons (Bosworth 1999; Rhodes 2004; Goffman 1961; Sykes 1958).

Researchers do not agree on how these non-compliant behaviours should be conceptualized. Bosworth (1999) defines non-compliant behaviours as acts of resistance that are small-scale actions that disrupt power relations in a prison. These behaviours are viewed as minor acts of
rebellion, which would otherwise go unnoticed by penal authorities. Bosworth contends that resistance is an “effect of and reaction to power, not an arrogation of it” (1999:129). In her study of female prisons, Bosworth (1999) finds that female prisoners routinely engage in purposeful action aimed at improving their conditions of confinement. However, she notes that prisoners' ability to act as agents is always under attack because the prison structure restricts autonomy and choice (also see Hannah-Moffat 2000; Hannah-Moffat 2001). For Bosworth (1999), an act of resistance is best understood as a prisoner’s attempt to marshal a critique of the conditions of confinement.

Other scholars contend that defining all non-compliant behaviour as resistance renders the concept conceptually limited. According to Rubin, behaviours defined as resistance imply prisoners are “consciously disruptive” and “intentionally political” in nature (2015:24). This conceptualization of resistance does not consider the wide variety of behaviours that lack a clear subversive intention. Rubin argues that most non-compliant behaviour is better conceptualized as “friction”. She defines friction as “reactive behaviours that occur when people find themselves in highly controlled environments” (2015:24). For Rubin (2015), these actions are normal behaviours that occur in correctional facilities and are often responses to a prisoner’s mental or physical needs. She contends that friction is rarely, if ever, politically motivated; nor is it designed to intentionally challenge prison authority, as implied when it is defined as resistance.

However, I argue that the distinction between resistance and friction does not go far enough. Both conceptualizations focus on the intention of the action from the perspective of the prisoner. From these perspectives, an action is only a form of critique or a response to unfilled need when prisoners decide to try to manage imprisonment on their own terms. These perspectives focus on how prisoners see the environment in which they live and how they try to manage the conditions of confinement. Resistance scholars have not considered the role that COs play in how these behaviours are conceptualized as disruptive. In fact, COs play a vital role in the labelling process. They are responsible for ensuring non-compliant behaviour is identified and managed efficiently so that prisons remain secure and orderly. In terms of how imprisonment is experienced, COs are the gatekeepers between just “doing
one’s time” and experiencing imprisonment as painful. Therefore, conceptualizations of non-compliant behaviour must also include the ways COs depict and understand it.

2.2.2 Conceptualizing Prisoners’ Misconduct from the COs’ Perspective: Moving Away from Friction Toward Antagonism

I argue that the actions Bosworth (1999) calls resistance and Rubin (2015) calls friction are conceptualized by COs as forms of antagonism. I define antagonistic behaviour as any action that is interpreted by correctional officers to be counter to institutional rules and regulations, any action that challenges officer authority, and any action perceived annoying enough to distract officers from their main security duties. Antagonistic behaviour is primarily conceptualized as a security threat by COs. Although the prisoner may not have intended to be disruptive, the behaviour is interpreted as such by correctional authorities. COs presume such actions are purposefully designed to antagonize officers.

Antagonistic actions can include behaviour that are relatively minor and oppositional in spirit, but for which there is no legal or criminal designation. Antagonistic behaviour can also include illegal actions. In either case, how the behaviour is or is not administered outside the institution is not really a concern for COs from an institutional management perspective. COs are trained to conceptualize and respond to behaviours that they consider risks to prison security. Their response strategies correspond to the level of dangerousness and risk that the behaviour poses to the immediate safety of the officer or the security of the unit. The primary responsibility for COs is to keep prisons secure. Responses to antagonistic behaviour are based how COs view this behaviour as impinging on their power or their ability to keep prisons orderly, not its legality or illegality. Officers do not modify their response based on the action’s legal status.

The training context creates and maintains social separation between COs (“us”) and prisoners (“them”) by portraying prisoners as security threats. CO training produces a very narrow and stigmatizing depiction of prisoners as risky and dangerous. As I discussed in Chapter 1, this institutional preoccupation with identifying sources of risk and the
containment of dangerousness are the hallmark feature of punitive punishment. By conceptualizing prisoner behaviour as antagonistic, COs can blame prisoners for the behaviour and justify the use of punitive interventions, because prisoners are wilfully choosing to aggravate, agitate, or harm COs. Weill and Haney (2017) say this deferral of responsibility is one reason COs can distance themselves from any accountability for producing the behaviours they see as antagonistic.

2.3 Criminology of the Other: Institutionalizing the Us vs. Them Dichotomy

The status of COs with respect to the prisoners is established very early in the training program. The working environment is presented as volatile, dynamic, risky, and dangerous. Impending disruptions, potential for violence, and quarrels between prisoners are all possible when officers are not vigilant. In this context, the prisoner is conceptualized as a predatory risk subject who takes pleasure in harming officers. Since prisoners are considered a homogenized security risk group, social status differences, social causes of criminality, or the impact/experience of imprisonment are absent from the discussion of “who” prisoners are and why they behave the way they do. Despite the characterization of prisoners as a unitary risk group, there is a high degree of heterogeneity in the types of disruptive behaviour this risk group engages in. This heterogeneity is an educational tool used by trainers that is situated within a corporate culture that positions prisoners as dangerous, potentially “evil”, and oppositional.

This “us vs. them” dynamic pervades all aspects of CO training and is designed to reinforce the perception that prisoners are a public safety risk to be contained. It not only helps officers rationalize their choices about what types of persuasion and physical control tactics they use, but it also works to reinforce the power differential between officers and prisoners. In prisons, COs represent a form of sovereign power (Foucault 1995). They are the representatives of the state within the prison and they reinforce their sovereign power by ensuring the “underclass” stays in its subordinate position (Garland 1996). Weill and Haney
(2017) argue that this “us vs. them” dynamic functions as a convenient moral justification for the use of punitive forms of control. Physical force is justifiable because COs are simply using the necessary level of control to match the prisoner’s dangerous behaviour.

The goal of CO training is to prepare recruits to work with this “other” while retaining their privileged position as guardians of public safety. To reinforce an awareness of the dangerousness of the job, recruits are required to provide training staff with a visual representation of what is at stake if prisoners are given a chance to usurp power. The lives of COs are presented as a commodity that prisoners are willing to sacrifice to gain power. One way to create a metaphorical separation from the prisoners is to present COs as morally superior. In first week of class, the recruits were asked to post pictures of what they were “fighting for” every day at work. These postings often included pictures of family and friends. The photographic images of loved ones were juxtaposed to the perception of prisoners as an immediate threat to the officer’s ability to return home at the end of the shift. Even though this exercise seemed innocuous at first, it served as a very powerful reminder that the lives of COs and the happiness of their families are intimately tied to ensuring that prisoners’ behaviour is properly dealt with. This exercise uses the language of risk to reinforce what Douglas (1992) refers to as the politics of danger and helps to situate the “us vs. them” divide in a moral realm.

2.3.1 Positioning Prisoners as the “Dangerous Other”

A security paradigm permeates every aspect of correctional officer training. Prisoners are routinely cast as the “dangerous other” (Drake 2011; Drake 2012; Garland 2002) and, as such, their conduct is scrutinized as a risk that needs to be managed. The ideal prison, one in which discipline is rigorously exercised and compliance is ensured, is a space where correctional officers are hyper-vigilant to any form of behaviour perceived to contravene the smooth operation of the prison complex. The security of the institution and, more importantly, the safety of the prison officer, depend on the officer’s ability to identify and correct non-compliant conduct.
The conduct of antagonistic prisoners is filtered through a neo-liberal lens, whereby prisoners are viewed as rational and responsible individuals who chose to be non-compliant (Moore and Hannah-Moffat 2005; Klassen 2017). Antagonistic behaviour is presented to recruits as deliberate, calculated, and a product of the prisoner’s internal oppositional character. There is no consideration during CO training that the conduct COs see as antagonistic may be a by-product of the conditions of confinement or an outcome of how COs interact with prisoners. Antagonism is an internal disposition of the prisoner. This places responsibility for abhorrent behaviour directly on prisoners, not the system. Garland refers to this as the “criminology of the other” (Garland 1996; Garland 2002).

Prisoners are routinely depicted as individuals who have 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year to “get at officers.” Trainers often refer to this “getting at officers” not as a matter of a prisoner trying to get an officer’s attention, but as the prisoner expressing violence towards the officer. The job of the officer is more than just watching and guarding; above all else, it is about promoting compliance and order. The depiction of prisoners as security threats works to produce what Haney (2008) refers to as a level of “intellectual toxicity” among COs. Toxicity is produced when COs decontextualize rule breaking behaviour in prison by attributing it to the “evil” constitution of the prisoner. By positioning antagonistic behaviour as a product of a prisoner’s character, rather than the structure of imprisonment, COs are trained to see prisoners as deserving of close monitoring and harsh treatment when they misbehave. This intellectual toxicity makes the punitive treatment of prisoners justifiable and necessary (Haney 2008).

One example of how this characterization of prisoners as dangerous others is reinforced during CO training is by rendering prisoners equivalent to animals. Prisoners are given animalistic nicknames, such as dogs and monkeys, as a way of distinguishing them from the upstanding “law-abiding” officer, or as Garland suggests the self (1996). The depiction of prisoners as less human makes them suitable objects of threat (Drake 2012) and it is easier for officers to use physical force. Weill and Haney (2017) argue that dehumanization is one of the most powerful mechanisms contributing to prisoner abuse because it ignores the essential characteristics of prisoners’ humanity. Human beings have feelings, needs, and desires, prisoners and non-prisoners alike. Vasquez, Loughnan, Gootjes-Dreesbach, and
Weger (2014) find that when offenders are described as monstrous and animalistic, people are more likely to support social distance and punitive punishments.

The “humanness” of prisoners is erased during CO training when the trainers characterize prisoners as predatory animals. When COs view prisoners as dangerous animal-like subjects, this simultaneously reduces any moral obligation to treat them with empathy and kindness (Weill and Haney 2017). COs are trained to treat prisoners as objects of threat, not human beings who happen to be confined. In effect, CO training creates COs who fail to see that their actions have negative consequences for prisoners and by seeing punitive treatment as a reasonable response to prisoner behaviour.

In addition to the dehumanization of prisoners, CO training positions the prison officer as the primary institutional risk manager. It is the role of the CO to identify and contain the risky behaviours of the “predators” within. However, instead of focusing on how COs can support and promote compliant behaviour as a form of risk management, training is preoccupied with the physical control of disobedient prisoners. In Chapter 3, I argue that the use of force dominates most of the training hours. I suggest that the way that use of force is taught to be normal and natural makes these control tactics the default management tool for new COs when they are faced with perceived risky behaviour. Within this context, prisoners who violate institutional policies are often subjected to punitive and coercive treatment. Regardless of whether prisoners have a legitimate grievance, persistent antagonistic behaviour is routinely understood as an inherent subversion of correctional officer power.

CO training teaches recruits that the prison is a security regime that requires swift and decisive action in the face of risky behaviour. Riskiness is defined by how behaviour is interpreted by correctional officers, rather than the actual conduct or the intention behind the behaviour. Prison officers are not well trained in identifying the underlying causes of the behaviour; rather, they are taught to be suspicious and to perceive disruptive behaviour as a risk that needs to be managed. Officers are trained to listen, observe, and “size up” what prisoners say and/or do, not because they are interested in what the prisoners are saying, but to gather evidence to justify an intervention. Interventions can be as simple as a verbal warning, but since the use of force is normalized during training, the possibility that force
may be applied is always present and, importantly, likely. Prisoners are routinely warned that if they fail to comply with an officer’s order they could be subjected to the use of force. This strategy is aimed at encouraging prisoners to make responsible choices. Responsible choices are defined as those actions that comply with CO requests. Prisoners who make irresponsible choices by failing to comply will be subjected to additional disciplinary mechanisms (Klassen 2017; Turnbull and Hannah-Moffat 2009).

2.4 Typologies of Antagonistic Behaviour

Prisoner non-compliance is routinely classified as antagonistic along a continuum of increasing threat. Recruits are instructed to view any and all prisoner behaviour that appears to be non-compliant as suspicious, troublesome, and indicative of wider plans for disruption. Whether prisoners actually escalate their behaviour beyond the slightest signs of disrespect is not up for consideration by officers. Prisoners who engage in antagonistic behaviours are considered increasingly difficult to manage. Antagonistic behaviours are classified into four main categories: everyday annoyances; verbal threats/altercations; property damage; and physical altercations.

2.4.1 Everyday Annoyances: Disrespectful and Immature Behaviour

Disrespectful and immature behaviour is at the lowest level on the antagonism continuum. These are defined as any verbal and non-verbal forms of communication that COs perceive to be used by prisoners to ignore, evade, or agitate officers. For instance, behaviours that outside of the prison would be conceptualized as signs of rudeness or insolence, such as rolling one’s eyes, are conceptualized during officer training as signs of a prisoner’s disobedient character. Prisoners are often described as immature, disrespectful, and incorrigible. These behaviours, on the surface, do not appear to be direct security threats, but they are positioned as the antecedents of impending trouble either with individual prisoners or with groups of like-minded individuals. This category of antagonism can include
behaviours such as rolling one’s eyes, not making eye contact, ignoring CO requests, failing to answer an officer’s question, clinching one’s jaw, having one’s hands in one’s pockets, loitering at the officer’s desk, congregating and chatting with other prisoners, horsing around, rumour spreading, or asking repetitive questions (Field Notes May 21, 2014). These behaviours are seen as signs of a prisoner’s risky character and evidence that the prisoner is planning disruptive actions.

There is a presumption during training that officers can identify potential security breaches by closely watching prisoners’ verbal and non-verbal communication. Prisoners who make the slightest non-verbal gesture toward an officer are placed under immediate suspicion. Disrespectful and immature prisoners may agitate and annoy officers with their perceived neediness. The more annoyed officers become, the less tolerant they are to the requests and needs of these prisoners. In fact, much of the interpersonal communication module that recruits take is devoted to finding ways to “size up” prisoners (Provincial Training Manual 2014). For instance, recruits are taught how to evaluate whether a prisoner’s request is legitimate and valid. Legitimate and valid requests are those that comply with the rules and regulations of the institution (Provincial Training Manual 2014). These are fairly easy to evaluate, as all COs are required to know the policies and procedures that govern their work. However, if the request falls outside the scope of what prisoners are entitled to by policy, recruits are taught to approach the request from a position of suspicion. A prisoner’s demeanour is observed as the CO probes deeper into what he/she wants and why he/she wants it. The questions are designed to evaluate whether the prisoner is telling the truth or simply playing a game to get attention. Since prisoners are often considered manipulative, COs need to make sure that a request is genuine before it is granted. If a prisoner is being disrespectful during this questioning, recruits are told to delay a decision until the prisoner can behave respectfully.

Overall, officers are instructed to “deal” with these behaviours through verbal warnings and institutional charges. Verbal warnings give disrespectful prisoners the opportunity to make responsible choices to cease their disruptive and perceived rude behaviour before it has the chance to escalate. A verbal warning is a responsibilization tool used by COs to promote compliance (Rose 2000). If prisoners do not heed the warning, escalate their behaviour, and
make irresponsible choices, COs are left with little option other than to escalate their responses. Officers often see these sorts of behaviours as subtle affronts to their power. By vocalizing their disapproval in a loud and precise verbal warning, COs can often redirect prisoners to be compliant.

2.4.2 Verbal Threats and Altercations

Verbal threats and/or altercations increase the overall intensity of potential confrontations between officers and prisoners. Verbal altercations are defined as any verbal disagreement between prisoners. This could include disagreements about who won a card game, or who should shower first, or whether someone returned exercise equipment to the right place. For the most part, these are fairly benign and seldom escalate if COs can intervene quickly and separate the squabbling prisoners. However, some verbal disagreements escalate into threats of violence. Sometimes prisoners will use threatening language when they are frustrated with other prisoners or with COs who appear to not be listening or responding to their requests. Verbal threats are described as any verbal utterance that either directly represents a prisoner’s desire to cause physical harm to another prisoner or to a prison officer. Threats of bodily harm are positioned as important security threats because they indicate a higher level of antagonism.

Officers take threats between prisoners seriously so they can prevent future disruptions. Verbal arguments between prisoners are conceptualized as potentially volatile episodes that could erupt into actual violence if not quickly contained. Even though no actual physical contact occurs between prisoners, officers have to actively disengage the quarrelling prisoners quickly before the threat ignites into a physical confrontation. In most situations, strong and authoritative verbal commands are enough to stop prisoners from arguing, thus containing the security incident. Interestingly, prisoners who threaten other prisoners are less likely to be subjected to institutional charges than those who threaten officers because prisoners rarely request formal interventions when they are threatened. These prisoners request a transfer to protective custody if they fear for their safety. However, verbal threats
against officers are presented as direct threats to prison security. They initiate formal responses from COs, including institutional charges and reassignment to more secure units. In both cases, recruits are told that they have a professional responsibility to report threats to their superiors and to recommend charges. It is up to the supervising CO to decide whether disciplinary charges are warranted. Front-line officers do not have the authority to lay disciplinary charges without the approval of the supervisor. Even though uttering threats is a criminal offence in Canada, it is up to the discretion of upper management whether to involve the police. COs I interviewed noted that in practice, the police are rarely called when threats are uttered. It is only when threats manifest as acts of violence that police are called and criminal charges are pursued.

2.4.3 Property Damage: The “Dirty” Job of Being a CO

Since prisoners in the provincial system have limited access to programs and activities to occupy their time, they are often depicted as bored and idle. During training, recruits are regularly told that prisoners have a significant amount of unoccupied time on their hands and they will fill this time with disruptive behaviours. This could include obstructing CCTV surveillance cameras, flooding the cells, or even using their bodily fluids against prison staff. All such actions are considered types of property damage. A commonly described example of property damage is “shit bombing”, the practice of urinating and defecating into used pop bottles for the sole purpose of creating an explosive device when stepped on. These bottles are placed at the edge of the cell door and are stepped on as the CO walks passed. This behaviour was discussed during the training and in the interviews as the most vivid example of how prisoners will go to great lengths to disrupt the orderly running of a prison by contaminating the unit with their bodily fluids. Since prisoners do not have weapons to harm officers, contaminating an officer with one’s human waste is seen as the next best thing. This behaviour is described as an ideal example of the “disgusting” and “dirty” nature of prisoners.
2.4.3.1 Shit Bombing as "Dirty Work"

By most moral standards, CO work is a dirty job. Dirty jobs are those working environments where workers do tasks that the general public generally finds socially, physically, and morally distasteful (Hughes 1962, Rivera 2015; Tracy 2004; Dick 2005). Hughes (1958) defines “dirty work” as those work duties that are physically repulsive, represent forms of degradation, and damage a person’s individual dignity, or those tasks that are beyond morally acceptable standards. COs must work in close proximity to people whom society has judged socially unacceptable. It is not uncommon, especially on remand intake units or on mental health units, for COs to work with people with poor hygiene or communicable diseases, such as HIV, TB, or Hepatitis.

Shit bombings are the most personal and disgusting experience that COs can endure. In this case, officers literally and figuratively take on the role of waste managers (Lynch 1998; Simon 1993). Recruit trainers and the COs I interviewed both said prisoners will engage in this “disgusting” behaviour to put officers in compromising situations. They equated this behaviour to the inherently diabolical and contaminated character of prisoners. A senior correctional officer explained:

In the new prison, is they do what’s called shit bombing. That’s what they take pop bottles, the inmates shits and [puts] urine in them, shake[s] them all up get them all nice and fizzy, and then waits for you to come and investigate why they covered their camera. When the doors are closing and you walk past the door there’s enough room where they slip it through there or they have it in a plastic bag so as soon as you walk by... bang (claps hands) they smack it or step on it, and it nails you.

And these bad guys are doing it, and a lot of them are already in the max unit, which has a camera in their house. So what they do is they get toilet paper (packing noise), jump up and put it on the lens. So now we’re blocked. So as I’m sitting down there in the max unit, and we got all the cells on camera, we say to each other, “Dummy in number 7 just covered his camera up. Go up there and tell him to take it off”. I then go on the mic and say “hey inmate X in 7 take that stuff off the camera”. They’re not listening to ya. So a staff is going to have to go up there. That staff goes up there, he boom (smacks hands) shit bombs him. But what does he do right away after he’s done it, he jumps off, takes the Kleenex down and lays on the floor in the prone position (laying on their stomach), cause he knows the response team’s coming. So the doors open and if all of a
sudden ya know he gets thumped on and says so “I didn’t do anything” (said innocently). You’re full of shit and ya know our last guy got it in his eyes, in his mouth. It’s a big disrespect, it’s just a big disrespect getting covered in feces (Interview Transcript CO 001W2R).

This quotation is an important illustration of how officers see their work and prisoners as dangerous, contaminated, and dirty, and thus, a profound personal safety risk. It reinforces how officers view certain behaviours as evidence that prisoners plot and devise ways to agitate officers into using force.

What is striking about this quotation is the officer’s assessment of the motivation. It is clear that he views this behaviour as a deliberate action aimed solely at harming officers. This coincides with the characterization of prisoners as rational subjects who actively find ways to antagonize officers (Haney 2008). When I probed officers about why prisoners engage in this action, there was a consensus that prisoners take great pride in challenging the authority of COs. This is an opportunity to momentarily have the upper hand. Such behaviours are more common in maximum-security, segregation, or mental health units, making it conceivable that they are a product of mental health issues, not a deliberate attempt to slight officers. However, the training staff at the academy and the officers I interviewed rationalize these acts of antagonism as an individually motivated choice geared toward gaining notoriety among other prisoners when they successful bomb an officer.

This example resonates with Bosworth’s (1999) research in women’s prisons in Britain and Rhodes’ (2004) work in locked psychiatric words in supermax prisons in the USA. Bosworth (1999) finds that prisoners often resort to aligning their resistance with their biological constitution. For example, the female prisoners in her study used their bodily hygiene as part of their argument for better toilet paper. Similarly, Rhodes (2004) finds that prisoners see shit bombing as a viable reactionary response to the austere conditions in supermax prisons. She argues that the practice of throwing urine and feces represents a satisfying form of resistance. In her sample, prisoners explained that they felt that they were defined within this system as waste. They conceptualized “shit bombing” as a natural extension of their disposable status. Similarly, in my study, during training, it was not uncommon for prisoners to be described as contaminated waste (Rhodes 2004). On one occasion, it was suggested that prisoners who engage in this type of behaviour make the prison a “toxic waste-dump”
(Field Notes July 9, 2014). As Rhodes (2004) argues (and I agree), throwing behaviours exacerbate the perceived danger posed by these individuals and justifies the amount of force used to minimize the security risks associated with this population. Once prisoners are relegated to the status of "waste", they unknowingly remove themselves from the moral boundaries of society. This removal situates the CO's responses as a form of “just deserts” (Vasquez et al. 2014).

The officer’s comment indicates that these incidents can become unit-wide security breaches. Cleaning up the cell area after one of these attacks requires a coordinated effort beyond simply cleaning up the excrement. During training, recruits are told that they must secure the unit by locking down all prisoners, if possible. If the extent of the mess is vast, units must be evacuated until the hazardous waste team sanitizes the area. This poses logistical problems for officers since there are a limited number of open bed spaces. Officers are left scrambling to find places to house prisoners who cannot be housed together. Many prisoners are housed either in secure cells in admitting and discharge or in segregation units until the biohazard is cleared.

Moreover, the individual who engages in this act is often forcefully removed from their cells by the tactical response team and placed in segregation, if they are not already placed there. As Weill and Haney (2017) argue, COs often respond with punitive measures, including force, when behaviour is considered a wilful act of disobedience. In response to being attacked by bodily fluids, recruits are trained to mount an even more aggressive response. These incidents are often depicted as no more dangerous than if a prisoner attacked a CO with a knife. The presence of a weapon is a direct threat to the safety of the officer and the security of the institution (Field Notes June 17, 2014). As the quotation above notes, prisoners are aware that the tactical team will be called when they do this action.

2.4.3.2 Shit Bombing and CO Contamination

COs are taught during training that they can never allow prisoners to gain any power advantage in the prison. Shit bombing, while couched in a concern for property damage, is
positioned as an act of war. In this context, COs are taught to view the exposure to bodily fluids as the exposure to a biological weapon. If the prison unit is a theatre of war, and shit bombing is an act of war, COs must be the warriors. In fact, the stories trainers tell about the experience of shit bombing are part of a battlefield narrative used throughout the training program. They function as vivid war stories that seasoned officers share with recruits to reinforce just how dangerous the job can be. These war stories are discussed in graphic detail to create a sense of revulsion among recruits and to reinforce the perception that prisoners are dirty and risky (Hughes 1958). Training sergeants suggest that the threat of tactical team cell extractions and the use of force is not a sufficient deterrent for this behaviour. Prisoners willingly do this in spite of the consequences to boost in status among the other prisoners. The resultant degradation of officers is worth the effort.

During my interviews, I asked COs how often these incidents occurred. They consistently said these behaviours were weekly events on maximum security, segregation, and mental health units. Interviewees reported that the CO directly impacted by the urine and feces must go to the hospital for communicable disease testing where he/she is prescribed a cocktail of anti-viral medications as a precaution. The requirement to take anti-viral and anti-bacterial medications reinforces the perception that prisoners are inherently dirty and triggers much more stress among COs than the incident alone. Schaufeli and Peeters (2000) find that potential exposure to communicable disease in jails is one of the most salient stressors COs face. Beyond the threat of disease, they also face what Goffman calls “courtesy stigma” by being exposed to a prisoner’s bodily fluids (Goffman 1986). COs report that the stigma associated with this event changes how they are treated by prisoners and co-workers. Since they have already been successful targets, prisoners continue to see them as viable targets for further degradation. This loss of social status among the prisoners makes their security role very difficult to maintain. Affected COs also face potential social stigma from his/her co-workers. During the interviews, officers explained that they did not want to be partnered with COs who had been previously shit bombed, not because they were concerned about the officer’s competence, but because the incident put them at risk for similar attacks.
2.4.4 Physical Altercations

The final category of antagonistic behaviour is physical altercations. Physical altercations are any form of aggressive contact between prisoners or between prisoners and officers. They typically involve some form of violence. The potential for physical altercations between officers and prisoners is by far the most prominent form of antagonistic behaviour featured in officer training. In fact, the use of force training (see Chapter 3) is premised on the need to ensure that new COs can adequately defend themselves from prisoner attacks. Even though officers are concerned with assaults between prisoners, the potential risk to an officer’s personal safety is at the heart of the training program. The survival of the officer and the security of the prison rest on the how well officers can identify and eliminate sources of threat. This is not a minor concern. Researchers consistently find that COs work in dangerous environments where the risk of harm is always present (Ricciardelli and Gazso 2013; Ferdik 2016; Ferdik 2018; Gordon and Baker 2017; Martin et al. 2012; Dowden and Tellier 2004). Violence or the threat of violence is a salient part of working in jails (Ricciardelli and Gazso 2013).

However, not all physical altercations are treated equally. Even though officers are bound by law to protect the safety of prisoners, there is a clear distinction between how they respond to a code involving two or more prisoners and one involving a physical altercation between a prisoner and officer. During the discussion of emergency codes, on a couple of different occasions, trainers indicated that there was an unwritten tendency among officers to defer intervening in physical altercations between prisoners a bit longer than they would in assaults on a fellow officer. Recruits are told that officers have a duty to respond to any physical altercation as quickly as possible, but when the situation does not involve an officer, the time to assemble the response team and organize an intervention plan can be momentarily delayed. However, for prisoner assaults on officers, the response time is almost instantaneous. In this case, COs intervene without hesitation and initiate tactical response teams to secure the assaultive prisoner. This tells recruits that the safety and security of the officer is the primary concern when dealing with physical altercations. Prisoner-on-prisoner violence is problematic from a unit security perspective, but the safety of the officer is always of paramount concern.
During the interviews, I asked officers working in the field if this differential response strategy was a common practice. They confirmed that it was. On the unit, officers let physical altercations between prisoners continue a bit longer in the hope that the offenders will stop before officers have to place themselves at risk of being assaulted. They noted that in most cases, prisoners stop fighting when they are issued assertive verbal warnings. The momentarily delayed response is positioned as a protective posture necessary for officers to assess the severity of the situation and to marshal a cohesive and effective plan. Officers were quite insistent that this was not a meaningful disregard for prisoners’ safety.

There is also a differential engagement with law enforcement in the pursuit of criminal charges for physical assaults. Minor altercations between prisoners are often resolved internally through the disciplinary board, without police involvement. In the case of fairly minor prisoner-on-prisoner physical altercations, the decision about whether to call the police is left to the discretion of the prisoners. However, prisoners rarely opt for police presence. In the case of serious bodily harm, the police must be called. The decision to initiate police involvement is in the hands of management, but COs are responsible for securing the scene, ensuring that healthcare assesses the victim or victims, and providing documentary evidence to aid the police in laying charges. It is the COs’ responsibility to protect evidence so that the evidence chain of command is seamless and uncontaminated.

In the training program, the focus is on prisoner-initiated assaults. There is a presumption that only prisoners initiate assaultive behaviours and any actions by COs are solely for the purpose of protecting themselves and other prisoners from serious bodily harm. The recruits are taught that they have a professional responsibility to report any incidents of excessive use of force or cruel behaviour by other COs to their superiors. However, other than this reminder, there is no real discussion of how to respond to situations when the instigator is the CO not the prisoner. This lack of acknowledgement that COs sometimes initiate violence leaves recruits expecting that prisoners are the sole source of threat.
2.5 The Complication of Mental Health and FASD Within the Security Paradigm

Since the dominant conceptualization of prisoners is based on fear, risk, and threat, it is not surprising that prisoners with mental health issues and cognitive impairments are a perplexing population. Officers often express concern about the impact these people have on prison security (Union of Canadian Correctional Officers 2008). This concern is part of an overwhelming misconception that prisoners with mental illness are dangerous. They are presumed to be unpredictable, violent, and volatile (Haney 2003; Haney 2006). The training staff expressed little empathy and did not recognize that these people are in distress or that the penal environment contributes to mental distress (Haney 2008). Distress is equated with dangerousness, thus reducing the officer’s desire to engage with this population beyond controlling behaviour.

Most trainers had a fairly dismissive attitude. At best, this group is a daily hassle and annoyance. At worst, mentally ill prisoners cause fear. Generally, these people occupy a significant amount of the officers’ time and energy because of their repetitive questions, their lack of behaviour modulation after being warned, their inability to learn from mistakes, their constant loitering around officers’ desk, and their overall perceived lack of maturity. During training, these prisoners are referred to as “bugs.” Reducing a difficult to manage group to a non-human status diminishes the legitimacy of the prisoners’ concerns and reinforces their subordination (Weill and Haney 2017; Drake 2012). Positioning prisoners as bugs allowed COs to dismiss prisoners’ requests as illegitimate.

The training staff and my interviewees expressed frustration that they are left to deal with this group without adequate support from the mental health and social work departments. Many complained that at times they felt they were “babysitting” prisoners, rather than doing what they are supposed to be doing – keeping the unit secure. The amount of time devoted to training new correctional officers on how to manage this group is particularly limited. During the nine-week training, only 12.25 of 333 hours were devoted to mental health and cognitive deficits, such FASD. For the most part, new officers are given basic knowledge about the types of mental illnesses and cognitive disorders present in prison populations.
While this is valuable as a base understanding, little is offered in the way of meaningful management strategies to support this population beyond lowering their voices, not overwhelming these prisoners with complex tasks, being empathetic and understanding, and not to judging their behaviour (Field Notes July 3, 2014).

As one senior officer mentioned during my interviews, “You get training on how to use force, but we don’t use force all the time. Very little training is given on communication, addictions, and dealing with the mentally ill. COs are ready for the battle, they are not prepared for the reality of the battlefield” (Interview Transcript CO 003W2R:15). This officer clearly identifies a major weakness of the recruit training. There is little focus on how to communicate and manage difficult people without force. COs have no way to decipher whether a prisoner’s behaviour is potentially a function of a mental health issue or simply manipulative antagonism. The possibility that prisoner behaviour may not be a function of rational choice, but an outcome of mental health vulnerabilities is ignored during training. Officers presume these prisoners are a behaviour management risk that needs to be contained to preserve security in prisons.

The overall quality of mental health training did not go unnoticed by recruits. The kind of advice offered was generally not well received. One recruit summarized the anxiety that officers face when dealing with people who appear not to possess the rational capacities that prisoners are expected to have:

I can’t invest and care about them. I will not give them personal attention because they don’t deserve it. I’m not giving empathy because they don’t respect COs or have empathy for their victims. I will protect them, but it won’t be personal because it will bleed you dry. COs can treat them firm but fairly. We all have made choices. Everyone has an excuse, especially the mentally ill ones. We are using prisons as mental hospitals. Let’s be frank. My job is simple. I’m here to make sure you (mentally ill offender) don’t kill me or yourself. I don’t care about your personal problems. (Field Notes July 7, 2014:12-13)

This example indicates the tension between security duties and the need to care for this population. For this recruit, the line between protecting life and being nice is not one he considers important. Mentally ill prisoners are positioned as dangerous because of their
propensity for self-harm and the risk they may pose to the officer’s safety. This officer is very clear that priority is placed on the safety of the officer. He has zero interest in any personal communication with the offender.

This officer also expresses a long-standing belief that prisoners are rational self-serving individuals who end up in prison because of their choices. In discussions of choice, my interviewees did not differentiate them from the general prisoner population. Even when their mental health condition might compromise their rational capacity to evaluate the benefits or consequences of their actions, COs remain committed to seeing them as manipulating the system. It is also not uncommon for officers to view mental illness as an excuse for misbehaviour. The language of risk used to describe mentally ill prisoners works to reduce empathy among officers and increase the blame-worthiness of mentally ill prisoners for their misbehaviour (Bosworth 2007; Haney 2008; Haney 2010; Weill and Haney 2017). This also helps to justify harsh forms of treatment, including the use of segregation, as a logical outcome of the choice to misbehave (Weill and Haney 2017). As one officer noted, “I can sum up the lectures on mental health and FASD in one sentence. I treat the retards like retards” (Field Notes July 12, 2014:10).

Even though COs feel that they lack the necessary training to manage this population, there has been a growing push within forensic psychiatry for correctional officers to take on a larger treatment role (Dvoskin and Spiers 2004). Since COs spend more time with prisoners than any other correctional staff members, some scholars argue they are uniquely positioned not only to identify prisoners in distress, but also to work closely with clinical staff to ensure treatment compliance (Dvoskin and Spiers 2004; Lavoie, Connolly, and Roesch 2006). Lavoie et al. (2006) argue that officers have a significant impact on the success of mental health treatment in prisons because they are the first to intervene when a prisoner is in distress, they directly observe inmate conduct, they are in a better position to make behavioural recommendations to medical staff, and, importantly, they are in a position to ensure that inmates take their medications. However, treatment and security roles are mutually exclusive. Adopting a treatment role requires COs to develop relationships with prisoners that respect their confidentiality, but this is virtually impossible in jails. Everything prisoners say and do is documented in their institutional file, which is accessible to all
correctional staff. The number one responsibility of correctional officers is security. New recruits are told to be suspicious of these prisoners because they could be faking psychiatric symptoms to get better housing or to get out of unit work duties. By reinforcing a suspicious stance, CO training eliminates compassion as an acceptable response to prisoner behaviour.

By conflating difficult to manage behaviour with prison security risks, CO training relegates prisoners to a subservient position, a concept at the heart of the criminology of the other (Garland 1996). When they focus on a prisoner as a dangerous other, officers can view him/her as a subject that “bears little resemblance to us” (Garland 1996:461). Garland contends that punitive crime control policies are all about identifying, containing, and isolating dangerous others. This demonizes mentally ill prisoners as “a species of threat” (Garland 1996: 461) and justifies the use of segregation and physical restraints to reduce the threat.

Since COs are not trained to decipher whether behaviour is the result of a mental health concern, the range of options available to manage this group is limited. As a result, some officers come up with creative modes of interaction that are not and cannot be taught in basic training. Such tactics require officers to possess high levels of interpersonal communication skills and the ability to “meet prisoners where they are.” Therefore, their use is episodic and officer dependent. The following example is illustrative. On one occasion, a prisoner refused to come out of his cell. The prisoner reported that he was a ninja and did not want to leave his cell because he feared for his safety. The frontline staff tried to coax him out, to no avail. They became so frustrated with his disobedience that they called in the tactical team to initiate a cell extraction. As a last resort, the CO in charge summoned one of the trainers to the unit because he had a reputation of being a good “talker”. If he failed to remove the prisoner from his cell, the tactical team was in position to remove him by force. The trainer arrived at the prisoner’s cell and began a verbal exchange. He stated, “I understand you are a ninja.” The prisoner replied that he was a white ninja (prisoners on the male mental health unit wear white security gowns). The officer replied in a calm tone, “Well I’m a blue ninja,” referring to the CO's blue uniform. This response seemed to please the prisoner who confirmed that the officer was in fact a blue ninja. The officer explained to the prisoner that his current housing location was not suitable for a ninja of his stature, and he needed to be
moved to a more appropriate location. The prisoner agreed that his cell was not sufficient for a ninja of his calibre and willingly walked out of his cell without incident. As the trainer escorted the prisoner to his new holding cell on the admitting and discharge unit, the other officers were observed laughing at the prisoner. The prisoner did not realize that he was manipulated into cooperating until he arrived at his new cell (Field Notes July 3, 2014:10).

There is always a potential for force in cases of non-compliance. This is not surprising, given the portrayal of prisoners as dangerous. In this instance, the tactical team was ready to step in. However, the officer was creative enough to step outside of the box and manage a prisoner who was clearly displaying delusional symptoms. Instead of charging into the cell and physically restraining the prisoner, the customary response, this officer used his interpersonal communication skills. He did not pass judgment on the rationality of the prisoner’s assertion that he was a ninja, but played along. This is an important example of how using non-judgmental approaches to mentally ill prisoners can be effective.

The ability to be creative without using force is not well supported in current correctional practices. This officer noted that he was unique among his co-workers because he had an abundant sense of humour and did not embarrass easily. The laughter of his co-workers shows just how difficult it is for officers to use unconventional methods. He was confident that he had the skills necessary to diffuse the situation, but this level of confidence is rare. In training, the interpersonal communication modules do not offer role-playing scenarios geared toward de-escalating mentally ill prisoners. Officers are more inclined to use force because that is what they are taught to do. Only on rare occasions can they respond to misbehaviour among the mentally ill prison population without force.

2.6 Conclusion

Penal systems across jurisdictions have become decidedly more punitive since the 1970s. The rise of punitive punishment is situated within a neo-liberal political context geared toward holding offenders responsible for their crimes (Garland 2002; Rose 2000). Within this context, the prison is the institution responsible for housing and segregating risky
subjects (Rose 2000). This chapter examined how COs are trained to view prisoners as risky and dangerous. By depicting prisoners as the “dangerous others,” CO training conditions officers to interpret prisoner behaviours as inherently antagonistic. Antagonistic actions come in a variety of forms, but are always conceptualized as a threat to the security of the institution and the safety of the officer.

Scholars of prisoner non-compliance have traditionally conceptualized such behaviours as individually motivated actions used by prisoners to address conditions of confinement or to make sentences more palatable (Bosworth 1999; Rubin 2015; Rubin 2017). However, in this chapter, I offered an alternative conceptualization, one that does not rely on the intention of prisoners. I argued that CO training depicts non-compliant behaviours as acts of antagonism directed at threatening COs, not as acts of resistance as suggested by Bosworth (1999) or friction as suggested by Rubin (2015). This conceptualization considers the ways COs understand and rationalize their management of prisoner behaviour. From the perspective of COs, the internal motivation of prisoners matters less than the possible impact of the behaviour on prison security. COs are not particularly interested in why prisoners misbehave; instead, they simply equate misbehaviour with the dangerous and risky disposition of prisoners and they see it as a security risk.

By conceptualizing prisoner behaviour as antagonism, this chapter also moves the conceptual literature on resistance away from focusing only on prisoner motivation to consider how COs learn to label certain behaviour as threatening to their security mandate. I argue that previous conceptualizations of prisoner non-compliance do not consider the vital role COs play in how behaviour is understood and how prisoners experience imprisonment. Here, I point to the centrality of CO training. It shapes how new COs think about non-compliant prisoners as a problem of security, not individuals who may be engaging in disruptive conduct for other reasons. Prisoners who fail to comply with institutional policies and practices are simply seen as affronts to CO power and risks to CO security and are dealt with accordingly.

In this chapter, I argue that the depiction of prisoner misconduct as antagonism justifies the COs’ implementation of punitive management responses, such as the use of force. Within
this dynamic, prisoners are positioned as responsible for the antagonistic behaviour and for the security responses to that behaviour. COs are simply fulfilling their security role by identifying and containing antagonistic behaviour before it becomes a serious security breach. By conceptualizing prisoners’ misconduct as a deliberate act of antagonism, CO training silences the legitimacy of prisoners’ concerns about confinement. It fails to consider that acts of antagonism may be responses to the penal structure, as suggested by Weill and Haney (2017) and Rubin (2017).

At every level of antagonistic behaviour prisoners are constructed as dangerous, malicious, wilfully disobedient, dangerous, and, at times, dirty. These constructions are used to justify harsh responses by reinforcing the “us vs. them” dynamic that Drake (2012) argues is the foundation of security regimes. CO training positions prisoners as a subhuman species; this positioning renders their status and grievances subordinate, illegitimate, and unworthy of consideration. At the same time, prisoners are understood to be in charge of their decisions to misbehave, thus making the use of force a morally justified and necessary response. This neo-liberal responsibilization of prisoners negates the powerful role of institutional contexts in producing disruptive behaviours. Haney (2008) argues that prisons are criminogenic spaces because of the ways COs respond to prisoner behaviour with force.

Similarly, Weill and Haney (2017) argue that by positioning prisoners as responsible for their suffering, COs are not accountable for the trauma they create when they use force. Demonizing and dehumanizing prisoners absolves them of responsibility (Haney 2010; Weill and Haney 2017). I argue that CO training desensitizes them from considering how their behaviour may contribute to the disruptive behaviour. They have a much easier time using punitive punishments if they do not have to think they are making imprisonment more painful.

CO training ignores the fact that prisoners are human beings who can be negatively impacted by punitive punishments. COs are not trained to recognize suffering among prisoners, nor are they given the opportunity to learn management strategies that respect the humanity of prisoners. Rather, CO training entrenches a pejorative and stigmatizing depiction of prisoners, and this, in turn, reinforces punitiveness in provincial jails. The message COs get
during training is that prisoners are dangerous, and it is the COs’ responsibility to ensure prisoners are not given the opportunity to threaten the security of the jail or the safety of the officers.

The depiction of prisoners as dangerous, yet, rational subjects is complicated by the increasing number of people who are entering prisons with mental health issues and cognitive impairments. The lack of applicable training leaves new COs in a very difficult position when faced with perceived antagonistic behaviour. They continue to presume that the behaviour of mentally ill prisoners is malicious and not a sign of distress. This finding supports those of Hannah-Moffat and Klassen’s (2015) study of female prisoners who engage in self-harming behaviour. Prisoners who suffer from personality disorders are not considered mentally ill in Canadian federal correctional policy. Hannah-Moffat and Klassen (2015) argue that the narrow definition of mental illness focusing solely on schizophrenia and bipolar condition relegates prisoners with personality disorders to behaviour management problems. CO training fails to offer new officers any meaningful way to move beyond this dynamic.

The conceptualization of prisoners as risks entrenches social inequality in prisons. By structurally positioning the prisoner as a risk to be managed rather than a human being, COs’ training supports a punitive regime that lacks awareness of the social and contextual factors that may be behind disruptive behaviour. CO training contributes to the criminogenic nature of penal environments by teaching new COs to treat prisoners as objects to control. By conceptualizing prisoners as safety risks, COs will continue to support stigmatizing rhetoric and use punitive control strategies when prisoners are non-compliant. Prisoners will remain demonized “enemies” who can only be managed by force (Haney 2010; Drake 2012). This has the potential to create a cycle of aggressiveness (Kupers 2006). Prisoners will respond to how they are treated; if they are treated like risk subjects, they will behave in kind. The way COs understand prisoner behaviour as antagonistic and the management strategies they deploy may actually make prisons more risky and dangerous, rather than safer and more secure.
Chapter 3
Producing Masculinized and Competent Correctional Officers

3.1 Introduction

Prisons have evolved into security regimes that use restrictive penal management strategies geared toward protecting the public by containing risky populations (Rose 2000; Drake 2012; Bosworth 2010). Correctional officers are positioned as the guardian of public safety (Field Notes May 19, 2014; Drake 2012). COs are responsible for ensuring that prisons remain orderly and safe so that prisoners do not escape (Drake 2012). To do this, COs must ensure that prisoners comply with institutional rules and that security threats are resolved quickly. This elevates punitive punishments and the use of force as the primary behaviour management strategy used by COs. This chapter will examine how CO training reinforces the use of physical control as the primary determinant of whether COs are competent to effectively manage prisons.

The literature on prison officer attitudes and management styles argues that COs view working with prisoners as the most challenging part of their job. Researchers find that COs who express negative attitudes toward prisoners often develop cynical attitudes toward their jobs and are more suspicious of prisoner behaviour (Lerman and Page 2012, Liebling 2008; Skolnick 1966; Jacobs and Retsky 1980; Farkas 1999). Scholars attribute this cynical attitude to a CO’s endorsement and use of punitive and coercive forms of control, such as the use of force (Liebling 2011; Ricciardelli and Perry 2016; Farkas 2000; Jurik 1985). The support of punitive control is attributed to COs’ fear of victimization from prisoners (Gordon and Baker 2017; Martin et al. 2012; Ferdik 2016; Dowden and Tellier 2004; Ricciardelli and Gazso 2013). The dangerousness of the job and the persistent threat of violence often lead officers to view physical control as the only viable way to manage prisoner behaviour (Ferdik 2018). Punitive attitudes that support the use of physical force go hand in hand with a focus on identifying sources of risk and reducing dangerousness. This preoccupation with
risk and dangerous legitimizes the use of physical forms of control by COs in order to maintain order in prisons.

Risk, dangerousness, and the primacy of the use of force are situated within a gendered organizational structure that continues to privilege masculinized traits of strength, dominance, and control (Zimmer 1987; Marquart 1986). COs must present a tough and physically dominant posture when they interact with prisoners. This helps to produce “processes, practices, images and ideologies, and distributions of power” (Ackers 1992:567) where gendered conception of penal power structures the work life of prison officers. Britton (2000; 2003) argues that bureaucratic organizations are gendered in part because hegemonic masculinized practices structure the daily functioning of the organization. This delegitimizes feminized skills and attributes, such as verbal negotiation and positive prisoner interactions. The dominance of risk management is predicated on the perception that COs must be physically dominant and be willing to assert their physical prowess to keep prisoners under control. Physical strength and verbal aggressiveness remain essential components of the CO’s job (Jurik and Musheno 1986), which are typically characteristics not attributed to women. The depiction of the prison as “jungle like” spaces requires COs to have the capacity and competence to physically restrain prisoners (Lawrence and Mahan 1998). However, this conceptualization of COs’ working environment has traditionally been an important barrier to women entering the field (Jurik 1985; Jurik 1988).

In Canada, prior to the 1970s female COs were restricted to being matrons of female only prisons (Hannah-Moffat 2001; Burdett, Gouliquer, and Poulin 2018). Over time, women have been slowly hired to work in male prisons; however, women are still under-represented in most prisons. Research on the incorporation of women into corrections has consistently found that women face a number of barriers to full integration as COs. Much of the resistance to women working in male prisons is centered on the perception that women are not as capable of successfully completing the security duties as male COs (Camp and Langan 2005). Considering that the job requires the assertion of a physically competent and assertive attitude among COs, male COs still think that women are less capable of doing the job properly (Farnworth 1992; Burdett et al. 2018; Lawrence and Mahan 1998; Jurik 1985; Parisi 1984). Of particular concern for male COs is the perceived inability of women to
successfully manage emergency situations (Hemmens, Stohr, Schoeler and Miller 2002; Zimmer 1987; Britton 2003; Jurik 1985; Sakowski 1990; Szockeyj 1989; Kissel and Katsampes 1980); that women would be victimized by male prisoners (Farnworth 1992); and that women were too emotionally and mentally weak to handle the stresses of the job (Jurik 1985). Research finds that male officers view the presence of female COs as dangerous not only because they fear that women will be assaulted when they work with men, but also because they could increase penal instability and aggressiveness because of their weaker constitution (Shawver and Dickover 1986). Furthermore, male officers do not want to be partnered with women because they feel that they would have to ‘babysit’ female officers to protect them from prisoner aggression (Newbold 2005) and that men would be able to physically manage prisoners better than women (Farnworth 1992).

These attitudes limit the ability of women to fully integrate into correctional spaces. The limited number of female COs often relegates women to the status mere tokens among male COs (Kanter 1977; Zupan 1992; Jurik 1985). Female officers are often assigned to more service-related assignments in jail, especially in the case of maximum-security male facilities. These differential placements limit women’s ability to demonstrate that they are capable of managing violent interactions. Some research suggest that women are not only disadvantaged by being restricted from physical altercations with prisoners, but women are also given less security-related training before they enter jails (Zimmer 1987). Scholars suggest that this lack of training in the use of force limits women’s promotional opportunities and it keeps women in lower status positions in the jail (Zimmer 1987).

Research also finds that women recognize the physical limitations they have, but they feel that this does not limit their capacity to the job (Farnworth 1992). Women tend to adopt more collegial interactions with prisoners and they are much more adept at using verbal negotiation to get prisoners to comply so that they do not have to use force (Farnworth 1992; Zimmer 1987). Liebling and Price (2001) suggest that women are better able to contain disruptions and promote compliance because they are much more proficient at interpersonal communication and social relations skills. Interestingly, male prisoners prefer working with women over men because female COs are less verbally and physically aggressive and more friendly (Zimmer 1987; Crouch 1985; Boyd and Grant 2005). Since female officers are more
sensitive to the needs of prisoners, male prisoners often adopt protective behaviour toward female COs (Szockyj 1989; Crewe 2006). Szockyj (1989) argues that prisoners have little to gain from resisting female COs’ requests. However, male prisoners adopt and display their machismo with male not female COs. Researchers suggest that this differential interactional patterns of prisoners can explain the higher rates of violence and misconduct directed at male COs (Szockyj 1989). Women’s value as a COs is not in their physical prowess, but rather in the ‘softening’ and calming influence that women bring to prisons (Newbold 2005; Morris and Hawkins 1970; Carlen 1998; Liebling and Price 2001; Crewe 2006). Prisons who employ female COs tend to have fewer acts of violence, suicides, and assaults.

To keep jails safe, COs must learn the necessary skills to deal with prisoner disruption. Previous research on COs has yet to consider how CO training normalizes and naturalizes the use of force as the primary mechanism through which recruits internalize their security role. This requires COs to adopt masculinized gender norms, regardless of their gender identity. Learning how to effectively use force is a gendered process that promotes masculine gender norms of toughness, control, and physical strength. Men and women are expected to demonstrate their competency to use force to control prisoners. Unlike previous research that suggests that there is differential training for male and female COs, the training program I examined does not differentiate between male and female recruits with respect to what skills each learn. Since one of the barriers to women entering corrections is the perception that women lack the physical strength necessary to do the job, this chapter will demonstrate that the structure of this training program removes this barrier. Women learn how to effectively use physical forms of control just as men do. Women are expected to be as proficient as their male classmates in order to graduate from the training academy.

In this chapter, I will argue that CO training is a masculinized environment designed to produce competent COs. Competence is intimately tied to how well COs learn to use physical force strategies. This chapter suggests that the development of a security and control-focused officer is predicated on recruits developing an outwardly tough and emotionally reserved presentation of self. I will show that physical control tactics become normalized and naturalized as a result of the highly choreographed and repetitive reinforcement of use of force skills. However, the normalized and competent use force is a
gendered process. I will show that during training male and female recruits are disciplined in gender specific ways when they fail to demonstrate toughness and stoicism. Competency is constantly under review during use of force training. Recruits who are unable to master the use of force skills are subjected to additional disciplinary mechanisms designed to make them competent.

### 3.2 Masculinity and CO Training

Despite the suggestion by academy staff that the training program is an inclusive space where men and women are held to the same standards of conduct and are treated as equals, this program’s structure, tone, and content are anything but gender-neutral. CO training is situated within a male-dominated space that promotes hegemonic understandings of masculinity (Britton 2000; Britton 2003). To be successful in training, recruits are expected to develop a masculine orientation that is steeped in exerting dominance and control over prisoners. To achieve this, the program is designed around the use of physical force as the primary indicator of competency. The characterization of COs as tough, strong, and in control privileges a masculinized understanding of how COs are expected to act. Showing weakness or emotionality are liabilities that COs cannot afford to show. The official curriculum produces a sense of confidence and a posture of toughness in new officers so that they can retain their position of power over prisoners.

In his exploration of how masculinity is a situational accomplishment, Messerschmidt (1993) argues that individuals “do gender” by developing particular expression of masculinity and femininity that are constructed and reinforced by the social structure under which they are displayed. By elevating masculine traits as fundamental attributes of competent COs, all recruits are engaging in a structured environment where authority and control are vital to “doing” masculinity during training. Messerschmidt (1993) states that “social structure are constituted by social action, and in turn, provide resources and power from which individuals construct ‘strategies of action’” (p. 77). The ‘strategies of action’ developed during training are geared toward using physical control to manage prisoners.
In the context of CO training, competence and the development of a control orientation are enacted and reinforced by elevating the use of force as the primary practical skillset COs need to master in order to become a certified CO. West and Zimmerman (1987) argue that “gender is an accomplishment, an achieved property of situational context, our attention shifts from matters internal to individuals and focuses on interactional and, ultimately, institutional arenas” (p. 126). In this sense, CO training is an exercise in the competent accomplishment of masculinity as a proxy for "doing" competent correctional work. The structure of the training academy with its emphasis on physical control strategies creates the conditions necessary for individuals to enact masculinized subjectivities, despite their actual gender identity. This makes CO training a gendered organization predicated on the promotion of hegemonic masculinized practices and masculine gender norms (Britton 2000; Britton 2003)

One of the goals of the training program is to create a uniform and unified officer core. "Being" a CO requires recruits to not only master masculine skills, but it also requires them to adopt a masculinized presentation of self. The process of producing a masculinized subject begins with how recruits are expected to look and dress. All recruits wear a standard issued uniform, which includes a shirt with their last name embossed on the back and tactical pants. Male recruits are expected to be clean-shaven, have short haircuts, and display no outwardly signs of piercings and tattoos, which conform to the image of a military recruit. Women, on the other hand, must make much more overt alterations to how they look. To do this, women must ensure that their hair is pulled back in a tight bun at the base of their neck. They cannot wear makeup or jewelry. They are also not allowed to wear pins or accessories in their hair because these are depicted as safety concerns. Therefore, the desire to produce a unified group requires women to conceal their femininity so that they look and act like men.

Femininity is juxtaposed with the masculine image of the CO as a safety risk that needs to be managed. This risk is not only directed toward the potential for victimization of female COs (Farnworth 1992), but it is also conceived as an unnecessary sexualized distraction for male recruits. Therefore, the dress requirements homogenize recruits by restricting the expression of subjectivities that do not conform to the institutionalized image of the CO. This effectively eliminates distinctions and differences among COs so that they look and act
alike. This homogenization process situates the “doing” of CO work within a social context of “doing” masculinity (West and Zimmerman 1987). Within the context of CO training, “being” a CO is conceptualized is a contextually produced masculinized subject position that reinforces a security orientation based on dominance and control. Interestingly, as I showed in Chapter 2, this process of homogenization is also a strategy used by trainers to depict prisoners as risk subjects. Prisoners are treated as a singular type of risk group who are also subjected to strict rules and regulations that limit individual expression of agency and subjectivity.

3.3 Creating Competent COs

3.3.1 Linking Competency to Mastering Use of Force Skills: The Normalization and Naturalization of Force

The primary goal of CO training is to produce officers who can effectively identify and manage prisoner behaviour before it becomes a major security issue. To be proficient in these tasks, recruits are exposed to a variety of different modules during the program. This includes discussions about the legal boundaries that encompass their powers to police prisoners, how to evaluate prisoner requests as part of their interpersonal communication development, information about the diversity prisoners with respect to mental health, aboriginality, and multiculturalism, and how to manage emotion under stressful situations. Despite the comprehensive nature of the training curriculum, competency to do CO work is narrowly defined by how well recruits are able to master the use of force skills necessary to execute their security and control role. Before recruits are able apply the use of force skills during scenario week (see Chapter 4), recruits must first be able to perfect the execution of use of force skills. During control tactics training\(^3\), recruits are required to demonstrate that they know how to use the correct technique associated with each use of force skill.

\(^3\) Control tactics and the use of force are used interchangeably to represent modes of prisoner management that use physical forms of control and restraints, such as handcuffing, baton strikes, and OC spray deployment.
Use of force training is about disciplining the body by controlling its movement. It uses the disciplinary technique of successive segmentation to train recruits’ bodies to be efficient (Foucault 1995). Efficiency is tied to the competent use of force. To become certified as a competent CO, recruits have to demonstrate that they not only know how to do specific use of force techniques, but that these techniques can be performed as if they are natural and normal. Mastery of use of force techniques during CO training is structured very similarly to how dancers learn how to dance. Each dance skill is divided into its individual component parts so that the dancer can perfect basic technique before moving onto more difficult skills (Clark and Markula 2017). Clark and Markula (2017) argue that ballet training is designed around the efficient movement of the body so that dancers are able to coordinate their movement with the music and other dancers. Successful dancers internalize the "correct" way to do ballet technique. Perfecting technique execution is developed through the mastery of basic skills that comes from repetitive training (Clark and Markula 2017).

This segmentation process is also integrated into CO control tactics training. Foucault (1995) suggests that there is a temporal component to how the body is exercised. He argues that, “disciplinary methods reveal a linear time whose moments are integrated once upon another, and which is oriented toward a terminal, stable point” (Foucault 1995:160). To develop this terminal point, “exercise is that technique by which one imposes on the body tasks that are both repetitive and different, but always graduated” (Foucault 1995:161). Much like a well-rehearsed dance, use of force training is a highly choreographed and sequentially designed experience. Recruits are exposed to an intensive and repetitive style of training so that they develop proficiencies at the basic levels. In the case of CO training, each use of force skill is broken down into its component parts. Recruits are required to master basic skills before they can all move onto more difficult and intricate skills. This style of training is designed to exercise the body to make it compliant and efficient so that use of force looks and feels natural.

This graduated style of training ensures that recruits learn how to apply use of force skills safely and accurately. However, mastering use of force skills did not come naturally to some recruits. Even though the tasks were broken down into digestible parts, some male recruits struggled with the rhythmic and repetitive quality of training, while female recruits rarely
struggled to learn the component parts of each use of force skill. When recruits did not master the fundamentals fast enough, the entire class had to do the task over and over until the less competent subject was able to show that they could do the task. This produced tension among recruits, not because they were exposed to repetition, but because struggling recruits were conceptualized as a future safety risk to other recruits. There was an unspoken expectation that male recruits should be able to easily learn and execute use of force skills because they were men. Men were positioned as inherently capable of mastering these masculine skills. Some recruits actively avoided being paired with male recruits who struggled and they expressed concern that these people would actually make their security duties more dangerous. They argued that being partnered with incompetent partners puts them in a difficult position once they return to their home institutions because these people could not be depended upon to manage crises effectively.

There were additional mechanisms implemented into the training program to help guide these struggling recruits to become competent at the use of force skills. Recruits who struggle during the use of force training were required to attend remedial sessions in order to practice the skills until they have mastered them. These remedial sessions were sometimes trainer-led, but recruits also organized practice sessions without the trainers being present. Female recruits were instrumental in organizing practice sessions to ensure that they mastered the skills well enough to do well on the practical exam. Some male recruits dismissed the need to practice because they were over-confident of their natural ability to use force. Attendance at trainer-led sessions was compulsory for recruits who were identified during the training sessions as not quite proficient in the use of force techniques. These extra training sessions were presented as an opportunity to get more direct one-on-one training to learn how to do perform force techniques properly, but they also functioned as an important disciplinary strategy. Even though attendance was not compulsory for many recruits, most male and all female recruits attended the trainer-led sessions because they wanted to leave a positive impression with the trainers who would be conducting the tactical skills practical exam at the end of the term. Since not all recruits were required to attend these sessions, some male recruits opted not to participate. The failure to attend these sessions was brought up several times during drills and during the practical exam when recruits did not execute the force skills properly.
These remedial sessions increase the surveillance capacity of the training staff to evaluate skill development among all recruits. This additional monitoring by the training staff during these remedial sessions extends the reach of the knowledge produced about recruit competency that was created during the primary training sessions. During these sessions, trainers document who attended and who did not. They also document who appeared to be improving and mastering the skills and who needed more practice. Failing to make oneself available for extra training is documented in the recruit’s file. Even when recruits were able to master skills competently during the primary training sessions, their failure to attend the remedial sessions provided trainers with evidence about the recruit’s character. Trainers perceive this lack of attendance as an indication of the recruit’s lack of commitment to the training and this character assessment was used to evaluate the recruit’s fit for the job.

3.3.2 Cross Gender Pairing and Gendered Responses to Using Force

Unlike the prohibition against cross-gender pairing during police academy training (Prokos and Padavic 2002), the tactical skill training for COs required that men and women be partnered together. Recruits are told that cross-gender pairing is an important aspect of CO work because COs must be able to manage different types of bodies efficiently and effectively. Being proficient at control strategies requires that COs learn how to modify their posture and body positioning when faced with larger or smaller bodies. The training is designed to produce confidence in new COs so that they can exert control over prisoners who may be structurally different from them. By pairing men and women together, alongside larger and smaller body types, the use of force training provides recruits with experience in managing bodies across the size spectrum.

Even though there was no distinction made between how force should be applied to male versus female bodies, there was a gendered dynamic that unfolded during training sessions. Male recruits often expressed an overt concern about potentially hurting their female partner, not because of her size, but rather because she was a woman. However, there was no similar concern expressed about inflicting pain on other male recruits. Body size was not a factor in
how male recruits approached using force on each other. Smaller statured men were not treated differently either by the larger men or women. Unlike male recruits, female recruits never verbally expressed any trepidation about inflicting pain onto male recruits during the training. This is likely attributable to the fact that female recruits internalized the idea that toughness was as a sign of strength. Given that the training academy is a masculinized environment, women also learn that to be successful within this space they had to conform to the masculinized image of the CO. The use of force training was an important avenue through which women could demonstrate that they had the capacity to be just as tough as the men.

Two examples stood out during the training sessions regarding the gendered dynamics between male and female recruits. On one occasion, recruits were learning how to apply a directed strike at a prisoner’s forearm in order to get them to release their grip on a cell door bar (Field Notes June 5, 2014). This maneuver required very precise placement of the strike midway up the forearm, otherwise the prisoner would not release the bar and the officer would have to try again. During this drill, a female recruit played the role of the prisoner holding the bar. Her male partner raised his arm and struck her forearm. To the male recruit’s surprise, she did not release the bar despite the amount of force that he applied to her arm. Appearing perplexed and concerned, the male partner apologized to the female recruit for hurting her. She told him she was fine and that he had to do it again so he learned how to do it correctly. Just as they were having this verbal exchange, one of the male trainers approached the pair and verbally chastised the male recruit for apologizing. In a very stern tone, the trainer stated, “Do it again! You never apologize to an inmate. Will it hurt? Yes. Should you feel bad that it hurts? No.” The male recruit repeated the maneuver correctly before the recruits changed roles. When it was the female recruit’s turn, she swung and administered the strike to the correct spot on the first try. Unlike her partner, she did not apologize as he winced in pain, but rather she jokingly stated “Karma!” (Field Notes June 5, 2014).

A similar dynamic occurred during baton training. On this occasion, a different male/female partnership was practicing how to administer baton strikes. In this drill, the female partner went first. She administered the baton strike to her partner as he held a boxing mat without
incident. When it was the female partner’s turn to play the role of the prisoner, her male partner administered the strike so forcefully that it levitated her off the ground causing her to land about 20 feet from where the partners were originally positioned. As the female recruit got off the ground, her partner rushed over and apologized for hurting her. Once again, the male recruit was admonished for expressing empathy and concern for the female partner. A different male trainer stated, “Never apologize! That is exactly what you want to happen! You want to put the inmate on their ass. Good Job.” (Field Notes June 30, 2014).

In their study of police academy training, Prokos and Padavic (2002) argue that police training includes an official and hidden curriculum. The official curriculum contains all of the actual skills and abilities that the recruits are expected to learn, such as how to handcuff suspects or how to fire a gun. The hidden curriculum; however, reflects all the subtle lessons that recruits learn during training that are not expressly outlined in the official curriculum. Prokos and Padavic (2002) argue that the primary lesson that female recruits learn from the masculinized training environment was that policing is hostile toward women. Unlike the gendered hostility documented by Prokos and Padavic (2002), CO training does not have that component. However, there are important lessons that are learned during CO training that are not part of the official curriculum. The examples described above illustrate the hidden curriculum at the CO training academy. Male recruits consistently express trepidation and concern about inflicting pain on their female partners. This could be a function of how men are socialized to avoid using violence against women and to protect women from harm. This supports previous research that found that male COs routinely worried that women would be in danger when they work as COs (Farnworth 1992; Shawver and Dickover 1986). However, these public admonishments teach men to disregard their concern about inflicting harm when they are using force.

The lesson learned from these examples is that COs must separate their actions from the impacts it may have. They show that COs only need to be concerned with whether or not they administer the use of force strategy correctly. The impact that the use of force has on prisoners is not something COs need to be concerned about since the role of the correctional officer is to remain in control when they interact with prisoners. If pain is inflicted, it is viewed as a natural consequence for the prisoner’s behaviour. In this sense, the training
program reinforces a neo-liberal understanding of prisoners as responsible and rational subjects who are accountable for their non-compliance (Rose 2000; Klassen 2017). By deferring responsibility for the force incident back onto prisoners, these examples alleviate COs from being cognizant about the harm they cause to prisoners. In the end, these examples teach COs a hidden lesson that they should not feel badly for causing pain because prisoners deserve it.

These examples are also educational for female recruits. Even though women regularly deploy use of force strategies in ways that inflicted pain on their male partners, women recognize that their ability to be taken seriously as competent officers is directly tied to how they use force. Women have to work harder to be taken serious as physically competent than their male colleagues. In these examples, the female recruit was able to successfully execute the skills on the first try. Since she was able to get the job done swiftly and accurately, the female recruit was able to avoid censoring from the trainers. This counters previous research that depicts female COs as less physically capable to successfully do the security role of COs and to manage emergency situations with force (Hemmens et al. 2002; Burdett et al. 2018; Jurik 1985; Farnworth 1992; Britton 2003). Female recruits regularly demonstrated that they were just as capable to using force as the male recruits. In fact, they often were more proficient at use of force skills such as nerve motor stuns and pain sensitive areas. Moreover, by witnessing their partners being disciplined for expressing emotion, women also learn that expressing emotion during training is not socially acceptable and will be sanctioned by the trainers.

Beyond highlighting the gendered interplay between male and female recruits, these examples provide a deeper lesson about how COs are expected to regard the welfare of the prisoners they manage. In both cases, when male recruits expressed empathy for the perceived suffering of their female partners they were verbally sanctioned by the trainers. These examples highlight how recruits are taught to view prisoners as unworthy of compassion and care. A competent CO keeps his or her emotions in check. Expressing emotion, in this case empathy and concern, is viewed as a weakness. Since COs must retain their position of power relative to prisoners, these examples highlight that this can only be accomplished when the CO distances him/herself from the potential consequence of using
force. Any time physical force is used to control and restrain prisoners, the possibility of harm exists. These two examples are important knowledge production lessons for recruits. The underlying message learned from these two incidents is that prisoners deserve pain and that COs should not care that they inflict pain.

3.4 Gendered Competency

3.4.1 Get “Switched On”: Competent COs Must Be Tough and Aggressive

Once the fundamental use of force skills are rehearsed and perfected, recruits are exposed to dynamic drills that test how well they have internalized the force skills. These drills, much like the scenarios I will discuss in the next chapter, have varying degrees of disorganization and danger that the recruits are expected to manage. These live action drills are designed to give recruits the opportunity to show that they are tough, that they can secure the scene and gain control over prisoners, and that they can manage their emotions under stressful situations. These drills work to reinforce a masculinized depiction of COs and the way that recruits were evaluated during drills revealed a gendered process of regulation where male and female recruits are differentially sanctioned for failing to display a masculine presentation of self.

During one drill, recruits were required to enter a makeshift boxing ring in full boxing gear to punch one of the training sergeants as hard as they could for 2 minutes straight (Field Notes June 2, 2014). If the trainer perceived recruits were slowing down or losing power in their strikes, the recruit would be struck by the trainer. After the first five recruits (all male) completed the drill, one of the male sergeants gathered the whole class in the hallway to ridicule the male recruits for giving up. He told the class that if a prisoner was attacking them, they could just give up after 15 seconds because they were tired. Once the entire class had completed the drill, they were assembled for a debriefing session. During the debriefing, the lead trainer remarked at how well the female recruits had accomplished this
drill. No woman gave up or was forced to stop because they became physically unwell. He noted that the men struggled to keep boxing for the 2 minutes and that they should be embarrassed that the women did better than they did.

This was a common strategy used by trainers to hold male recruits accountable for not adequately displaying their masculinity during drills. Trainers used public shaming to remind men that they were expected to display an image of toughness and tenaciousness that matched or surpassed what women could be expected to accomplish. Being tough was equated with being competent. Training sergeants repeatedly reminded all recruits that they were being evaluated on their ability to manage volatile situations from a position of strength. COs do not give up in the face of adversity. Toughness was a required trait for people who work in jails because COs must be tougher than the prisoners. Prisoners must be reminded that COs occupy a position of power that is predicated on their ability to use physical force to keep prisoners under control.

However, despite being praised for outperforming the men on some drills, women were often scolded for not using enough force. For instance, one pair of recruits (1 male and 1 female in this case) was summoned to the gym to remove 2 prisoners from the ‘yard’ so that they would be locked up for the day. The recruits entered the ‘yard’ and proceeded to order the prisoners to lock up. The prisoners ignored the orders. The recruits approached the prisoners and attempted to restrain the pair with handcuffs. One prisoner grabbed the female partner’s handcuffs and began to run around the gym. She began to run after him demanding that he give her back the handcuffs. As she was pursuing one prisoner, the male partner struggled restrain the second prisoner. Eventually, the female partner was able to restrain the prisoner on the ground by using aggressive nerve motor stuns, punches, and kicks in response to the prisoner’s attacks on her.

During the debriefing session the trainers commented on what a ‘shit show’ that this episode was (Field Notes July 10, 2014). They commented to the female recruit that she needed to get her head sorted out faster. They scolded her for her lack of aggression at the beginning of the scenario. She responded by saying “This is new to me. I don’t use violence to solve my problems.” A male trainer replied, “You do in this environment!” The trainer went on to
remind the recruits not to waste time chasing prisoners. They need to get the situation resolved as quickly as possible. The trainer noted that at the end of the drill the female recruit finally got “switched on” and displayed the kind of aggression that he expected of her during the drill. The trainer commented that he had been waiting for 8 weeks for her to get aggressive. He also stated that he had serious doubt about whether she would be a good officer because she was not aggressive enough. He did praise her for displaying the level of violence that she did at the end of the drill, but he warned her that she would have to maintain this level of aggressiveness for the remainder of the program if she wanted to graduate (Field Notes July 10, 2014).

This example highlights the prominent position that masculine traits, such as aggressiveness, play in how COs are expected to manage prisoners. The training is designed to condition recruits to be able to readily use violence to resolve conflicts with prisoners. Being aggressive in the face of prisoner disobedience is not only reinforced during training as appropriate, it is also a gendered behavioural orientation that requires women to internalize a masculine subject position. In this case, the female recruit was disciplined by a male trainer for not displaying the kind of character necessary to be successful in corrections. Success as a CO requires the automatic use of physical force when verbal orders fail to get compliance. In this case, she was not accomplishing the masculine depiction of the CO that the trainers were expecting her to have achieved earlier in the term. The fact that her competency and fit for the job was up for debate suggests that female recruits who either chose not to adopt an aggressive posture or who are unable to respond to prisoner disobedience with force are not considered capable of managing the challenges of being a CO.

This finding is in direct contrast to research that finds that COs are often more successful at getting compliance from prisoners when they use respectful verbal de-escalation skills over force (Liebling 2011; Ricciardelli and Perry 2016). Scholars have found that when prison officers conceptualize their power as solely based on coercion and intimidation, that they are met with more resistant behaviour from prisoners (Hepburn 1985; Haney 2008; Ricciardelli and Perry 2016). The structure of this training program and the association between competence and force leaves new COs expecting that using force is the only way that they can be considered a competent CO. Given that COs are expected to disregard or not be
attuned to the potential harms and trauma they may create by using force, aggressiveness and violence become essential to how COs deal with prisoner behaviour. This creates what Haney (2008) refers to as a culture of harm. The pains of imprisonment for prisoners are exacerbated when prisoner behaviour is supposed to be managed with force. CO training teaches recruits that physical control is an acceptable and a normal part of doing the business of corrections.

The training program also creates a sense of bravado among new COs by socializing recruits that toughness is a valued characteristics of competent COs. However, this reliance on naturalizing force as a sign of strength for COs contrasts how COs actually do their job. COs that I interviewed routinely note that the using physical forms of control are actually rare events. Most officers do not use physical force to deal with prisoner misconduct. They explain that verbal de-escalation is by for the most commonly used mode of behaviour management in provincial jails. Officers working in the field suggest that the training program does a disservice to new COs because it focuses on force over interpersonal communication skills. They argue that knowing how to use force is necessary, but the training does not adequately prepare new COs for the reality of their jobs. In the field, a competent CO is actually one who does not have to rely on physical force to get prisoners to comply. However, new officers come back to work with what one officer referred to as the “Rambo mentality” (Interview Transcript CO 0022W2R). He explains that new COs return from training with the expectation that they will be fighting with prisoners on a regular bases. Interviewees argue that this creates an aura of arrogance that cannot be sustained over time. Prisoners do not respond well to physical force. New COs learned on the job that aggressiveness makes their job more stressful and dangerous than it needs to be. Some interviewees suggest that the rise in violence experienced by COs in prisons is in part attributed to how prison officers are trained.
3.4.2 Get It Together and Stop “Carrying On”: Displaying Competence Through Emotional Regulation

The OC spray drill is by far the most important drill that recruits participate in. It represents a fundamental moment where the internalization of a masculinized subjectivity is clearly on display. The drill is traumatic by design. It requires that recruits be able to endure the intense pain from the pepper spray, while also demonstrating the presence of mind to successfully complete a challenging obstacle course, which included many of the use of force skills, before they could decontaminate (Field Notes June 11, 2014). This drill is designed to test how well recruits can demonstrate their toughness and perseverance, but more importantly, it reinforces that emotional regulation is also an essential characteristic of competent COs.

The experience is painful and trainers expect that recruits will have a visceral reaction to the pain. During the drill, the trainers document how well recruits can contain their displays of emotion. Showing too much emotion, such as crying in hysterics or being overly angry and aggressive were considered problematic by the training staff. This was particularly the case for male recruits. After the training was complete, I discussed the drill with the main trainers. The trainers commented on how poorly some of the male recruits handled the effects of the spray. They noted that one male recruit was crying and "carrying on" so baldly that the trainer was unsure if he would be able to complete the obstacle course. They said they had to make some modifications to the obstacle course so that he could complete it. The trainers noted that this recruit’s reaction was overly emotional and dramatic, which casted doubt on whether he was suitable to carry and use OC spray in jails. The recruit’s behaviour was recorded in his file and was used to determine whether he would successfully complete the program. They also reported his behaviour to the head of his home institution to ensure that his boss knew that he had difficulty managing stressful situations.

Expressing too much emotion is viewed as an important safety risk that must be eliminated before recruits return to work. The trainers equated emotionality with a lack of professionalism. COs are expected to stay calm and not to let their emotions cloud their judgment. The ability of this recruit to fit into the culture of corrections required him to
regulate his emotions better. Therefore, this connection between over-emotionality and concerns about a recruit’s competence is gendered. Only male recruits had their competence questioned when they expressed emotion. In fact, the trainers publically commented on how impressed they were that the women were able to manage OC spray day better than the men. This counters the common perception that women are emotional by nature (Jurik 1985; Jurik 1988).

The image of the emotionally reserved CO was challenged during the decontamination process. Not only was decontamination the only time that recruits were not monitored by the trainers, but it was also a rare opportunity for men to express emotion and accomplish masculinity differently (Messerschmidt 1993; Ricciardelli, Maier, and Hannah-Moffat 2015). During the decontamination process, male recruits displayed more visible signs of discomfort than the female recruits. Female recruits displayed more hegemonic expressions of masculinity during this drill because they rarely yelled in pain, had fewer incidents of uncontrollable crying, and generally took less time to decontaminate and recover than their male counterparts. In fact, one trainer commented that the female recruits were much “tougher than the boys” (Field Notes June 11, 2014).

There is some evidence in the policing literature that suggests women are better able to accomplish their role as a police officer than men because they can manage the emotional labour aspects of the job (Martin 1999). Emotional labour is defined as the way people manage their feelings so that they can elicit a desired response from another person. In the case of police work, emotional labour requires that officers express the appropriate type and intensity of emotion in order to get cooperation from the general public (Hochschild 1983; Guy, Newman, and Mastracci 2008). Female police officers are able to keep calm during calls, while male officers struggle to keep their emotions under control. Martin (1999) argues that in the context of policing, women can modulate their emotions under stress better than men because they are less likely to be engage in violent confrontations with suspects and they are much better at using verbal de-escalation tactics (Alpert and Dunham 1997). Researchers suggest that since female police officers are more adept at controlling their emotions, they are also less likely to have to use physical force while on patrol (Martin 1999; Rabe-Hemp and Schuck 2007; Schuck and Rabe-Hemp 2007).
Despite the rhetoric of toughness and machismo that is promoted throughout the program, the OC spray drill provided recruits an opportunity to express empathy and compassion. This was particularly relevant to male recruits. Within policing, women are often considered more emotionally sensitive than men and tend to gravitate toward caring behaviours over aggressiveness (Schuck 2014). It was not surprising that female recruits displayed acts of kindness and caring during the decontamination phase of the drill. Unlike the findings from the policing literature, male recruits in this study were also capable and readily displayed caring behaviours. For instance, male recruits not only verbally reassured their partners that everything would be fine, but they also comforted each by putting their arms around a distressed recruit’s shoulders. These acts of caring are in sharp contrast with the expectation that COs and police officers must be emotionally reserved (Farkas and Manning 1997; Martin 1999). These displays of compassion provided male recruits an opportunity to accomplish masculinity in ways that counter the dominance of hegemonic masculinity (Ricciardelli et al. 2015; Messerschmidt 1993; West and Zimmerman 1987) without being sanctioned by the training staff.

Beyond how male and female officers reacted to OC spray, OC spray day was an important knowledge production exercise for the training staff. All trainers monitor, documented, and evaluated a recruit’s performance on this drill as evidence of whether or not the recruit was a good fit for the job. The drill required displays of toughness and perseverance, but it also required recruits to self-monitor their expression of emotion. Interestingly, OC spray day was the only drill that was video-recorded during the training program. Video clips of the drill were compiled and shown during the graduation ceremony (Field Notes July 18, 2014). This video primarily showed male recruits crying and wincing in pain and only included the most dramatic and outrageous behaviour of the recruits. This was intended to have two primary purposes. On one hand, since the OC spray drill was designed as a tool to help new COs demonstrate their toughness, the video evidence was shown during the graduation ceremony to publically validate that the recruit class was in fact strong enough to effectively manage prisons.

On the other hand, the public nature of the OC video also worked as a tool of ridicule that was designed to remind COs that their moments of weaknesses are worthy of public
embarrassment. This hidden lesson was directed at male recruits because they were disproportionately represented in the video. Doing gender scholars argue that there is a measure of accountability involved with accomplishing gendered actions (Lorber 1994). To be taken seriously as male or female, individuals are responsible for ensuring that they adequately "pass" as that gender. In the case of the OC spray video, recruits are also being held accountable for their actions. These depictions of recruits highlight the ways in which mainly male recruits fail to accomplish the masculinized subjectivity that the program is designed to produce. There was noticeable expression of laughter in the audience while the video was played at graduation and in the classroom the day before. During this pre-graduation viewing, the training staff appeared to take pleasure in exposing the clumsy, emotional, and somewhat bizarre behavior displayed by recruits during the OC event. The trainers described how male recruits screamed and cried like "little girls" and how some failed to use proper use of force techniques during the pre-decontamination obstacle course (Field Notes July 17, 2017). By having the OC spray experience made public, recruits are being responsibilized for not passing as a CO (Rose 2000).

3.5 Showing Competency on Examinations

The ability of recruits to show that they mastered the use of force skills was on display during evaluations. Up to this point, this chapter has primarily focused on the one the spot informal evaluations that trainers use to correct improper technique and to reinforce masculinized traits and attributes. These informal evaluations provided trainers with vital knowledge about the recruit’s perceived competence. Formal evaluations also occurred throughout the training program. Recruits wrote a number of written examinations designed to display their knowledge of the theory and principles behind their power to use force, how to evaluate prisoner requests, and the legalities of their job. Recruits were required to achieve a grade of 80 percent or higher to pass these exams. This generally was not an issue for most recruits because the written exams were primarily memorization in design. If a recruit failed the exam, they were given a chance to re-write. If they failed a subsequent attempt, they were removed from the program. Failing a written examination was a clear indication
that the recruit was not suitable for the training program, which implicitly meant they were not competent to be a CO.  

Other than written exams, recruits also had a formal practical examination for the use of force skills that they learned throughout the course. During the exam, the trainers evaluated the recruits on whether they performed a task in the correct sequence with the correct form. Each task was given a point value based on quality of execution. Recruits were also required to get a score of 80 percent or higher to pass the practical examination. Despite the fact that the officers I interviewed regularly noted that interpersonal communication is the most important skillset that COs use to get prisoners to comply, recruits did not have any practical examination that evaluated how well they can communicate with prisoners or how they can use verbal de-escalation skills. The practical exam was strictly designed to test use of force skills.

No recruit failed the final practical examination; however, it was clear that some recruits still struggled to master the use of force fundamentals. During the test, recruits could observe how their classmates were doing during on the test. Some recruits verbally questioned whether at least one of the male recruits should pass the practical exam. They noted during private conversations that this recruit clearly had "no clue" what he was doing (Field Notes July 1, 2014). They mentioned that they worried what will happen when this recruit went back to work. Much like the example earlier in this chapter, these recruits also commented that they would have a hard time being partnered with this person because they questioned his competence at the use of force skills. Recruits noted that they would rather have a female partner who was good at use of force techniques, than a male partner was considered "useless" (Field Notes July 1, 2014). This contradicts previous research that finds that male COs prefer not to be paired with women during emergency situations because they are not strong enough to use force effectively (Farnworth 1992; Newbold 2005).

4 Only one recruit failed a written exam twice. This recruit was removed from the training program and sent back to his home jail to continue working until another training spot opened up.
3.6 Conclusion

This chapter examined the strategies used during CO training to normalize and naturalize the use of force as a vital skill that all competent COs must master. Situated within a masculinized disciplinary environment, the CO training academy represents the most important agent of socialization for producing COs capable of handling the working conditions of provincial jails. In this chapter, I have argued that the training regime is designed to produce security and control-focused COs. This is accomplished by elevating the use of physical force as the primary indicator of CO competence.

I argued that CO training is similar in structure to ballet training. The use of force training incorporates the principle of successive segmentation in order to help facilitate efficient training of use of force skills (Foucault 1995). Each use of force skills is divided into its component parts, which recruits must master before moving onto more difficult skills. The use of repetition and practice is designed to help recruits internalize the skills so that they become automatic responses to prisoner disruptions. Foucault (1995) argued that the means of "correct training" within disciplinary societies requires bodies be exercised so that they are efficient. This is accomplished during the use of force training sessions by creating a space where all recruits are visible, monitored, and corrected by the training staff.

In order for COs to be able to keep prisons safe and secure, the training program promotes a masculinized image of COs, which is geared toward displaying toughness and emotional stoicism. To "be" a CO, as I have argued, means that all recruits, regardless of their gender identity, must accomplish masculinity during their training program. I have suggested in this chapter that “doing” masculinity is a proxy for “doing” CO work. As Messerschmidt (1993) and West and Zimmerman (1987) argue, doing gender is a socially situated form of action that is context dependent. The ability of recruits to accomplish a masculinized presentation of self is structured by the social context of the use of force modules. The extent with which COs internalize this masculinize subjectivity as their master orientation is unknown. What is clear from how the use of force training is designed is that successful completion of training and earning the title of a certified CO requires recruits to adopt and express a masculinized behavioural orientation while they are in training.
In this chapter, I have argued that there was a gendered sanctioning structure implemented during the training. Male recruits are regularly sanctioned for expressing emotion, be that empathy and concern toward their female partner or by over-emoting during the OC spray drill. In both cases, the emotional expression of male recruits is used as evidence by the training staff that the recruit may not be a good fit for the job. The job of the CO is to get prisoners to comply. If compliance is only possible through the use of physical force, recruits are taught they should not feel badly that they have inflicted pain on a prisoner. This works to desensitize COs to the harm and trauma that prisoners may experience when they are subjected to physical force.

Women are also sanctioned for not displaying the type of gendered subjectivity promoted by the training academy. In this case, women are sanctioned for not displaying enough aggression and toughness during use of force drills. Female recruits have to display their toughness even more overtly than their male colleagues in order to avoid being disciplined by the trainers. The fact that both male and female recruits were scolded for not complying with the gendered expectations by male trainers alone is an important consideration in the context of CO training. There were female trainers involved in the use of force training, but only male trainers sanctioned recruits for signs of gendered non-conformity. Male trainers, all of whom work in provincial jails and were trained at the same academy, have a vested interest in ensuring that recruits were properly socialized to "be" COs. Since they work in the jails that recruits will return to, they want to make sure that new COs are just as skilled as they are to keep prisons safe. To be properly socialized and trained as a CO, recruits must learn to internalize a masculine orientation where toughness and emotional stoicisim are required.

This chapter examines the role that the structure and content of CO training has on the production of a security and control orientation among new COs. The official curriculum provides recruits with the skills and abilities deemed necessary to effectively do their security duties in the jails. However, the structure of the use of force training also produces a number of important implicit lessons that continue to reinforce a social division between prisoners and COs. The use of physical forms of control is arguably one of the most punitive powers COs possess. It requires COs to be willing and able to inflict some measure of pain
in order to make prisoners comply. Among the most salient lesson learned is that COs must disassociate their actions from the impact that it may have on prisoners. CO training socialized new COs to disregard the pain and suffering of prisoners because prisoners are positioned as subjects unworthy of empathy and kindness.

This dynamic creates a sense of intellectual toxicity among COs (Haney 2008). Haney (2008) argues that intellectual toxicity is predicated on a profound ignorance among COs that their actions matter. Prison officers, as I discussed in the previous chapter, are trained to see prisoners as risk subjects that must be contained, rather than human beings who happened to be confined. By socializing officers to be instrumental in their actions, meaning using force without a regard for the effects, new COs come out of training without an appreciation that they may actually be the reason why prisoners misbehave in the first place. By promoting force over interpersonal communication, CO training produces officers who anticipate that they will have to use force to control prisoners and, thus, making the use of force their default management style. This functionally delegitimizes feminized skills such as interpersonal communication in favour of physical control. Researchers have suggested that there is a vicious cycle of violent aggression that is produced in penal environments where prisoners are routinely subjected to use of force incidents. Prisoners expect that COs will respond in aggressive ways, which increases the level of aggression that prisoners project back onto COs (Kupers 2006; Hannah-Moffat and Klassen 2015). In this sense, violence begets violence. The disregard for the suffering of prisoners and the normalization of the use of force during training may actually create an ecology of toxicity that exacerbates the pains of imprisonment (Sykes 1958) and produces the behaviours that COs are trying to stop when they use force (Haney 2008).
Chapter 4
“Authorize, Justify, and Excuse”: Accountability and the Escalation of Force

4.1 Introduction

Prisons are coercive organizations designed to tightly control and monitor prisoner behaviour (Griffin 1999; Drake 2012). The preoccupation with security measures, including CCTV cameras, physical and chemical restraints, and the regimented organization of daily activities support austere living conditions promotes repressive penal practices and maintains the power differential between prisoners and frontline staff (Drake 2012; Haney 2006; Haney 2008). Penal security depends upon how well COs can ensure prisoners comply with institutional rules and regulations. Unfortunately, not all prisoners comply. In Chapter 2, I argued that prisoner non-compliance is positioned as antagonistic to COs in their training. Antagonistic behaviour varies in intensity and level of threat, but each action is evaluated through the lens of risk and dangerousness. In practice, COs maintain order by containing risky behaviour that, in their view, threatens the efficient running of the prison (Rose 2000). The use of physical control is normalized and naturalized during CO training as a legitimate and necessary response to risky behaviour (see Chapter 3).

The legitimacy of CO power is tied to how COs enforce prison rules (Wooldredge and Steiner 2016). Scholars argue that prisoners are more likely to comply with institutional rules when they are treated with respect and when COs are fair in their decision-making (Sykes 1958; Ricciardelli and Perry 2016). When principles of procedural justice are implemented into penal regimes, prisoners are more likely to see COs as respectful, fair, and considerate. In such prisons, prisoners display fewer incidents of non-compliant behaviour (Reisig and Mesko 2009). Huebner (2003) points to a distinct difference between coercive regimes that use physical sanctions to restrict prisoner behaviour and those using rewards and productive rehabilitation programming, such as educational and vocational training. When remunerative controls are used instead of coercion, prisoners are more likely to
comply. Positive interactions between COs and prisoners are found to reduce disruptions and incidents of violence (Harer and Steffensmeier 1996).

The extant literature on prisoner management suggests that an exclusive focus on punitive punishment increases misconduct and violence in prisons. For instance, Hepburn (1985) finds that when COs are more custody-focused and coercive, they are more likely to use punitive behaviour management strategies, including force. Research on the impact of coercive treatment finds higher rates of violent and non-violent misbehaviour, higher levels of psychological distress among prisoners, and more incidents of organized and collective forms of resistance (Hepburn 1985; Marquart 1986; Haney 2003; Haney 2006; Haney 2008; Ricciardelli and Sit 2016; Colvin 2007; DiIulio 1987; Useem and Kimball 1989; Day, Brauer, and Butler 2015). Prisoners also tend to retaliate more when rule enforcement is arbitrary and punitive (Hepburn 1985; Marquart 1986; Haney 2008; Haney 2009).

Hepburn (1985) suggests that coercive power is not effective in reducing misconduct when it is used regularly. This is not a new suggestion; 60 years ago, Sykes (1958) noted the limits of coercive tactics to produce compliant behaviour. He argued “the ability of the officials to physically coerce their captives into paths of compliance is something of an illusion as far as day-to-day activities of the prison are concerned” (Sykes 1958:49). Furthermore, he suggests that, “the use of force is actually grossly insufficient as a means of securing obedience” (Sykes 1958:49). Punitive control exacerbates the pains of imprisonment by subjecting prisoners to harsh and dehumanizing conditions of confinement, and this, in turn, results in more prisoner disobedience (Weill and Haney 2017; Haney 2008; Sykes 1958). When prisoners are non-compliant, security regimes turn to harsh conditions of confinement to maintain order (Drake 2012).

Despite research evidence suggesting that punitive strategies increase rather than decrease prisoner misconduct, CO training positions physical control tactics as not only legitimate, but also as reasonable mechanisms to reduce risk. This chapter builds on Chapter 3 by arguing that punitiveness is engrained in how COs are taught to escalate the intensity of the physical control strategies they use to manage prisoners. I argue that the line between verbal negotiation and physical force is very thin. Recruits are admonished for using less restrictive
methods because they are not resolving issues fast enough. CO training privileges physical forms of power to curb disruptive behaviour over other less restrictive tactics because physical control is seen as necessary to maintain secure prisons. I suggest that the reasonableness of physical force is not geared towards the moral justification of the action *per se*, but towards how well COs can document and apply force in camera-friendly ways. CO training teaches recruits that their power to control prisoners is linked to how they use force, and they can absolve themselves of responsibility by blaming the prisoners for the austerity of their treatment.

4.2 Prison Control and the Use of Force by Prison Officers

The use of physical control tactics is recognized as a hallmark feature of law enforcement practice (Garner, Schade, Hepburn, and Buchanan 1995; Garner, Maxwell, and Heraux 2002). Despite this recognition, the literature on policing and corrections does not provide a clear conceptualization of what constitutes force. Policing scholars often define force as the “exertion of power to compel or restrain the behaviour of others” (Kania and Mackey 1977:29) or as “acts that threaten or inflict harm on suspects” (Terrill 2003:56). This literature tends to focus on incidents of excessive or deadly force rather than non-lethal tactics by examining incidents in official police records (Terrill 2003; Klinger 1995) or citizen complaints of police abuse of power (Terrill 2003; McClusky and Terrill 2005). There is even less specification of force in the correctional literature. Investigations into COs’ use of force in Canada focus on prisoners’ and advocacy groups’ complaints of excessive force (Marin 2013). These literatures do very little to examine how force is taught and how officers are trained to assess risk as the pretext for force. This chapter extends this conceptual literature by examining how COs learn to apply escalating levels of physical control to curb disruptive behaviour.
4.2.1 Conceptualizing Force as an Expression of Power

I conceptualize physical control techniques as expressions of power. COs use these strategies to maintain control, establish and/or re-establish order, or contain prisoner disobedience. They can include the use of pain sensitive areas (PSAs hereafter) and nerve motor stuns, handcuffing, grappling and ground fighting, OC spray, batons, and lethal force in extreme conditions. While the policing literature suggests force is harmful to suspects (Terrill 2003), CO training does not see force as purposefully harmful. Force is conceptualized as the justifiable use of pain to promote compliance. Momentary experiences of pain are not considered harmful if there are no visible injuries. This depiction of force fails to consider that any physical control can be harmful to prisoners even without visible signs of injury.

When COs decide to physically restrain prisoners or use chemical agents, they are solidifying their power to control prisoners. The power to use force is conferred onto COs by Canadian law. The Criminal Code of Canada (Government of Canada 1985) stipulates peace officers, both police and COs, can use as much force as necessary to stop injury or self harm, to defend oneself from harm, to quell impending riots, and to prevent property damage (see sections 27, 34, 32, 35 of the Criminal Code of Canada -- Government of Canada 1985). By conceptualizing control tactics as expression of power, this chapter provides a better understanding of the implications of how recruits are taught to escalate the type and intensity of force. This conceptual framing moves beyond the force/no force binary toward a broader discussion of the exercise of power and control.

Physical forms of power are designed to overwhelm antagonistic subjects so that COs can re-establish control. Recruits are taught specific techniques that act as an intermediary between verbal direction and more punitive actions, such as OC spray and baton strikes. PSAs and nerve motor stuns efficiently compel compliance by applying pain without causing noticeable injury. They apply a constant level of stimulation to selective nerves on the arms, neck, head, and back of prisoners to disorient them so they stop their disruptive behaviour (Provincial Training Manual 2014; Field Notes June 2, 2014; Field Notes June 5, 2014). PSAs are depicted as less restrictive modes of control that help COs achieve “goal reorientation,” essentially getting compliance through pain (Field Notes June 5, 2014). As I
will show later in this chapter, PSAs and nerve motor stuns figure prominently in how COs learn to apply restrictive forms of control while avoiding responsibility.

4.2.2 Perceptions of Risk Matter

The strategies and techniques recruits learn during training are situated within a risk averse social environment where COs conceptualize prisoner behaviour as a source of threat. The ability of officers to exert power over prisoners depends on how they interpret the prisoner conduct. Given that CO training is predicated on reinforcing an "us vs. them" dynamic, the perception of risk underscores the escalation of physical forms of control. The decision to escalate interventions from verbal warnings to physical control is based on how COs perceive the prisoners’ responses to their orders. These risk assessments are determined by how threatened COs feel. It is the CO’s job to assess the prisoner’s level of cooperation to determine what level of force is necessary to contain the behaviour. These assessments do not consider the structural conditions that may have influenced the behaviour in the first place (Hannah-Moffat 2016).

The continuum of threat and risk associated with antagonistic behaviour is mapped onto a continuum of perceived cooperation and danger. The perception of threat ushers in a series of increasingly coercive forms of power aimed at re-establishing order, gaining control, and reinforcing the power hierarchy. Officers evaluate the way prisoners are posturing, speaking, and interacting with each other. These assessments provide insight into the possibility of an impending problem and the associated levels of risk. For example, if a prisoner is clenching his/her fists, puffing his/her chest, looking around nervously, and displaying rapid eye movements, officers interpret these as signs that the prisoner is agitated and may become disruptive. A prisoner’s non-verbal forms of communication are described as threat cues that COs must constantly monitor (Field Notes May 20, 2014). None of these behaviours are specifically aggressive, but they are positioned as signs of the prisoner’s aggressive tendency. They form a summative risk assessment that is designed to align the CO’s
response to the behaviour displayed. It is the responsibility of the CO to identify these precursors to disruptions before they manifest in physical confrontations.

The more threatening the behaviour seems to be, the more punitive the response is supposed to be. The use of force training is premised on the progressive escalation of the amount of physical control that is justifiable given the category assigned to the particular behaviour. Prisoners who refuse to comply with orders and continue to engage in disruptive behaviour require increasing levels of severity until they comply. COs are socialized to expect violence as a commonplace feature of jails and to consider force as the only obvious way to manage antagonistic behaviour (Ricciardelli and Gazso 2013). The threat and actual use of physical expressions of power are required to manage prisoners effectively and to keep units safe. This unquestioning acceptance of physical control strategies reinforces the dangerousness of penal spaces and ignores the possible consequences of these types of management techniques (Weill and Haney 2017; Haney 2008).

4.3 Reducing Risk Through Physical Manifestations of Power

Prisoner behaviour is depicted along a continuum from cooperative to grievous bodily harm (GBH) (see Figure 1). As the level of antagonism/disobedience increases, so too does the level of control that officers can legally use. Passive resisters, for instance, simply refuse to comply with an order. They do nothing to physically resist or cause harm. In this case, COs could not use OC spray (an intermediate weapon) because it is considered a higher level of force than is warranted by the behaviour of the prisoner. Active resisters take actions that try to mitigate the physical control of officers. This could include holding onto cell bars or attempting to run away. Assaulitive prisoners are those who purposely try to evade being restrained by attempting to assault the officer. Prisoners who use weapons are considered to engage in grievous bodily harm, not in the reciprocal use of force. Their actions have the potential to kill the officer or another prisoner (Provincial Training Manual 2014). In this case, COs can use lethal force to preserve life.
When prisoners are disruptive, COs are expected to begin all interactions with verbal directions. However, the amount of training devoted to verbal direction is limited. Recruits only get 10 hours of instruction on interpersonal communication. These 10 hours focus on how to evaluate prisoner requests for authenticity and legitimacy, not how to communicate with prisoners. In fact, the lead trainer stated, “Interpersonal communication has nothing to do with learning how to speak to prisoners” (Field Notes May 29, 2014:1). It is clear by looking at the distribution of training time that the priority is on teaching the mechanics and application of physical expressions of power; less corporal management techniques are much less important.

Verbal direction is not a request; rather, it is an order designed to enforce status and rank differentials between officers and prisoners. Verbal directions are direct, authoritarian in tone, and assertive in content. Prisoners are expected to comply and are warned that they will be subjected to more coercive responses if they fail to do so. These warnings are key responsibilization tools used by COs to hold prisoners accountable for force incidents (Rose 2000). It is the prisoner and the prisoner alone who determines whether COs will use force. Failing to comply is a reasonable justification for initiating physical control tactics. This reduces the COs’ responsibility for the amount of force they use, because it positions the prisoner as deserving the treatment (Haney 2008; Weill and Haney 2017).
The line between verbal orders and hard forms of physical control is often blurred. Throughout the training program, it is assumed that recruits know how to evaluate the riskiness of a situation, how to articulate what they want prisoners to do to redirect misbehaviour, and importantly, and how to move toward physical control tactics to regain control of disruptive prisoners. Unfortunately, these skills are not innate. The training program does not focus on how to determine risk apart from the level of threat COs perceive in a behaviour. They are not given specific training on how to use verbal de-escalation techniques when prisoners are disruptive beyond telling them to stop and “get back.” No role-playing or scenario training is specifically geared toward verbal de-escalation beyond the use of an assertive and aggressive tone when demanding prisoners stop what they are doing. As I discuss below, knowing when to talk and when to exert physical power is not clear for new recruits.

4.4 Managing Dynamic Conditions: CO Scenario Training

Throughout the training program, recruits participate in a variety of live action scenarios that correspond to a particular set of use of force principles they have been practicing. The week of scenario training at the end of the program is designed to place recruits in unpredictable and volatile situations to assess whether they have the capacity to evaluate risk and use the appropriate type and amount of physical control to contain it. Recruits are given little to no instruction about each scenario so that the trainers can evaluate the quality of the recruits’ decision-making. The ability of a recruit to complete a scenario successfully often requires some use of physical control to stop prisoner antagonism.

Not all interactions between COs and prisoners end in force. At times during scenario training, assertive, calm, and directed verbal orders get uncooperative prisoners to comply. For example, a pair of recruits was told that a prisoner had to be moved to another unit as a safety precaution (Field Notes July 10, 2014). Upon entering the room, the recruits found a woman sitting on a chair. The female recruit told the prisoner that she had to move to another unit. The prisoner said she did not want to go. The recruit told her that this was not
negotiable, and it was not safe for her on that unit. The prisoner said she could not go because she did not know what was going to happen to her things and canteen rations. The female recruit told the prisoner that she would personally pack up the belongings and transfer the canteen account to the new unit. At that point, the prisoner stood up, and the two recruits escorted her out the door without incident (Field Notes July 10, 2014).

Once the scenario was complete, the recruits and trainers gathered to discuss what had transpired. These debriefing sessions are important knowledge production events because they provide feedback about what has gone well and what needs improvement. They are designed to help recruits understand the decisions they make and how to make better ones in the future. In this instance, the recruits were informed that the scenario was designed to test the recruits’ ability to use verbal commands to control a potentially volatile situation (Field Notes July 10, 2014). If the recruits had barged into the room and barked orders at the “prisoner,” the role player was instructed to engage in a physical confrontation. Even though the environment of this situation suggested that physical control might be necessary because the role player was wearing a padded suit, the use of calm and assertive verbal commands promoted compliance.

The presence of a woman caught the recruits by surprise because the training and lectures on prisoner management focused on male prisoners. There was no distinction made between male and female prisoners during the program, and recruits were not given any specific training on managing women. In fact, female prisoners were never mentioned. This gave the impression that the control strategies were applicable to all prisoners, regardless of gender. This homogenization of prisoners decontextualized their behaviour and gave recruits no understanding of the unique needs of women or how to manage female prisoners who do not comply with verbal orders.

This scenario was particularly disorientating for the male recruit. He initially paused as he entered the room because he was surprised to see a woman. He deferred to his female partner, not because she was more capable of taking a leadership role, but because she was a woman. He assumed that his female partner was able to deal with a female prisoner because women know how to manage women. This finding supports previous research on female
incarceration in Canada (Hannah-Moffat 2001). The idea that women know how to manage other women is promoted by advocacy groups looking for the development of female-centred prisons in Canada (Hannah-Moffat 2001).

4.4.1 Talk is Cheap: “Figure It Out!”

Despite the recognition that verbal communication is an important part of a CO’s job, one of the unfortunate aspects of scenario training is that there are very few opportunities for officers to resolve situations with verbal direction alone. During some scenarios, recruits were chastised for talking too long to prisoners and not using physical forms of control fast enough. For example, during one scenario, a pair of recruits approached a bedroom in the dormitory that was intended to simulate a jail cell. Much like the scenario discussed above, there was a female prisoner sitting on the bed. The male recruit walked up to the prisoner and told her that she was being transferred. She said she did not want to go. He told her that this was not up for debate and she had to pack her bag. She became argumentative and said she refused to go because she was pregnant and needed to see a psychologist. The female partner responded by saying “I’m sure this is hard for you if you are pregnant, but I will make sure you get referred to psychology as soon as you arrive at your new place.”

At that moment, the training staff called the scenario to a halt. The sergeant told the team to “figure it out” because talking to her was not going to get her to move (Field Notes July 9, 2014:12). The pair re-entered the room and the female recruit tried to distract the prisoner as her partner attempted to restrain the prisoner on the bed. As soon as the male recruit touched the prisoner, she began to physically resist. The male recruit flung her onto the floor and the female recruit helped to restrain her in handcuffs. Once the handcuffs were secured, the prisoner was escorted out of the room and the scenario was over.

In the debriefing session, the training staff said the pair took too long “chatting up the offender” before using physical control strategies (Field Notes July 9, 2014:13). This was somewhat confusing for the recruits because they had just participated in a scenario where verbal orders were deemed appropriate. In this case, they began the scenario with the same
calm and assertive direction and yet the outcome was very different. In this instance, recruits were told that COs do not have time to negotiate with prisoners. Speaking too much was positioned as a sign of weakness; COs who waste time talking, the trainers said, are ineffective and complicit in security breaches in prisons. Recruits were told that prisoners should never be given the chance to usurp power. Negotiating rather than physically restraining prisoners was described as an opportunity for prisoners to compromise a CO’s security role. Recruits were admonished for not being tough and aggressive enough in the face of prisoner disobedience.

This scenario told the recruits that force is not only preferable over verbal negotiation, but it is essential for the speedy resolution of conflicts. This is not backed up by the literature. Studies find that when COs take the time to talk to prisoners respectfully prisoners are more likely to comply (Ricciardelli and Perry 2016). It is conceivable that in this scenario, the prisoner had legitimate concerns that needed to be addressed. However, telling recruits to stop talking and to “figure it out” delegitimized her concerns and taught recruits that their main role was to control not care for prisoners. Efficiency and expediency privileges punitive and restrictive tactics over less painful options.

An interesting feature of this scenario was the characterization of the prisoner as pregnant. The training program is specifically focused on the identification and management of male bodies and the kinds of disruptive behaviours common among male prisoners. It is not unreasonable to assume that when working with a pregnant woman, officers would try to use the least amount of force necessary. The two recruits made every attempt to be respectful and empathetic because part of a CO’s job is treating prisoners with care. This requires a commitment to using the least restrictive mode of control to achieve the desired level of compliance when possible. In this case, the recruits opted to take longer to negotiate compliance before using force because the level of risk associated with this subject was low.

By privileging force over care, the instructors reinforced the masculinized image of COs central to this training program. As I argued in Chapter 3, competent officers use force to fulfill their security duties. COs are also expected to present an emotionally muted self to bolster their persona of toughness. In this scenario, the recruits were displaying compassion
and empathy toward a pregnant woman. The training program did not support this. Social status differences, such as gender, are not supposed to factor into how COs resolve conflicts because prisoners are seen as androgenized and homogenized collection of risk subjects. Recruits are taught to ignore the concerns of prisoners because they restrict the expeditious resolution of incidents.

The depiction of this prisoner as pregnant was a test to see if the recruits could see the prisoner as primarily a security risk who required physical control, rather than a pregnant woman. The fact that the recruits subsequently wrestled the subject to the ground shows COs are taught to use more restrictive forms of power to reduce risk. In this case, tackling her was deemed necessary and less risky than letting her continue to be disobedient.

The fact that the training staff told the new officers to “figure it out” strongly suggests physical control is preferable over non-violent forms of control. In fact, “fix it” or “figure it out” are common phrases used by training staff to encourage officers to find a solution to re-establish control. Officers are expected to “fix it” to eliminate threats quickly and without hesitation. By admonishing the recruits for talking too much in this scenario, the trainers reinforced the importance of physical control as the appropriate means of behaviour management, regardless of the condition of the prisoner. It also works to limit the ability of COs to humanize prisoners by taking their circumstance into consideration when considering any form of control (Haney 2008).

Knowing when to talk and when to use force is not well defined for officers. This scenario provided an important risk management lesson. It taught recruits that talk is cheap, and security requires force. Deciding between verbal orders and physical force is episodic, however, and recruits were often unsure how to respond (Field Notes July 9-11 2014). This confusion limits their confidence to use verbal communication and positions negotiation as simply a prelude to force. It entrenches the punitive nature of provincial prisons by requiring recruits to escalate the amount of force they use without considering how this may impact the prisoner’s experience of penal power as coercive and punitive. The lesson learned is the following: good and orderly prisons require physical force to be used quickly, and good COs use physical force to establish and maintain order.
4.5 Reinforcing Penal Risk Through Exposure to Violent Scenarios

During the training recruits engaged in intense and violent scenarios. These often seemed unlikely but were positioned as opportunities for recruits to demonstrate their toughness vis-à-vis prisoners. Most scenarios required the deployment of physical control, but one instance stood out because of the intensity of the violence used by recruits and “prisoners.” A pair of recruits was called up to the field house to do a cell check. As the recruits approached a mock jail cell, they observed a prisoner stomping on the head\(^5\) of the other prisoner. The male partner demanded that the prisoner stop. He did not comply. The male recruit deployed OC spray twice, to no avail. The recruits entered the cell and attempted to physically restrain the assailant. The male partner engaged in a physical altercation with the prisoner, while the female recruit attempted to disentangle them. She used increasingly aggressive strategies to assert control by kicking, punching, and striking the prisoner. Eventually she was able to get the prisoner off her partner. The pair handcuffed him and escorted him out of the cell. The recruits administered CPR to the injured prisoner, and the scenario was stopped (Field Notes July 9, 2014).

In the debriefing session, the lead trainer mentioned that in a GBH situation, such as this one, COs can “go to town on these guys. It’s like Christmas with no rules on conduct. You can use as much force as necessary to stop a prisoner from assaulting you or another inmate. You can use lethal force if need be. The key comes after the fact when you need to justify your actions” (Field Notes July 9, 2014: 6). The instructor further stated:

> These guys won’t know you mean business unless you meet them with high level of violent attacks. You will never get compliance until they endure pain. No amount of verbal warnings will stop them. They need to be put down with force. Use whatever you got because you have no chance against a 300-pound man, especially someone your size (referring to the female recruit). They will destroy you before you know it, if you are not aggressive (Field Notes July 9, 2014: 7).

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\(^5\) No actual person was being assaulted. The subject being stomped on was a boxing dummy, which simulates a person being struck.
GBH situations are the most serious and least frequent events in this jurisdiction. The violent nature of this scenario was designed to prepare officers for the eventuality that they may encounter such violence. This scenario was a stark reminder that COs have very few strategies to manage extreme forms of violence other than to use violence in response. In this case, the recruits had to react quickly because a prisoner’s life was in jeopardy. The amount of force used was reasonable and easily justified given the circumstances. However, even in this situation, recruits were criticized for not resolving it fast enough because they did not use the full range of tactics to stop the assault. The trainers specifically noted that they should have used their handcuff key to stab the prisoner in the eyes or neck because lethal force was justified. The trainers told the recruits that they could not be crippled with fear and must react to violent situations swiftly. Rather than advocating a think first and react second approach, the trainers wanted recruits to get a situation contained and then find a way to mitigate culpability later. By being told to “go to town” on these prisoners, the officers were, in effect, absolved of any responsibility for using force, and the amount of force was justified. They were being trained to use potentially lethal force when conditions are out of control, even though physical power is supposed to be expressed cautiously and with restraint.

This scenario was volatile, dangerous, and unpredictable on purpose. It was designed to develop confidence in the new officers that they could manage difficult events and survive the most dangerous interactions. As Ricciardelli and Gazso (2013) argue, violence is a common life experience that is both anticipated and manifest in Canadian provincial jails. The escalation of violence during the scenarios reinforces the inherent dangerousness of the job and primes officers to be fearful of the potential for violence when they return to their assigned institutions. The use of physical forms of power is viewed as a viable risk management strategy that positions the security of the CO over the risk associated with using force. By being presented with rare and less probable situations, recruits are left with the perception that the jail environment contains highly violent people who have the capacity to inflict serious bodily harm at any given moment. They are trained to view prisoners as obstacles to the smooth running of prisons. The scenario described above highlights the extent to which coercive power is justified in provincial jails (Hepburn 1985). But as Sykes
(1958) suggests, relying on force to control prisoners is doomed to fail. Coercion alone is insufficient to keep prisoners in their place in the long term.

4.6 Implementing Accountability For Physical Control Tactics

The use of physical forms of power cannot be arbitrary, overtly punitive, and without clear provocation. In CO training, physical expressions of power are positioned as unavoidable aspects of the job. Officers are taught to appreciate the power they have and to use it appropriately. The appropriateness of an action is closely tied to its perceived reasonableness. This means the officer must demonstrate that the level of physicality used to gain control over antagonistic prisoners is appropriate given the severity of the prisoner’s behaviour and the overall riskiness of the situation. This can lead to over-inflated assessments of risk because recruits are trained to be conservative in how they assess risk. That is, it is better to perceive behaviour as more serious than to underestimate it and not resolve the situation fast enough. Recruits learn to quickly escalate their use of physical force when they perceive a prisoner’s behaviour as risky – even though the behaviour might not really warrant it. This is also common in policing. Alpert and Dunham (2000) find police officers sometimes use slightly higher levels of force than the level of resistance by suspects requires.

4.6.1 The Reasonableness of Force: Documenting Disruptions to Justify Using Physical Forms of Power

Reasonableness is a quasi-legal concept. Actions are reasonable if they meet three main criteria: the officer was legally placed; the officer subjectively felt that the amount of force used was reasonable under the circumstances; and a reasonable person would think that the amount of force used was reasonable (Field Notes May 28, 2014; Provincial Training Manual 2014). The reasonableness standard presumes that the officer has objectively evaluated the level of threat without bias and another officer placed in the same situation
would also deem the use of force as legitimate (Klinger and Brunson 2009). Therefore, the reasonable use of force is intimately linked to how COs describe the prisoner’s behaviour as the precipitating cause. For COs, the task is always to “authorize, justify, and excuse” any acts of force (Legal Trainer, Field Notes May 23, 2014:5).

Justifying and excusing physical control is part of a CO’s duty when he/she is documenting use of force incidents. COs must show in writing what occurred in the incident, what mechanisms and strategies were used to get prisoner compliance before any physical interaction took place, and what events indicated the level of risk necessary to justify the action taken. Whenever physical forms of control are used, COs must fill out and submit a use of force report to their supervisor. This form contains a description of the incident, who was involved, and a chronology of events. It has a checklist of the subject categories of prisoners (cooperative, active resister, assaultive, grievous bodily harm) and the types of control used, including verbal redirection, holding techniques, stunning and distraction techniques, physical control, and OC spray initiation. It also includes whether an impact weapon (baton or stun gun) or spit net was used (Provincial Training Manual 2014 -- Control Tactics Report Form). Finally, the form indicates the perceived level of injury sustained by the prisoner and CO, the gender of the prisoner, whether the prisoner was armed, and the perceived mental condition of the prisoner at the time of the incident.

When OC spray is deployed, COs must also include an OC Spray Incident Form with their report (Provincial Training Manual 2014—OC Spray Incident Form). To avoid liability for using OC spray, COs must outline what took place, the strategies they used to promote compliance before the spray was deployed, and the mechanisms used to assist prisoners after the fact to decontaminate. This documentation also explains how long a prisoner was subjected to contamination and, importantly, what the prisoner was doing to provoke the deployment in the first place.

Trainers described these two forms as important mechanism of accountability and risk management. The reasonableness of force is tied to how COs explain what happened in writing. COs are told that the more comprehensive the narrative is, i.e., how well it
documents the prisoner’s responsibility for the incident, the less liability is likely to be a problem if the prisoner claims excessive force was used.

Physical forms of power were encouraged because they were less risky and illegitimate than the prisoner’s behaviour – that is, if it were properly documented. This type of documentation places the responsibility for severity of physical control tactics directly on the prisoner not the CO. As Hutter and Power (2005) argue, risk management in organizations centres on “identifying, measuring, and evaluating possible outcomes from natural and technological hazards” (p. 7). In this case, the deployment of physical control is the natural outcome of how COs identify the risk associated with a prisoner’s behaviour.

Documenting use of force incidents is one way that COs can show evidence of risk to justify their use of physical control strategies. COs are rarely questioned about their reasons for using a particular type of force. The use of force is expected and unquestioned. What is up for discussion is what happened during the incident from the CO’s perspective. This documentation privileges the CO’s account of the incident as the officially sanctioned narrative. It also reinforces the perception that prisoners are risky and dangerous (see Chapter 2) by providing a contextual backdrop for the CO’s right to use physical force. These forms are a type of knowledge production that works to create a written identity for the prisoner as difficult to manage. Prisoners who are involved in physical confrontations with staff become known within the institution because incidents are recorded in the prisoner’s institutional file. Once prisoners are involved in a use of force incident, they are depicted as even more risky than before and subjected to increased surveillance. This increases the probability that they will be engaged in additional use of force in the future.

4.6.2 Skirting Accountability for Physical Control Tactics By Using Surveillance Cameras

The implementation of CCTV security cameras has been lauded as a way to improve accountability and reduce disobedience. Scholars have argued that cameras are valuable tools to fight crime (Felson 1987), to improve school safety (Norris and Armstrong 1999), to
investigate police use of force, and to increase accountability and transparency of police practice (Headley, Guerette, and Shariati 2017; Ariel, Farrar, and Sutherland 2015; Gaub, Choate, Todak, Katz, and White 2016; Sandhu and Haggerty 2017; Brucato 2015; Sandhu 2015; Sandhu 2017; Stalcup and Hahn 2016). Given the variety of different social spaces where CCTV cameras are implemented, there is a general recognition that CCTV cameras have heightened the amount of surveillance present in society.

Correctional institutions have not escaped the gaze of the camera. Surveillance cameras are important tools to monitor prisoners’ behaviour (Allard, Wortley, and Stewart 2006; Allard, Wortley, and Stewart 2008) particularly in maximum-security cells, in segregation cells, and on mental health wards, where persistently non-compliant prisoners are housed. These penal spaces represent the most austere conditions of confinement and are designed to contain the riskiest prisoners. Cameras give officers an additional way to monitor prisoners so that they can identify, contain, and manage antagonistic behaviour. Being able to monitor prisoners from a centralized location expedites the movement of resources within the prison to ensure officers can devote their attention to the most pressing issues.

No surveillance cameras were operating during the use of force training; however, the virtual presence of CCTV cameras function as an important surveillance mechanism designed to promote proper technique. Unlike mirrors in a ballet studio which are designed to help discipline the body through the perfection of dance technique, cameras are positioned as an accountability mechanism to ensure COs comply with the rule of law by not engaging in excessive use of force incidents. Camera are integrated into the use of force training as a reminder to COs that they are always being watched and must ensure that the amount and type of force they use looks reasonable on video (Field Notes June 5, 2014). For example, one of the nerve motor stuns recruits learn requires COs to strike a nerve at the base of the neck between the neck and the shoulder socket. When COs apply this move, they are required to use an open hand, not a closed fist. A closed fist looks like the officer is punching the prisoner in the neck when it is caught on camera, and this would likely result in an investigation for excessive use of force (Field Notes June 5, 2014). Using the proper technique helps absolve officers of complaints of excessive force and reduces the chance that officers will be disciplined for using unreasonable force.
Recruits are also taught to use cameras as a powerful diversionary tactic to avoid responsibility for using force during PSA and nerve motor stun training. The lead training sergeant referred to these tactics as “beautiful” because they allow COs to inflict pain without being noticed by the camera (Field Notes June 5, 2014:6; Provincial Training Manual 2014). The training staff argued that these control strategies are less invasive forms of physical control because the effects are short term and the pain subsides as soon as the pressure is released. They can be applied swiftly and in unpredictable ways to redirect prisoners to behave appropriately.

Even though the presence of cameras is intended to protect prisoners from being subjected to more restrictive forms of control, recruits are taught how to apply PSAs and nerve motor stuns in camera friendly ways. In this case, cameras are used as mechanisms of subversion of the rule of law by COs. Cameras do very little to discourage officers from using physical restraints to get prisoners to comply; rather, they create opportunities for COs to use very restrictive forms of control without being held accountable.

There is no critical reflection during training on whether using pain to get compliance is even appropriate. There is an unquestioned assumption that pain is an appropriate and an effective behaviour management tool. Learning that PSAs are “beautiful” for the camera systematically desensitizes prison officers to the impact of their actions on prisoners (Haney 2008). It teaches recruits that they do not have to be cognizant of the potential harm they cause when they use pain to get compliance. New COs leave training with competencies to use physical control techniques effectively; they also see the infliction of physical pain as reasonable. This training creates the structural conditions necessary for COs to justify potentially abusive management styles with no regard for the trauma that can be created when pain compliance is normalized (Weill and Haney 2017; Haney 2008). It institutionalizes punitiveness as a justifiable way to manage prisoner misconduct in provincial jails by teaching new COs that prisoners deserve pain when they misbehave (Crewe 2011; Sykes 1958; Weill and Haney 2017).
4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that CO training positions physical expressions of power as an essential component of a CO’s security duties. Recruits are conditioned to escalate the intensity of physical control as an instantaneous reflex. The live action scenarios are designed to prime COs to use force because few scenarios are set up to resolve conflict without physical force. In fact, even in situations when COs attempt to use less restrictive control tactics, they are chastised by the training staff for wasting time talking to prisoners. In this way, the CO training systematically devalues and delegitimizes COs who try to negotiate with prisoners. One of the key lessons recruits learn from scenario training is that good COs do not waste time “chatting” up prisoners. Their job is to contain risk, something only achievable by using force.

The use of physical force is positioned as the primary mechanism to keep jails secure and to keep staff and prisoners safe. By promoting a force first and justify later position, CO training puts COs in a difficult position. Using force is stressful for COs and this can impair their ability to accurately depict what has happened when incidents are chaotic and violent. When COs are under high levels of stress and their adrenaline is pumping, they may not remember the chronology of events (Field Notes May 28, 2014). Even so, documentation is crucial: COs who do not adequately document incidents so that blame is squarely placed on prisoners open themselves up to civil, criminal, and disciplinary liability. It is not the act of force that comes under scrutiny, but the quality of the documentation.

As the chapter suggests, force is considered reasonable when it is clearly documented. The production of institutional knowledge by documenting events is an important risk management strategy. It makes the CO’s recollection the officially approved and legitimized account of an incident. Moreover, it is the action of the prisoner that determines the CO’s response. This silences any meaningful connection between the conditions of confinement and the behaviours that prisoners display. COs come out of training expecting to engage in routine physical confrontations with prisoners. This produces COs who are insensitive to the potential harm they cause and unaware that their behaviour may actually be the cause of the
disruptive behaviour in the first place. This entrenches punitive penal conditions and reinforces the criminogenic aspect of prisons (Haney 2008).

The ability to avoid responsibility for using force is clearly demonstrated during the discussion on PSAs. Cameras are supposed to be a visual tool designed to discourage COs from using restrictive forms of control. However, what becomes apparent during CO training is that the camera is used for other reasons. For example, new recruits are taught how to apply PSAs so that they can inflict pain without being held accountable for this action. This makes the training program a mechanism for COs to resist responsibility for using pain to get compliance. COs can avoid the civil, criminal, and disciplinary liabilities associated with physical force when they inflict pain in camera friendly ways.

Using physical force to curb disruptions is not only common during training, but also expected. Ironically, the focus on physical force over verbal de-escalation strategies may actually increase the number of physical control incidents in correctional centres, instead of making them safer places. Researchers consistently find that coercive and punitive penal regimes produce higher levels of misconduct and violence (Hepburn 1985; Marquart 1986; Haney 2008; Haney 2009). Instead of improving prison safety and maintaining order, then, restrictive forms of physical control may make things worse.
Chapter 5
Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This dissertation considers how punitiveness, characterized by risk logics and concerns about dangerousness, has been incorporated into a Canadian provincial prison system. Researchers argue that a recent punitive turn has fundamentally altered the purpose of imprisonment from rehabilitation to the secure containment of risk (Garland 2002; Rose 2000; Bosworth 2010; Feeley and Simon 1992; Drake 2012). Even though Canadian scholars have suggested that Canadian prisons are not as harsh and punitive as American ones (Doob and Webster 2005; Meyer and O’Malley 2006), evidence suggests that Canadian prisons are punitive spaces where violence is common and coercive practices, such as segregation and physical force, are used to manage difficult prisoners (Hannah-Moffat and Klassen 2015; Ricciardelli and Gazso 2013). However, research on the Canadian provincial context has not fully documented the extent to which punitiveness has been incorporated into correctional practice.

This dissertation examines the role of CO training in socializing new officers about prisoners and prison management. The existing research on COs focuses on the correspondence between attitudes and management styles in higher security prisons, the relationship between the stressfulness of the job and management styles, and the impact of coercive and rehabilitative regimes (Liebling 2011; Ricciardelli and Perry 2016; Farkas 2000; Jurik 1985; Lerman and Page 2012; Lambert et al. 2007; Callahan 2004; Tewksbury and Mustaine 2008; Schaufeli and Peeters 2000; Gordon and Baker 2017; Dowden and Tellier 2004; Stichman and Gordon 2014; Griffin 2001; Ricciardelli and Gazso 2013). It does not consider the role of training in producing COs as penal subjects in their own right; nor does it ask how the structure and context of training shape how COs are expected to manage prisoners. Unlike previous research, the dissertation situates the training academy as the most important venue that introduces recruits to the corporate culture of corrections, through which they develop an appreciation of the use of a punitive management style to respond to the conduct of...
prisoners perceived risky and dangerous. In this dissertation, I argue that CO training entrenches punitive prison management by incorporating concerns about risk and dangerousness into every aspect of the curriculum.

5.2 Contributions and Discussion

The dissertation makes a number of contributions to the literature on correctional officers, punishment, and prisons. Answering the call for more ethnographic research on the penal system (Wacquant 2002; Rhodes 2009), this research uses ethnographic participant observation to examine CO training. To the best of my knowledge, this is the only study in North America in which an academic researcher uses participant observation to examine recruit training. The only other study that comes close is one featuring an American journalist’s experiences as a CO in New York (Conover 2001). Most studies on correctional officer work use survey methodologies or carry out qualitative interviews with officers working in the field. By examining the training regime using an ethnographic methodology, I can provide important insights into the development of correctional officer culture, the entrenchment of punitive professional orientations, and the reinforcement of physical force as the dominant form of behaviour management available to COs.

The nexus of risk, dangerousness, and punitive control strategies is situated within an institutional culture that depicts prisoners as risky subjects who must be controlled. I argue that previous conceptualizations of prisoner misconduct are limited because they only focus on why prisoners are non-compliant from the prisoner’s perspective (Bosworth 1999; Rubin 2015). They do not consider how COs label and respond to behaviour they perceive to be non-compliant. My research offers a different conceptualization of misconduct – something I call antagonism. This conceptualization advances the literature on resistance. I show that for COs, it does not matter why prisoners decide to behave the way they do; they are simply trained to view misconduct as antagonistic. This finding makes a valuable contribution to the literature because it opens up a new line of inquiry into the impact of COs on the
understanding of non-compliant behaviour and the implications of seeing prisoners as antagonistic.

More specifically, I document in Chapter 2 that recruits are taught to identify antagonistic behaviour along a continuum of increasing threat. Their response is supposed to correspond to the level of risk associated with the antagonistic behaviour. Whether a prisoner intends to be disruptive is not important. COs are required to respond as if the prisoner has deliberately chosen to be disruptive. By depicting prisoners as antagonistic, CO training positions them as responsible for their behaviour and, thus, for the responses COs use to contain it. COs are simply doing their job by identifying and managing risk before serious problems occur. However, positioning prisoners as responsible for their antagonistic behaviour silences any legitimate concerns prisoners may have about their conditions of confinement. Recruits come out of training with no understanding that the behaviours they consider antagonistic may not be wilful disobedience but a reaction to the penal environment.

The training program entrenches an “us versus them” mentality in recruits by describing prisoners as “dangerous others.” COs are trained to adopt a highly pejorative understanding of prisoners as risk subjects. Garland (2002; 1996) refers to this process as the criminology of the other. The training program produces a sense of distain toward prisoners that “condemns more and understands less” (Garland 2002:184). This depiction of prisoners as risk subjects reduces their humanity in favour of a homogenized characterization of risk. These dehumanizing characterizations delegitimize prisoners’ concerns as irrelevant and justify punitive control tactics (Haney 2008; Weill & Haney 2017).

My research demonstrates that provincial prisons are punitive spaces because COs are trained to internalize and support coercive management strategies. I provide evidence that the production and reinforcement of punitive logics is situated within an institutional framework designed to maximize CO control of risky and dangerous prisoners. Recruits are trained to perceive prisoners as the primary threat to the security of the institution and the safety of everyone inside of it. Since the use of force is promoted as justifiable, reasonable, and necessary, CO training creates the understanding that COs work in “jungle-like” (Lawrence and Mahan 1998) environments where the expectation of violence reinforces a
punitive orientation that promotes coercive control over verbal negotiation. It also negates COs’ ability to see the links between the conditions of confinement and prisoner behaviour. COs are not trained to be attentive to the social or contextual causes of misbehaviour; rather, they are trained to view it as a reflection of a prisoner’s dangerous character.

Because prisoners are depicted as inherently antagonistic, COs are taught specific control strategies designed to manage disruptive behaviour quickly and efficiently. I argue that the use of physical force dominates the training program. Chapter 3 discusses how the use of force is normalized and naturalized in a highly choreographed and repetitive style of training. The mastery of the use of force skills is situated within a gendered training environment that privileges hegemonic masculine traits of toughness, dominance, and control. Recruits are trained to view their power to control prisoners as dependent on how well they can physically restrain non-compliant prisoners. All recruits, regardless of their gender identity, must adopt a masculinized presentation of self, which marginalizes and delegitimizes femininity and feminized skills, such as verbal negotiation. This makes “doing” CO work synonymous with “doing” masculinity.

This finding is an important contribution to the literature on COs because it considers how correctional officer training is gendered. The literature on gender dynamics in corrections focuses on whether female officers are physically and emotionally capable of doing the job (Farnworth 1992), but my research shows that the structure and content of CO training eliminates this barrier for female COs. The notion that women are not tough enough or emotionally strong enough to be COs is not substantiated by my research. On a number of occasions, female recruits demonstrated that they were more proficient at use of force skills and better able to control their emotions under stress than male recruits. This outperformance did not go unnoticed by the training staff. In fact, the success of women was used to shame male recruits for not “doing” masculinity properly (Messerschmidt 1993; West & Zimmerman 1987).

In Chapter 3, I also show that competent COs, both men and women, must be able to use force. However, achieving competency is a gendered process, with male and female recruits sanctioned differently for failing to display toughness and emotional stoicism. On the one
hand, male recruits are chastised for expressing emotions such as compassion and empathy. Emotion is viewed as a weakness COs cannot afford to show and it is used as evidence that male recruits may not be suitable for the job. On the other hand, female recruits are regularly criticized for not being aggressive enough during training drills and scenarios. This requires female recruits to work harder to demonstrate their ability to physically control prisoners than male recruits. In the process, women have to conceal their femininity and assume a masculinized posture. Women quickly learn that their competency is linked to their ability to appear physically dominant. Women who are unable to use force automatically or who chose to use their ability to negotiate with prisoners before using force are reminded that their fit for the job is under assault. Successful COs must be tough and be willing to exert their power over prisoners through physical control, regardless of their gender.

COs are required to resolve security threats and if that resolution requires the use of physical force, recruits are trained to disregard the potential harm it may cause to prisoners. Consequently, the training program produces COs who are morally disengaged from the possible impact of their actions on prisoners (Haney 2008). Haney (2008) argues that by attributing responsibility for force to prisoners, COs do not have to consider the contextual causes of the behaviour, including their own actions. Simply stated, prisoners deserve the treatment they receive (Haney 2008; Weill & Haney 2017).

The ability to use force encompasses more than the mastery of particular skills. It also requires COs to evaluate risk incidents quickly and to effectively deploy escalating levels of force to regain control in potentially volatile situations. The literature on the use of coercive control in prisons consistently finds that punitive control tactics increase the number and intensity of violent episodes in prisons (Hepburn 1985; Marquart 1986; Haney 2003; Haney 2006; Haney 2008; Ricciardelli and Sit 2016; Colvin 2007; Dilullio 1987; Useema and Kimball 1989). The dissertation extends this literature by showing how recruits are trained to increase the amount of force they use to resolve conflicts. I suggested that by situating force at the forefront of how COs understand their working environment this may actually make prisons more punitive and dangerous rather than safer.
In Chapter 4, I argue that CO training socializes recruits to see force as a legitimate response to prisoner antagonism. The line between verbal negotiation and force is a thin one, and most live action training scenarios require some level of physical force to contain risk. There are few opportunities for recruits to learn how to use verbal negotiation to resolve incidents. Verbal de-escalation, while prominent in actual correctional practice, is marginalized as ineffective and inefficient for resolving security problems. Trainers scold recruits for wasting too much time “chatting up” prisoners because the expeditious resolution of security incidents requires the use of physical control strategies. In this environment, prisoners are not people who happen to be confined. They are risk subjects that must be neutralized by force when they misbehave.

By situating force at the forefront of how COs understand their working environment, I suggested that this may actually make prisons more punitive and dangerous rather than safer. It is clear from the de-legitimization of verbal negotiation that COs are trained to use highly restrictive forms of control to obtain compliance. This was is particularly evident in the training on PSAs and nerve motor stuns, where recruits are trained to see pain compliance as justifiable if it results in compliance. One aspect of the use of force training is the recognition that the amount and type of force used must be reasonable based on the amount of prisoner resistance displayed by prisoners. In Chapter 4, I showed that reasonableness is connected to how well COs can document force and how they use force in camera friendly ways in order to avoid civil, criminal, and disciplinary liabilities.

The production of institutional documentation and the use of surveillance cameras are officially positioned as important accountability measures to prevent the excessive use of force by COs. However, I argue that these are not really accountability measures. The production of official documentation about use of force incidents actively blames prisoners for the incident while absolving the CO of responsibility. Trainers and training scenarios regularly connect the legitimacy of force and the blameworthiness of prisoners. The documentation privileges the CO’s account and prisoners have no mechanism to counter this official narrative. Despite the fact that care, custody, and control of prisoners are all part of the CO’s role, it is clear that custody and control dominate how COs are trained to manage prisoners.
Even though surveillance cameras are designed to dampen excessive use of force, CO training provides recruits with strategies to avoid the disciplinary gaze of the camera. The training on PSAs and nerve motor stuns is designed to show recruits how to inflict high levels of pain without looking like they are using force. In these incidents, highly restrictive and punitive forms of control are promoted over less restrictive methods because they allow COs to get away with inflicting pain. This reinforces the viability of pain compliance as a necessary tool and delegitimizes less restrictive forms of control as inefficient and insufficient.

Chapters 3 and 4 argue that CO training creates a level of intellectual ignorance about prisoner suffering. The disregard for prisoners’ suffering and the resultant lack of empathy is an outcome of how COs are socialized to anticipate violence, to respond to conflict with violence, and then to off-load accountability for this violence back onto prisoners. One of the most salient lessons recruits learn is that they have to divorce their actions from the impact they may have. Trainers stress that antagonistic behaviour is a deliberate choice, and choices have consequences. Prisoners who chose to be non-compliant are both responsible for and deserving of punishment.

I suggest that this attribution of responsibility creates a toxic penal environment where COs initiate increasingly harsh management styles in the guise of risk management. When COs fail to recognize that the cause of misconduct may be attributable to either the conditions of confinement or their own conduct, prisoners and COs can become engaged in an increasingly volatile environment where prisoner abuses can occur and COs are rarely held accountable. CO training primes recruits to use force, but it does not teach them that their actions matter. This produces COs who view prisoners as risk subjects who must be contained. As a result, punitive conditions of confinement that will likely make the environment more criminogenic and dangerous become entrenched.

Privileging the use of force over less restrictive behaviour management styles puts new COs in a difficult position when they return to work. COs I interviewed suggest that the most important CO skill is the ability to communicate with prisoners. Previous research also suggests that respectful and productive interpersonal communication reduces disruptions,
increases compliance, and facilitates rehabilitation (Liebling 2011; Harer & Steffensmeier 1996). However, this dissertation shows that the training in verbal negotiation is marginalized in favour of force. Recruits leave training without any meaningful understanding of how to de-escalate conflicts with words over fists. Their lack of training in verbal negotiation limits their ability to proactively interact with prisoners or to assist prisoners in making positive choices. COs learn to regard verbal communication as a stepping-stone to force, not as a viable behaviour management strategy in its own right. Verbal negotiation is positioned as a waste of valuable time that should be devoted to security and control. The training program also delegitimizes recruits’ attempts to use less restrictive forms of control by celebrating the use of coercive tactics as the most important risk management strategy. If the purpose of prison is to rehabilitate prisoners, as is suggested by Canadian penal discourse, this is functionally impossible within a provincial system where COs are trained to contain not rehabilitate prisoners.

5.3 Moving The Field Forward: Extending The Research into New Areas of Inquiry

Since this study took place in one provincial jurisdiction, the findings can only reflect that jurisdiction. It is possible that it differs from other geographic regions in Canada; thus, the results cannot be generalized to other jurisdictions, nor can they be generalized to federal correctional officers. Since each province is responsible for its own correctional system, the nature of recruit training and the experiences of officers in the field may not be comparable across provinces.

Future research should consider a comparative analysis of training programs across provinces and between provincial and federal systems. There may be meaningful distinctions in the incorporation of punitive logics and practices into prison management practices. A national comparative examination of CO training may identify areas of convergence and divergence in penal practice with important implications for how prisoners experience incarceration in Canada. It is conceivable that support for punitiveness varies across
provinces and between the provincial and federal systems. There may be more focus on rehabilitation and a greater human-service orientation at the federal level because prison sentences are longer and more conducive to rehabilitative efforts. This dissertation is simply the first step toward a greater understanding of the impact of training on how prisons are managed in Canada.

I argue throughout the dissertation that the support for and promotion of risk logics and strategies that reinforce the use of force to contain danger indicates that punitiveness is not only present in provincial correctional systems, but it is the primary guiding force in the working lives of COs and the conditions of confinement for prisoners. My research provides evidence of the type of training that provincial officers received in 2014. Moreover, I only observed one training class. Hence, the results reflect the experiences of one class in one year. I am unable to comment on whether the punitive practices and attitudes promoted during training have been internalized by the COs. Future research should examine how recruits transition out of training into the everyday practice of CO work. My study provides compelling evidence that new COs leave training expecting to use force as a customary practice. By examining CO transition into full time work, researchers will be in a better position to assess the extent to which punitive logics and practices have been internalized and incorporated into everyday practice. Despite the prominence of the security orientation and the normalization of the use of force during training, my interviews suggest the reality is quite different; new recruits may have a difficult time aligning their preconceived expectations of prisoners with the reality of working in jails.

Research should also examine the criteria used to determine who is eligible to be a CO and which candidates are ready for training. The hiring process is an unexplored area of inquiry. Research on the hiring and training criteria could shed light on the person-to-environment fit that is so essential for success in corrections. The dissertation provides only a small glimpse into the kind of person deemed suitable for the job. I argue that suitability is tied to how well recruits can demonstrate their toughness and emotional regulation, but this can be expanded. By examining the hiring and recruiting practices in provincial jurisdictions, researchers will get a better idea of what characteristics are promoted and reinforced. There may be
important associations between who applies to be a CO and how well that person fits into the institutional culture of corrections.

Since I used snowball sampling and union contacts to recruit my interviewees, it is possible that some self-selection bias was introduced into my data. Even though I made every effort to recruit a wide variety of officers at all levels of experience across the province, sampling through the union cannot guarantee that my participants fully represent the variability of COs. However, my participants’ responses were not predominantly pro-union, nor were they particularly negative about corrections. Although they expressed a wide variety of perspectives on the job, the COs were quite consistent in their comments on the nature of prisoner behaviour and the management of disruptions. Researchers should consider seeking provincial approval to observe and interview officers on the job to evaluate how the everyday working environment is experienced. This may prove to be very difficult given the current protectionist climate in Canada, but research using an ethnographic methodology to supplement one-on-one interviews will be in a better position to evaluate how punitiveness manifests in daily correctional practice.

5.4 Conclusion

This research was designed to evaluate the extent that punitive logics and practices have been adopted and promoted in this provincial location. My work provides compelling evidence that Canadian provincial jails have embraced punitive management practices through how COs are trained. This research provides a deeper understanding about how COs understand prisoner behaviour as well as the justifications and rationales associated with privileging the use of physical force as an essential risk management tool. My research documents that the social division between COs and prisoners remains a vital component of the security regime developed in this jurisdiction. The entrenchment of the "us versus them" mentality, coupled with the profound silence about the humanity and potential suffering of prisoners, reinforces the punitive nature of imprisonment. Until the corporate culture of
corrections moves away from the use of punitive control strategies, I suspect that the experience of imprisonment will continue to be painful.
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