

RESEARCH PAPER

The Conduits and Barriers to Reentry for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals in San Bernardino

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Abstract: *Numerous scholars have noted that the majority of prisoners will be reincarcerated within three years of their release. However, while there has been extensive research on recidivism, much less attention has been paid to the reentry process in the sociological and criminological literature. Given the high rates of former prisoners reentering society with struggles that may affect their friends, family members, and communities, policymakers and practitioners should understand the successful methods for their reintegration. In this paper, we explore the conduits and barriers to reentry for a sample of San Bernardino county callers using United Way's 211 Reentry Call Center from 2014-2015. We find that human needs resources (i.e. housing, clothes, and food assistance) and legal assistance are the two most frequently requested services. The callers in our sample have intersecting, disadvantaged identities and require multiple services which suggests a need for collaboration across agencies.*

Keywords: *San Bernardino, reentry, criminology, 211 call center*

Since 2002, the United States has had the highest incarceration rate in the world (Anderson, 2015; Wakefield & Uggen, 2010, p. 390). After incarceration, some ex-offenders become law-abiding citizens and successfully reenter society and some continue to commit crimes but do not return to prison. In other cases, some ex-offenders commit new crimes and return to prison, while others do not commit new crimes yet still return to prison (e.g. for a technical violation of probation or parole). According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics' Recidivism Study of State Prisoners (which tracked a sample of former prisoners from 30 states for five years after their release in 2005), 67.8% of released prisoners were arrested for a new crime within 3 years, and 76.6% were arrested within 5 years (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2017). California has had one of the highest recidivism rates in the country for over a decade, which contributes to overcrowding in the state's prison system (Lofstrom, Raphael, & Grattet, 2014, p. 6). However, according to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's most recent recidivism report, "the total three-year return-to-prison rate for all offenders released during fiscal year 2010-2011 is 44.6 percent, down from 54.3 percent last year" (OPEC Staff, 2016). There have been several concerted efforts to address the high recidivism rates and promote successful reentry in California.

California was one of the first states to reanalyze the value of community-based parole rehabilitation programs (Zhang, Roberts, & Callanan, 2006). For example, the Preventing Parolee Crime Program (PPCP) attempts to provide resources to alleviate the problems associated with employment, substance abuse, education, skill growth and housing (Zhang et al., 2006). "Nearly 60% of PPCP participants who failed to achieve any program goals were reincarcerated at the same rate as the statewide non-PPCP population" (Zhang et al.,



2006, p. 562). However, the participants who met at least one treatment goal had significantly lower odds of reincarceration compared to non-PPCP parolees. In another study, Hipp, Petersilia, and Turner (2010) observed a link between reentering parolees in California and regions with concentrated disadvantage. They found that parolees living in regions with a higher availability of social services are less likely to recidivate (Hipp et al., 2010). Therefore, states with community-based rehabilitation programs that provide services such as job training and substance abuse treatment can be influential (Freudenberg, Daniels, Crum, Perkins, & Richie, 2005; Zhang et al., 2006).

According to Mukamal, Silbert, and Taylor (2015), “over 50,000 people will be released from California prisons within the next two years” (p. 15). Furthermore, California corrections officials will adopt new sentencing rules to reduce the state prison population by nearly 9,500 inmates in the next four years (Ulloa, 2017). However, “within three years of release more than six out of every ten individuals leaving prison are re-incarcerated for a parole violation or new conviction” (Mukamal et al., 2015, p. 18). While there has been extensive research on the topic of recidivism, there is much less attention given to the reentry or criminal desistance process (Bahr, Harris, Fisher & Armstrong, 2010; Trimbur, 2009). Given the limited research examining prisoner reentry in the United States (Schram, Koons-Witt, Williams III, & McShane, 2006), there needs to be a better understanding of life for individuals after they exit prison and the successful methods for their reintegration (Bales & Mears, 2008, p. 288). This is particularly important because of the high rates of returning prisoners who try to reintegrate back into society with problems that may affect their friends, family members, and communities.

In this paper, we begin with a brief review of the academic discourse and previous studies on the conduits and barriers to successful reentry. The second major section discusses reintegrative shaming theory and social disorganization theory. We use these theories, along with previous research, to argue that community characteristics, access to services, prosocial institutions and ties to prosocial individuals all affect the reintegration of our callers. The third major section focuses on data, methods, and descriptive statistics: We explore the conduits and barriers to reentry for a sample of callers using United Way’s 211 Reentry Call Center from 2014-2015. Using data from San Bernardino County’s 211¹ service, we describe the socio-demographic characteristics, criminal history, and needs of our callers. We illustrate examples of the prosocial ties and institutions that motivate these individuals to seek resources. We also discuss callers’ most frequently requested services and the 211 operator’s referrals. In the final section, we discuss our limitations and conclude by suggesting a few lingering questions that provide opportunities for future research. Although this study is largely exploratory, the results will contribute to the literature by giving insight into the reentry process for individuals released into the San Bernardino area.

Literature Review

Offender reentry is the process of leaving an institution of incarceration and rejoining conventional society (Spjeldnes & Goodkind, 2009; Visher & Travis, 2003). Each prisoner in the reentry process experience four stages: “(a) life prior to prison, (b) life in prison, (c) the moment of release and immediately after prison release, and (d) life during the months and years following prison release” (Visher & Travis, 2003, p. 94). Within three years of their release, the majority of prisoners will be reincarcerated (Bahr et al., 2010; Marbley & Ferguson, 2005). The rearrest, reconviction, or reincarceration of ex-offenders is referred to as recidivism (Spjeldnes & Goodkind, 2009; Visher & Travis, 2003). Ex-prisoners can be reincarcerated for a new crime, a minor offense, a felony or a parole revocation (Bellair & Kowalski, 2011). Most research on former prisoners typically examine the factors that predict recidivism and focus on whether or not the outcome is an arrest (Visher & Travis, 2003) or uses recidivism as a dependent variable (Hannon & Defina, 2010, p. 615). Yet, the lack of information about the reentry process can lead to enacting counterproductive policies that may exacerbate recidivism rates. In the next section, we use previous literature to explore the conduits and barriers to successful reentry.

Conduits and Barriers to Successful Reintegration

A range of individual pre-prison circumstances predict recidivism and affect post-prison reintegration

¹It is also referred to as 2-1-1 on their website, but for consistency the authors will use 211.

including substance abuse history and mental and physical health issues (Visher & Travis, 2003). Compared to the general population, incarcerated and paroled individuals have a higher prevalence and variety of health problems (Marlow, White, & Chesla, 2010). For example, communicable or infectious diseases such as hepatitis and HIV/AIDS are prominent among the incarcerated population (Spjeldnes & Goodkind, 2009; Wakefield & Uggen, 2010). There are also high rates of substance abuse and mental illnesses such as schizophrenia/psychosis, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and anxiety (Wakefield & Uggen, 2010). Formerly incarcerated individuals have difficulties managing these illnesses because they are often uninsured or lack access to primary care services, which increases their need for emergency care services (Marlow et al., 2010, p. 2). Consequently, these health problems may make it difficult for prisoners to secure stable employment.

Although there is evidence to suggest that financial assistance reduces the likelihood of recidivism among its recipients (Wikoff, Linhorst, & Morani, 2012), stable employment can be especially critical to an ex-prisoner's successful reentry (Visher & Travis, 2003). The literature demonstrates that a job is the conduit that best reduces recidivism, regardless of an offender's race or gender (Bahr et al., 2010; Berg & Huebner, 2011; Duwe, 2012; Duwe, 2015; Philips & Spencer, 2013). According to Giordano, Cernkovich, & Rudolph (2002), jobs act as "hooks for change" that keep ex-offenders out of environments in which they are likely to reoffend by placing them in situations in which they see themselves in a positive manner. Legitimate employment after release provides these individuals with a valuable alternative to unconventional, illegal jobs. However, many reentering individuals with inadequate education and job skills have difficulties securing stable employment (Berg & Huebner, 2011; Spjeldnes & Goodkind, 2009). The stigma of a criminal conviction combined with an unstable history of employment also serves as a major barrier in securing stable employment (Berg & Huebner, 2011). Furthermore, many law breakers are legally barred from child-related and healthcare jobs (Spjeldnes & Goodkind, 2009). Consequently, the inability to find employment contributes to both incarceration and reincarceration (Marbley & Ferguson, 2005).

After incarceration, some types of former prisoners also encounter policies that limit their housing options (Philips & Spencer, 2013; Spjeldnes & Goodkind, 2009). In some instances, renters are required to disclose criminal history, decreasing former prisoners' chances to rent a home (Philips & Spencer, 2013). Former prisoners also have a hard time finding a place to live since they do not usually have the money to cover security deposits, nor references that allow them to be seen as good tenants (Philips & Spencer, 2013). Research on housing instability supports the link between homelessness and recidivism through social stigma (Lutze, Rosky, & Hamilton, 2014). Lutze and colleagues (2014) explain that housing instability increases the rates of recidivism by creating a social stigma that motivates former prisoners to engage in unlawful activities. These housing issues result in recidivism, homelessness or formerly incarcerated individuals living in impoverished, crime-ridden communities. To overcome these barriers to reentry, formerly incarcerated individuals seek help from a variety of sources, including The 211 Service.

The 211 Service ("which originated in Atlanta, Georgia and was launched by the United Way Atlanta" in 1997) provides callers with information and referrals about human services using the referral categories: Human Needs Resource; Physical and Mental Health Resources; Employment Support; Support for Older Americans and Persons with Disabilities; Support for Children, Youth and Families; Volunteer Opportunities and Donations (CMAP Strategy Report, 2008, p. 3). According to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Strategy Report (2008), which provides an overview of 211 services in the nation, in some regions, Legal Assistance is also a referral category. Across several states, the most frequently requested area of support is human needs resource (specifically shelters/housing, utility bill assistance, and rental assistance) with the least frequently requested area being legal assistance (CMAP Strategy Report, 2008, p. 12). However, this trend represents all callers who requested services, even those who had no previous incarceration history. Using data from San Bernardino County's 211 service, and focusing only on the formerly incarcerated population, we compare the patterns from our study to the findings in the CMAP Strategy Report and discuss their implications for reentry. Based on prior literature, we hypothesize that human needs resources (which includes food banks, clothing, shelters/housing, utility bill assistance, and rental assistance) will be the most frequently requested services. While legal assistance was the least frequently requested service by callers in some regions (CMAP Strategy Report, 2008), we expect that legal assistance will be a priority for the callers in our sample.

Theoretical Framework

In their conceptualization of social disorganization theory, Shaw and McKay (1942) argued that low economic status, ethnic/racial heterogeneity and residential mobility (structural factors) in Chicago neighborhoods led to the disruption of community social organization. This leads to the weakening of social control by the community, the development of delinquent subcultures and increased delinquency rates (Shaw & McKay, 1942). Population density, poverty, transience and dilapidation increase opportunities and motivation for crime and diminish social control (Stark, 1987). As a result, these areas attract deviant people and activities to a neighborhood and drive out the least deviant people (Stark, 1987). Therefore, neighborhood disadvantages can have a negative influence on returning prisoners' ability to reintegrate and avoid recidivism.

According to several studies, ex-prisoners returning to highly segregated or impoverished communities are at a higher risk of offending (Hipp et al., 2010; Kubrin & Stewart, 2006; Mears, Wang, Hay, & Bales, 2008; Wikoff et al., 2012). For example, Wikoff et al. (2012) argue that former inmates often return to urban communities plagued with concentrated social and economic disadvantages including active drug markets, high unemployment and crime rates, limited social services, public housing restrictions, and homelessness (p. 290). These ex-prisoners may exacerbate the reentry barriers of the communities they return to increasing the likelihood to recidivate and creating a "loop" (Morenoff & Harding, 2014) or a revolving door through the criminal justice system. Hipp et al. (2010) found that California parolees residing in economically disadvantaged tracts are more likely to recidivate. However, the presence of more service providers nearby reduces their risk of recidivism (Hipp et al., 2010).

Another perspective that takes into account community influences is shaming theory. Braithwaite (1989) explains that there are two types of shaming: disintegrative (stigmatization) and reintegrative. Offenders who experience disintegrative shaming are stigmatized, treated as outcasts and may not be welcomed into their community (Braithwaite, 1989). In reintegrative shaming, offenders are initially meant to feel shame or guilt but are subsequently shown forgiveness and reintegrated into conventional or law abiding society (Braithwaite 1989). Family and friendship ties can signify the success of ex-offenders' reintegration into their communities (Sung, 2011). Researchers have found that family acceptance, encouragement and emotional support during prison are related to post-release success for inmates (Visher & Travis, 2003, p. 100). Social support "during and after prison can serve as the critical differentiating factor between those who desist from offending and those who persist" (Bales & Mears, 2008, p. 292). Ex-prisoners may avoid illegal activities in order to maintain a job or an association with a partner or child (Bahr et al., 2010). Employment enhances attachment and commitment to conventional roles (Bellair & Kowalski, 2011). Moreover, family ties are important among ex-offenders with poor human capital and short employment history since family members can serve as references or contacts to help during ex-prisoners' job search (Berg & Huebner, 2011). Shaming theory would predict less recidivism and lower crime rates in communities that are forgiving and try to reintegrate formerly incarcerated individuals.

Successful post-release supervision and community reintegration necessitates adequate linkage to healthcare (physical and psychological), substance abuse treatment, job skills, employment opportunities, and stable housing (Salem, Nyamathi, Idemudia, Slaughter, & Ames 2013, p. 9). As a result of the 2008 Second Chance Act, "most states have created reentry councils to coordinate health, work force development, education and other social service agencies to improve prospects for individuals returning home" (Travis, Crayton & Mukamal, 2009, p. 2). In September 2011, The San Bernardino County Reentry Collaborative (SBCRC), a partnership of agencies, organizations and individuals, received funding through the Second Chance Act from the U.S. Department of Justice "to enhance public safety and reduce recidivism through rehabilitation and reentry services" (Strategic Plan, 2012, p. 3). Many of the agencies in the SBCRC are registered with 211 and listed as resources in their database. Using data from San Bernardino County's 211 service, we describe the socio-demographic characteristics and criminal history of our callers and illustrate examples of their prosocial ties to individuals and institutions. We also discuss their needs, service requests, and 211 operator referrals. Although San Bernardino County has the second highest homeownership rate in Southern California, due to its racial and ethnic diversity, high unemployment rates, and high poverty rates (Community Indicators Report, 2015), we argue that San Bernardino County can be characterized as a socially disorganized area. However,

access to services, agencies and prosocial individuals are conduits that can have a positive effect on former prisoners reintegrating back into the county.

Data/Methods

San Bernardino County's 211 is a confidential service that facilitates the connection between ex-prisoners, reentry programs and services. 211 is an easy number to remember and, within the U.S., callers can access the service from anywhere. However, its most important social asset is its extensive list of services that are offered at the community level. San Bernardino County's 211 has a database of more than 1100 agencies, 3500 programs, and almost 5,000 services that serve San Bernardino County (211 San Bernardino, 2017). 211 operators use this database to provide current, comprehensive, and accurate information to San Bernardino County residents. After dialing 211 on their phone, clients can choose from several menu options, which ultimately connects them to an operator. Then, operators identify the needs of the callers and the communities they call from and refer them to local agencies that offer services or resources such as health care, food, and shelter. Ex-prisoners can also get help obtaining the legal documentation necessary to apply for jobs, housing aid, information about their rights and obligations, and support during the first few crucial months following their release (211 San Bernardino, 2017).

In San Bernardino County, 211 is one of the only comprehensive information and referral entities that offer referral services to its clients and keeps a record of each call. Based on the confidential information provided by each caller, operators use an intake form to collect data. Information from the intake form is used to create a database that represents the socio-demographic background, criminal history, health and economic needs, and social characteristics of ex-prisoners returning to San Bernardino County (211 San Bernardino, 2017). Additionally, the database includes a brief narrative of each call, the 211 operator's comments, the caller's feedback and the referrals given to each caller. With this database, we can expand our understanding of the reentry barriers that ex-prisoners face in Southern California.

The first author was awarded a \$5000 Community-Based Research Mini-Grant from the Office of Community Engagement at California State University, San Bernardino to hire two undergraduate student research assistants (the second and third authors) for this study. This research involved the analysis of existing data provided by San Bernardino County's 211 Call Center². We requested access to San Bernardino County's 211 database of 1,145 calls that occurred between 2014 and 2015, stripped of personally identifiable information so that the calls cannot be linked to specific individuals. Furthermore, pseudonyms were used to protect the confidentiality of the callers.

Since our goal is to explain the conduits and barriers to reentry that ex-prisoners face when returning to San Bernardino County, we included only cases related to the formerly incarcerated population, reducing our sample to 842 calls. We present both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the dataset. For the qualitative portion of the paper, we took a simple random sample of calls that was 20 percent of the population by using random.org to generate 168 random numbers. We put the population of calls in an excel spreadsheet and selected the calls that corresponded to the random numbers. From there, we selected excerpts from the call narratives, the 211 operator's comments, and the caller's feedback. We also used the United Way's referral categories (i.e. Human Needs Resource, Physical and Mental Health Resources, Employment Support, Support for Older Americans and Persons with Disabilities, Support for Children, Youth and Families and Legal Assistance) (CMAP Strategy Report, 2008) to identify the types of referrals that were provided to callers.

Results

Descriptive Statistics of Socio-demographic Characteristics

Most previous research focuses on individual-level factors that consistently predict recidivism including race, gender, educational attainment and employment (Bellair & Kowalski, 2011, p. 180). In Table 1, we address some of those factors by illustrating the socio-demographic characteristics of formerly incarcerated individuals asking for 211 assistance. The majority of callers seeking services are from San Bernardino County (n = 84.9%) with the other calls coming from counties that are relatively close in proximity to San Bernard-

² The authors do not work for the 211 call center or have any conflicts of interest. The views expressed here are those of the authors and do not represent the positions of the funding agency or 211.

ino County. All of the calls came from someone who identified as previously incarcerated or who called on behalf of their formerly incarcerated friend, partner, or family member. In fact, 12.6% called for a family member, 58.2% called for themselves and 1% called for a friend (not shown in the tables). When asked “do you fall into any of the following categories?” some callers reported that the person seeking services belonged

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Socio-demographic Characteristics

Variables	n	Percentage
*Subgroups		
Disabled	153	18.2
Disabled and Homeless	46	5.5
Disabled and Senior/Aging Adult	1	0.1
Disabled, Homeless, and Senior/Aging Adult	1	0.1
Disabled, Senior/Aging Adult, and Served in the Military	3	0.4
Homeless	241	28.6
Homeless and Senior/Aging Adult	1	0.1
Homeless and Served in the Military	3	0.4
Previously Incarcerated	379	45.0
Senior/Aging Adult	7	0.8
Served in the Military	4	0.5
Missing	3	0.4
Gender		
Female	314	37.3
Male	509	60.5
Missing	19	2.3
Ethnic Background/Race		
Black	177	21.0
Hispanic/Latino/Cuban/Mexican-American	230	27.3
Hawaiian	1	0.1
Multi-Race	16	1.9
Native American	1	0.1
Other	6	0.7
Vietnamese	1	0.1
White	177	21.0
Don't Know/Declined to answer	131	15.6
Missing	102	12.1
Age		
13-17	11	1.3
18-20	11	1.3
21-28	103	12.2
29-34	93	11.0
35-40	75	8.9
41-49	160	19.0
50-60	103	12.2
61-64	18	2.1
65+	7	0.8
Missing	261	31.0

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Variables	n	Percentage
County		
Canada	3	0.4
Clark	2	0.2
Honolulu	1	0.1
Imperial	2	0.2
Los Angeles	62	7.4
Orange	11	1.3
Riverside	31	3.7
San Bernardino	715	84.9
San Diego	11	1.3
San Francisco	2	0.2
Sangamon	2	0.2
Number of People in Household		
0	2	0.2
1	396	47.0
2	112	13.3
3	57	6.8
4	37	4.4
5	29	3.4
6+	17	2.0
Missing	192	22.8
Source of Income		
Disability	4	0.5
EDD/Unemployment	2	0.2
Employed	84	9.9
Self-Employed	2	0.2
SSDI or SSI	86	10.2
TANF	43	5.7
None	392	46.6
Other	32	3.8
Missing	197	23.4

Note: *All of the people in the subgroups have been previously incarcerated, but the table shows that some may have also been homeless, disabled, elderly or military veterans. The percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

to multiple disadvantaged groups. While 45.0% of the sample had only been previously incarcerated, 28.6% of the sample was also homeless; 18.2% was also disabled; and 5.5% was disabled, homeless, and previously incarcerated. This information is significant because it reveals that the people requesting 211 services have intersecting, disadvantaged identities and require multiple services.

According to the Vera Institute of Justice (2015), in 2014, males had an incarceration rate of 716.4 per 100,000 while women were arrested at much lower rates in San Bernardino (108.6 per 100,000). This demographic characteristic mirrors that of the 211 callers in our sample who are mostly males ($n = 60.5\%$) but is contrary to the gender profile reported in the CMAP Strategy Report (2008). In fact, 80% of the callers who used 211 San Bernardino in June 2008 were females (CMAP Strategy Report, 2008, p. 13). Two other important demographic trends of note include race and income. In 2014, in San Bernardino, African Americans had the highest jail incarceration rate (958.3 per 100,000), followed by Whites (420 per 100,000) and Latinos

(354.2 per 100,000) with significantly lower rates (Vera Institute of Justice, 2015). In our sample, callers were mostly Hispanic/Latino ($n = 27.3\%$), Black ($n = 21.0\%$) or White ($n = 21.0\%$). Therefore, while Latinos are the least likely to be incarcerated, they are the most likely to use 211 services. Race is also an important factor since African American ex-prisoners who recidivate have shorter periods of time before reoffending than white ex-prisoners (Bellair & Kowalski, 2011). This is due, in part, to the fact that over 80% of white parolees return to neighborhoods with unemployment rates below 10 percent while slightly more than half of African American ex-prisoners return to neighborhoods with unemployment rates below 10 percent (Bellair & Kowalski, 2011, p.193). According to the CMAP Strategy Report (2008), only 28% of 211 San Bernardino callers were employed, while 14% had income from SSI, but 28% had no income at all (p.13). In our sample, approximately 10% of 211 San Bernardino callers were employed, 10.2% had income from SSDI or SSI, but 46.6% reported having no source of income.

In a recent report, the director of 211 reported an increase in requests for employment resources, noting that callers often indicate that they have multiple jobs or work less than 40 hours a week (Madden, 2016). However, “as serious as employment and wages are, they seem to be completely overshadowed by the shocking leap in requests for housing” (Madden, 2016, p. 2). In fact, “211 CRAs (Community Resource Advisors) can offer hundreds of anecdotal examples of callers indicating that they are homeless, in danger of becoming homeless, or in many cases, doubled or tripled up in a single family residence, or even living in a garage” (Madden, 2016, p. 3). Therefore, although they may be dissatisfied with their current living situation, we were surprised to find that a significant proportion of our callers ($n = 47.0\%$) live alone. Furthermore, callers that did live with others often expressed the desire to live by themselves. For example, Brad “does not want to live with a group of people. He wishes to live independently. Brad’s main priority is to find a place of his own. He struggles to find a place due to transportation. He just acquired a Disability ID for reduced bus fare.” When the callers live with others they may encounter problems, as in the case of Heidi: “Heidi says that the gentleman who is living there waiting for his wife to get out, is still giving her problems. He makes her feel uncomfortable and she stays locked in her room most of her time at home.” Still, there are others who are looking to secure housing, despite a potentially negative living situation, like Brianna who “put herself on the waiting list for the residential program but needs shelter now. She is alone and just applied for SSI. Brianna is also waiting on a phone call already from the Salvation Army for shelter.”

Another interesting finding surrounds the age range of the callers. According to the CMAP Strategy Report (2008), the callers that used 211 San Bernardino, were mostly in the age range 21-29 ($n = 25.0\%$), 30-39 ($n = 36.0\%$), 40-49 ($n = 19.0\%$) and 50-59 ($n = 9.0\%$) (p. 13). However, in our dataset, the most prominent group to use this service was between the ages of 41-49 ($n = 19.0\%$), followed by 50-60 year-olds ($n = 12.2\%$), and 21-28 year-olds ($n = 12.2\%$). Therefore, across both studies, older adults are more likely to use this service than younger adults in their twenties.

Descriptive Statistics of Criminal History

In Table 2 we present the criminal history of the callers. Most of the callers began their criminal history as adults ($n = 39.0\%$) while only 14% began their criminal history as juveniles. Of the 842 cases, 14.6% of our sample admitted to being arrested more than once while only 6.9% were arrested once. Additionally, when 211 operators asked whether or not callers were 290 offenders, 36.9% reported that they were not 290 offenders while only 6.4% admitted to being 290 offenders. 211 operators also asked formerly incarcerated individuals questions related to their release. Our data shows that 42.5% of callers reported that they were currently under supervision and 3.9% have a GPS device. Despite this valuable information, ultimately, most of the callers did not provide specific information about their criminal history. They identify as formerly incarcerated but will not elaborate on their history, perhaps due to the stigma associated with their criminal label. Another explanation is that since family, friends and partners call to get information on behalf of these currently or formerly incarcerated individuals, the caller has incomplete knowledge of that person’s criminal history.

Descriptive Statistics of Barriers/Needs

In Table 3, we examine the structural factors that represent reentry barriers for some of the callers. When asked, “Do you currently have a job that will still be available once you are released?” 64.1% of callers responded with a “no.” Furthermore, 19.2% of callers were denied employment based on criminal charges.

Table 2: Criminal History Characteristics

Variables	n	Percentage
Total Arrests		
1	58	6.9
2	26	3.1
3	23	2.7
4	31	3.7
5	6	0.7
6	8	1.0
7	3	0.4
8+	25	2.9
Unknown	7	0.7
Missing	654	77.7
Criminal History Began		
Adult	328	39.0
Juvenile	118	14.0
Unknown	4	0.5
Missing	392	46.6
290 Offender		
Yes	54	6.4
No	311	36.9
Unknown	117	13.9
Missing	360	42.8
Currently Under Supervision		
Yes	358	42.5
No	191	22.7
Unknown	332	39.4
GPS		
Yes	33	3.9
No	447	53.1
Unknown	362	42.9

Note: Some respondents did not give a precise number of arrests (e.g. 5+), so those cases are categorized as unknown. The percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

However, employment would be useful to callers such as Reynold who set up work release in Riverside County, “but moved to San Bernardino due to housing issues. He has been working in IHSS, and is not receiving a paycheck, but lodging instead.” Another formal institution that would reduce recidivism is education: Formerly incarcerated individuals who are young and have limited education can experience relatively high rates of recidivism (McDonald, 2014; Wikoff et al., 2012).

Almost 20% of callers reported some type of educational history (3.0% had some college experience; 8.8% graduated from high school or have obtained a GED, and 7.2% only completed junior high school). However, over 80% of callers provided no educational information for themselves or on behalf of the person they were calling for. Yet, it is very common to find low levels of education among offenders suggesting that it may predict deviant behavior in the first place (Lynch & Sabol, 2001; Wikoff et al., 2012). One person who seeks to enroll in a vocational school is Clifford “who had a BOG fee waiver from prison for Victor Valley Community College. But he no longer wishes to go there and now hopes to sign up for Skyway Truck driving school. He does not know if they accept BOG fee waivers and would like to see if the school accepts them.” Some of the callers had previously earned college credits and want to further their education but one barrier to

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Barriers/Needs

Variables	n	Percentage
Type of Transportation		
Bicycle	9	1.1
Own Vehicle	140	16.6
Public Transportation	105	12.5
Ride	193	22.9
None	103	12.2
Missing	292	34.7
Substance Abuse History		
Yes	265	31.5
No	233	27.7
Missing	344	40.9
Current Job		
Yes	103	12.2
No	540	64.1
Unknown	7	0.8
Missing	192	22.8
Education		
Some College	25	3.0
High School/GED	74	8.8
Junior High School	61	7.2
Unknown	12	1.4
Missing	670	79.6
Denied Employment Based on Criminal Charges		
Yes	162	19.2
No	53	6.3
Unknown	184	21.9
Missing	443	52.6
Healthcare		
Yes	486	57.7
No	46	5.5
Missing	310	36.8
Denied Food Outreach/Benefits		
Yes	19	2.3
No	231	27.4
Unknown	115	13.7
Missing	477	56.7

Note: The percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

making it to classes, jobs, and important appointments is a lack of reliable transportation.

Some of our callers (n = 53.1%) had at least one type of transportation available to them. However, 12.2% did not have any type of transportation, as in the case of John: “John is looking for work. He says he is having a hard time finding employment and he does not have transportation. His girlfriend is the only one who would be able to provide transportation but that is limited to certain days. He says he will not be able to travel out of the city.” Another example is Ellen’s family “who said that they are trying their hardest to get an appointment with the organization (the Family Service Association for homeless assistance). They are waiting on a couple of possible rides but say that they will take the bus if they have to get to the appointment.”

These callers also have other basic needs including access to food: 27.4% of callers have been able to access food outreach or benefits, despite their circumstances. Others are still in the process of accessing food benefits: One example is Patricia who “said that the food was their only need at this time.... She says due to their situation they have had to buy food daily and that is more costly than being able to buy for days at a time. She is on probation. Her children’s ages are 8, 9, and 11.” Another example is Dylan who is “living with his mom at this time, has no income and wants to apply for Cal-fresh. He says he needs all the help and tools he can get. He wants to find work. He also needs to get some mental health sessions as ordered by his parole agent. These have already been set up through his agent.” A majority of offenders who called 211 had health care ($n = 57.7\%$) but there is additional data (not shown in the tables) about several mental health conditions that serve as reentry barriers.

As previously stated, in this population, there are high rates of mental illnesses such as schizophrenia/psychosis, post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and anxiety (Wakefield & Uggen, 2010). In the current study, more than a fifth of 211 callers had some mental and physical health conditions such as learning disabilities, schizophrenia, depression, and ADD. For example, Paulette “says her son is very smart but is unstable. Bob has already tried to commit suicide and has been committed before. He usually takes off once he is released and is hard to find. Paulette is worried about him because she says he has mental health issues and he is unstable. She hopes to find an inpatient program for Bob as most of his prior cases have been the result of his episodes.” Another case is Allan who “was diagnosed with depression after his father murdered his mother (and) is looking for a program where he and his family can live together. He was open to the offer for family and couples therapy.” In addition to mental health issues, some callers have issues with chemical dependency or substance abuse.

Inmates who are dependent on drugs or abuse drugs in state prisons are more likely than other prisoners to have a prior offense (Mumola & Karberg, 2006, p.8), which indicates an association between chemical dependency and recidivism. For example, one caller, Denise, said that “her brother is an alcoholic. Jesse got out of prison in March. He poisoned himself by drinking rubbing alcohol while in a rehab. It was not a clinical rehab but more of a men’s home. His last charge was for terrorist threats. Jesse is a 290 offender and has made suicidal remarks... Denise says that her brother is depressed and is giving up on himself. His health is also an issue. His drinking is a real problem to the point that he needs to be monitored. He can get out of control at times. Jesse gets sick when he can’t drink as a symptom of alcohol dependency.” Another case is Antoine who “is on suicide watch, transgender, bipolar, and struggles with a moderate to severe addiction. He has been in Cedar House but was removed from the program. He cannot be boarded with men due to his sexual orientation. He has been denied SSI before but they would like to reapply and get him a psych evaluation.” Ex-offenders who constantly abuse substances will have a hard time finding stable employment and will be more likely to recidivate (Travis, Western, & Redburn, 2014).

Summary of 211 Call Referrals

After taking each call, 211 operators referred callers to several agencies that sought to address their needs. Out of the 842 calls made to 211, the operators made 488 referrals to agencies. Based on prior literature, we hypothesized that human needs resources would be the most frequently requested services. Our data supports this hypothesis, since, according to Table 4, almost half of the referrals ($n = 48.8\%$) were to agencies that provided services or assistance with food, clothes, shelters/housing, utility bill assistance, and/or rental assistance. For example, some of the most commonly referred agencies or services included the Electric Assistance Fund (EAF); Food Pantry; CalFresh (Food Stamp Program); Clothes Closet; Transitional Housing or Shelters (e.g. Special Little Angels, Veronica’s Home of Mercy, etc.); Rental Listings; and Affordable Housing. These referrals are critical since, in the period immediately following release, housing options should help formerly incarcerated individuals desist from criminal activity (Bales & Mears, 2008).

While legal assistance was the least frequently requested area of support by callers in some regions (CMAP Strategy Report, 2008), we hypothesized that legal assistance would be a priority for the callers in our sample. Our data supports this hypothesis since a third of the referrals ($n = 33.6\%$) were to agencies that provided legal assistance, court ordered classes, and/or were reentry organizations. In some cases, when callers needed only legal assistance, they were referred to the public defender’s office, parole offices, or day

reporting centers. Some callers also needed to take court ordered classes such as domestic violence, DUI, and/or anger management classes. For callers who had multiple needs, operators referred them to comprehensive, multi-service programs such as The Fontana Re-entry Support Team (F.R.S.T.) and the Cal State Reentry Initiative.

Table 4: Summary of Referrals Made To Callers

Variables	n	Percentage
Human Needs Resource		
Yes	238	48.8
No	250	51.2
Physical and Mental Health Resources		
Yes	118	24.2
No	370	75.8
Employment Support		
Yes	111	22.8
No	377	77.2
Support for Older Americans and Persons with Disabilities		
Yes	18	3.7
No	470	96.3
Support for Children, Youth and Families		
Yes	97	19.9
No	391	80.1
Legal Assistance		
Yes	164	33.6
No	324	66.4

The third most frequently requested area of support was physical and mental health resources ($n = 24.2\%$). The operators referred callers to agencies that address the substantive and long-term needs associated with their offenses or rehabilitation including drug and alcohol intervention, rehabilitation, physical and occupational therapy, mentally ill homeless programs, walk-in clinics, and counseling. Despite the heavy emphasis placed on employment in prior literature, it was only the fourth most requested area of service for the callers in our sample ($n = 22.8\%$). Callers were referred to agencies that could assist with job training, transportation assistance, workforce development, and/or vocational rehabilitation. We found that support for children, youth and families ($n = 19.9\%$) and support for older Americans and persons with disabilities ($n = 3.7\%$) were the least requested areas of support from callers.

Individuals who receive rehabilitation services may have the catalysts that can prevent future criminal activity. As previously stated, participants in one reentry program that provided substance abuse treatment, job training and job placement services, recidivated less than parolees not involved in the program (Zhang et al., 2006, p. 552). Although life skills and substance abuse programs are the most common reentry programs, the most impactful programs also include housing assistance (Wright, Zhang, Farabee, & Braatz, 2014). The data collected by 211 shows that there are many former prisoners, and their family members, who are proactively seeking these programs and services (especially housing and legal assistance) for their rehabilitation and reintegration back into society.

Conclusion

There has been extensive research examining the factors that predict recidivism but less emphasis placed on the successful methods for a former prisoner's reintegration. In this paper, we explored the conduits and barriers to reentry for a sample of callers using United Way's 211 Reentry Call Center from 2014-2015. We illustrated examples of individuals seeking basic resources, their ties to family members and their quest to join prosocial institutions (employment, education, etc.) or be rehabilitated. This exploratory study revealed

that our sample of 211 callers have intersecting, disadvantaged identities and require multiple services since they are not only previously incarcerated, but are often homeless, disabled and/or mentally ill. Our sample is largely composed of Hispanic males who are in their 40s and unemployed. We expected that inadequate income and insufficient housing would be two areas of reentry that still need to be addressed (Madden, 2016). However, the current study shows that legal assistance and physical and mental health resources are also prominent needs for reentering individuals. Programs should focus on both individual-level interventions and the community context when addressing reentry issues (Travis et al., 2009). This suggests a need for a coordinated, collaborative effort among agencies that can be accomplished under the umbrella of The San Bernardino County Reentry Collaborative (SBCRC). Although ex-prisoners might initially feel shame or guilt when seeking help from others, this collaborative can help reintegrate them into conventional society.

Although San Bernardino County's 211 service generously provided us access to their database of 1,145 calls between 2014 and 2015, this database has several limitations that opens the door for further exploration: As is common in large datasets with multiple variables, there is missing data in several fields. Since callers were not always honest or knowledgeable during the call, (particularly regarding criminal history and mental health status), in some cases the information was recorded as missing or unknown in the dataset. In other cases, due to 211 operator error, the information was simply misspelled. To address this, we used auto-correct to revise the spelling errors. Otherwise, the quotes were intact. Another issue is that since this is only one year of data, we cannot address the recidivism rates of our callers. Furthermore, since the database captures calls, but does not track individual callers, one caller can call several times and it is difficult to ascertain if they used the referrals given to them. While some callers were provided with referrals to several agencies, it is also unclear why almost half of the calls ($n = 42\%$) did not result in referrals to any agencies.

The results of our study give insight into the reentry process for individuals released into the San Bernardino area. One surprising finding is that compared to the CMAP Strategy Report (2008), our sample is predominantly male. We also found that support for children, youth, families, older Americans and persons with disabilities were the least requested areas of support from callers. What role does the age of the offender (i.e. elderly or juvenile offenders) play in the reintegrative shaming process? Are female ex-prisoners, disabled ex-prisoners or parents who are ex-prisoners, more likely than male, single or able-bodied ex-prisoners to be shown forgiveness and reintegrated back into society? Are these ex-prisoners more likely (or able) to access resources on their own, thus not needing 211 assistance? Future researchers should investigate how theory (including social disorganization theory and shaming theory) may account for these trends or address these questions.

While we are focused on the reentry process, desistance and recidivism are components that should also be addressed for this sample. Future researchers using this dataset can also ask the following questions: How would official data contrasted with this self-reported dataset further illuminate the desistance-reentry process? How have the agencies in the 211 database aided callers in this process? These questions will provide future research opportunities for scholars and give a better understanding of the conduits and barriers to successful reentry for ex-prisoners in San Bernardino.

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Competing interests statement: The authors do not work for the 211 call center or have any conflicts of interest. The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not represent the positions of the funding agency or 211.

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