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Order through Honor:
Masculinity and the Use of Temporary
Release in a Greek Prison

External Functions, Internal Problems

The last three decades have witnessed an immense growth in the use of imprisonment in Greece, especially for low-income groups and ethnoracial minorities. Overcrowding in prisons is staggering and living conditions are deplorable, leading various national and international organizations to condemn successive Greek governments for their persistent failure to improve this situation. The Greek public, for its part, has been largely supportive of these penal policies and practices. Both state and public punitiveness, however, have been disproportionately high compared with what has purportedly caused them, that is, crime rates (see Cheliotis and Xenakis 2011).

The apparent paradox can be explained by reference to the politico-economic functions that imprisonment performs in Greece. For example, the looming prospect of imprisonment for minor infractions—and under harsh conditions at that—has intensified the exploitability of the most marginalized segments of the population in the Greek labor market, forcing them to accept any available condition of work in the free community. This is in accordance with what is known in pertinent

literature as the “less eligibility” principle, whereby the working poor are controlled by being constantly threatened with a fate worse than their poverty. At the same time, governing parties have deployed imprisonment as a convenient cathartic remedy for heightened socioeconomic anxieties and increased anger with political elites among the broader Greek public (Cheliotis and Xenakis 2010, 2011; Xenakis and Cheliotis 2013). In this case, the notoriously poor conditions of imprisonment may be said to have helped unconsciously mitigate the pains of downward mobility and falling living standards for the average Greek citizen, reassuring him or her that they still enjoy material advantages over those on the fringes of society. The point here is less that prisoners are held under conditions that remain inferior to those found in free society, as the principle of “less eligibility” stipulates, than that free society itself tends to interpret the substandard conditions of imprisonment in terms of personal and in-group superiority—as a form of “more eligibility,” as it were (Cheliotis 2013).

These external functions of the Greek prison system, however, are not without internal costs for prisons themselves, as severe conditions of imprisonment have contributed to a rise in the frequency and seriousness of incidents of noncompliance by prisoners, including large-scale unrest and riots. The question this article explores is how Greek prison officers seek to achieve order in the cellblocks. Albeit far from absent, physical force cannot be relied on as a solution, partly because of human rights obligations, but mainly because of low staffing and security levels that place officers themselves at risk within the prison. Officers are thus impelled to pursue other, “softer” strategies aimed at eliciting cooperation from prisoners. One way they do so is by offering the prospect of temporary release (known in the United States as “furlough”) in exchange for compliant conduct. Given, however, that the granting of temporary release is tightly restricted by the punitive environment outside prisons, it is a puzzle how this scheme can actually promote prisoner compliance.

Drawing on Erving Goffman’s classic work on prison order and the role of temporary release, the present article develops a novel theoretical argument to explain how compliance might be achieved, at least to some degree, in the absence of concrete rewards and without necessarily requiring a cognitive shift on the prisoner’s part. Fieldwork material collected in a Greek male prison suggests that officers engaged in efforts to transfer the incentivizing properties of temporary release itself onto praise they extended to prisoners for observing prison rules and regulations. The content of such praise entailed references to the ideal of a tamed masculinity

embodied in the traditional Greek notion of *philotimo*, or honor, a finding that bolsters the limited body of research on the pacifying potential of masculine identities in prisons. As the article underlines, however, any gains made for order through this process have at best been transitory, although this has not undermined (and has indeed supported) the broader politico-economic functions of imprisonment in Greece.

Prison Order and Temporary Release

In what follows, I have avoided such phrases as *maintaining* or *securing order*, for they connote the possibility of an undisturbed state of tranquility that stands in marked contrast with the intrinsically volatile environment of the prison institution. Indeed, if asked to describe the social organization of prisons, where individuals are held against their will under conditions designed to cause pain, most insiders would subscribe to Roy King's (1985: 187) observation that "the control problem—of how to maintain 'good order and discipline'—is inherent and endemic." This is not to deny that some version of order exists in prisons, but rather to emphasize that prison order is a matter of degree, manifesting itself variably across different times and spaces, depending on a range of factors (see, e.g., Adler and Longhurst 1994; Carrabine 2004; Jacobs 1977). What prison authorities are actually struggling to achieve, then, is the *maximization* of order in light of the circumstances at hand.

The particular ways in which the authorities seek to maximize order inside prisons are similarly contingent on a host of considerations. Legal restrictions and financial constraints on staffing levels, for example, often limit the exercise of naked force, thus pushing officials to pursue order through cooperation with prisoners. Variations in penal ideology, moreover, are thought to influence whether cooperation itself is sought on the basis of prisoners' instrumental compliance or their active consent following a cognitive shift. The remainder of this article focuses on the pursuit of prison order through prisoners' own cooperation, especially the possibility of temporary release as a practical means to this effect. It is revealed that prisoner compliance can be sought on a basis other than either pure instrumentality or consent, although temporary release has previously been credited with the capacity to bring about each of these conditions as well. To clear the ground for the ensuing discussion of my research in the specific context of a prison in Greece, I first engage below heuristically with some key ideas from Erving Goffman's classic work on prison order and the role of temporary release.

Goffman (1961) famously coined the term *mortification processes* to describe what he sees as the systematic efforts of the prison institution to strip newly convicted offenders of their sense of self, with the dual aim of punishing and controlling them. Until then, Goffman maintains, the self is defined in terms of distinctive ways of life, discretionary decisions, and support from “significant others.” Now, however, the self is fully subjected to the dictates of the prison regime. To this goal, an array of mechanisms are put into effect, ranging from verbal discrediting and removing possessions with which prisoners have identified themselves, to disrupting contact with the outside world. Prisoners, Goffman goes on to argue, are also subjected to an omnipresent authority that seeks to judge and regulate all aspects of their institutional life at its own whim. Within that context, “misbehaviours in one sphere of life [may be] held against one’s standing in other spheres” (Goffman 1961: 76). Although here the institution may seek to impose order by using physical punishment against deviant prisoners (see, e.g., Scraton, Sim, and Skidmore 1991), Goffman provides an account of how prison authorities try to draw prisoners into quiescence by other means.

Goffman (1961) emphasizes what he terms the “privilege system,” as this may help preempt not only individual disruption but also, and most importantly, collective outbursts among prisoners. At the same time that mortification processes are in progress, Goffman elaborates, prisoners are given formal and informal instructions on how to reorganize themselves and rise to an achieved status as individuals, thereby diverting their attention away from group affiliations within the prison walls. Broadly speaking, these instructions provide for a set of coveted privileges, which are held out in exchange for disciplined custodial behavior. Conversely, breaching the rules of prescribed institutional conduct entails the temporary or permanent withdrawal of privileges, or even the abrogation of the right to earn them. Temporary release is a crucial privilege in this system. While prisoners engage in what Goffman (1961: 77) calls a “release binge fantasy,” or “recitals of what one will do during leave,” certain acts of compliance with the rules and regulations of the prison institution come to be identified as a means of lessening the stay behind bars. Prison authorities, in other words, hope to elicit conformity from prisoners by manipulating their eagerness for civilian life, as this is most fully realizable in the prospect of release, even if for brief periods of time (see also Glaser 1964; King and McDermott 1995; Mathiesen 1965; Messinger 1969; Powelson and Bendix 1951).

At first glance, the role Goffman attributes to temporary release does not differ from the idea behind the earliest recorded prerelease scheme,

introduced by Captain Alexander Maconochie at the British penal colony on Norfolk Island back in the 1840s. Maconochie envisaged imprisonment as a graduated series of steps that would move prisoners from an initial period of confinement to private employment in the community under a “ticket-of-leave,” meted out in exchange for good conduct and labor productivity. Yet Maconochie’s model, which soon after inspired Sir Walter Crofton’s “intermediate prison” in Ireland, was premised on the assumption that the prison could perform both a custodial and a rehabilitative function: that it could not only guarantee public protection by incapacitating lawbreakers but also render them capable of leading constructive, law-abiding lives in free-world settings. Although temporary release incentivized prisoner conformity and promoted institutional order, this was meant to be part of the rehabilitative process, not an end in itself (see Barry 1958). The disciplinary function that Maconochie reserved for temporary release thus resembles what Michel Foucault (1977) describes in *Discipline and Punish* as the prison’s effort to “correct” offenders in the sense of permanently “fine-tuning” their moral values and cognitive operations, whereas Goffman talks only about a superficial form of control over prisoners with the short-term aim of institutional order.

The logic underlying Goffman’s account is, in fact, akin to Skinnerian behaviorism. According to B. F. Skinner (1938), compliance can be accomplished by being paired with the presentation of a pleasant stimulus, which takes on the role of a “positive reinforcer.” By contrast, the withdrawal of pleasant stimuli and the reinstatement of unpleasant ones are said to operate in a punitive fashion, as “negative reinforcers,” decreasing the probability that disobedience will occur again. A key practical problem with Goffman’s analysis of the privilege system inside prisons, as much as with the Skinnerian behaviorism that lies implicit in it, is that important reinforcers may be only partially available or even wholly unavailable in the first instance. Temporary release is arguably the most paradigmatic case in point in that the level of its actual deployment is usually inversely proportional to how coveted it is among prisoners, as a result of restrictions posed by exogenous factors such as electoral politics and punitive public opinion.

Whether consciously or otherwise, prison officials often appear to seek solutions in what more recent psychological work has described as a process of behavioral modification that does not merely entail the presentation of an inherently rewarding stimulus (the “primary reinforcer”) but also systematically incorporates the association of that stimulus with communicative gestures of acknowledgment of a certain type of attribute (the

“secondary reinforcer”), the latter gradually assuming all reinforcing properties, albeit without necessarily provoking any deep cognitive change (see Schwartz and Reisberg 1991). Goffman at best only alludes to this process when he explains how prisoners are encouraged to outgrow their “ascribed” status of degradation and instead strive toward an “achieved” status of recognition in the eyes of the authorities.

Subsequent accounts of the prison institution have revealed official efforts to incentivize prisoner compliance where it is given symbolic recognition as an indicator of “responsibilized” character. The focus of these accounts, however, has been restricted to positive characterological assessments by the authorities as a necessary prerequisite for prisoners to attain more tangible rewards such as home leave or parole, whether in the context of a “carrot-and-stick” system that aims to elicit instrumental compliance or as part of a “reeducation” process in Foucault’s sense of the term (see, e.g., Cheliotis 2006; Crewe 2009; Rothman 1980; Toch 1988).¹ What is thus missed is the potential role of favorable official attributions of character as “secondary reinforcers” that enhance prisoner compliance in the relative absence of tangible rewards themselves, a form of compliance that is not ideological even though it can have only limited grounding in instrumentality.

In what follows, I hope to help fill this gap in the literature by specifying the content, identifying the mechanics, and evaluating the actual effectiveness of such a “secondary reinforcer” in the particular environment of a prison in Greece—a country that remains itself grossly understudied in the broader field of research on prisons.

A Study in a Greek Prison

The present article draws on material collected during a study of decision-making processes concerning temporary release in a Greek male prison.² The prison in question is located in the Korydallos district southwest of Athens and has long been the largest and most overcrowded custodial establishment in the country. At the time of research, the prison had a certified accommodation of 640, but consistently held over 2,000 prisoners, nearly half of whom were foreigners. Partly as a consequence of severe overcrowding, and partly because of a persistent lack of state provision, conditions of imprisonment were deplorable: floor space was insufficient, sanitation was limited, ventilation and hot water were lacking, room temperature was

unsuitable, hygiene was poor, health care provision was minimal, and illicit drug abuse was rife (see Cheliotis 2011, 2012).

Fieldwork took place during daily visits to the prison over four months in the early 2000s, supplemented by a number of visits before and after. In addition to collecting archival data on temporary release applications, I conducted semistructured interviews with senior officials and held informal discussions with prison officers, other members of the prison staff (e.g., social workers), and prisoners. Access to the cellblocks was limited; hence most of my fieldwork was undertaken on the administration wing, where I could mix relatively freely with various parties, including circulating prisoners. The central focus of interviews and informal discussions was on the factors that affected the granting of temporary release and on the functions the scheme performed in the prison.

The primary form of temporary release was what is generally known as home leave. In theory, it was intended to enable prisoners to maintain family ties and links with the community, thereby also smoothing their transition to civilian life after permanent release. This kind of temporary release counted toward the length of the sentence to be served and could be granted for between one and five (or, in certain cases, eight) consecutive days at a time. Eligibility to apply was restricted by length of sentence but not by ethnic origin, and all applications were assessed by the Disciplinary Prison Board, a small group of senior prison officials.

Elsewhere I have argued that harsh conditions inevitably jeopardized order in the prison, and what was legally a right to temporary release was practically deployed as a privilege for compliant prisoners with a view to preempting descent into disorder. In the words of a senior official then serving on the board, temporary release lent itself as “a powerful right that forces prisoners to behave well.” But while the granting of temporary release was undergoing a notable expansion overall, the scheme was in fact mostly reserved for a disproportionately small number of prisoners deemed to pose low risk of absconding and reoffending. This was in good part a consequence of political, media, and public pressures to put an end to what were portrayed and viewed as the repeated security failings of the Greek criminal justice system, including breaches of temporary release conditions by well-known prisoners (see Cheliotis 2006).

In the remainder of this article, I examine how prison officers sought to manage the implications that stemmed for order from the discrepancy between the promise that prisoners were given for temporary release in

exchange for compliant conduct and the degree to which the prison carried out its part of this informal agreement.

“Carrots” and “Sticks” or Trust and Respect?

Although nobody in prison doubted that temporary release was used as a way to incentivize prisoner compliance, views differed with regard to the actual process followed. Members of the Disciplinary Prison Board were adamant that temporary release was so desirable among prisoners it could easily operate as a “carrot-and-stick” mechanism without any need for officials to describe prisoner conformity in more flattering terms such as those of a positive characterological assessment. A member of the board explained:

There is no point in doing something like that. . . . Things are fairly straightforward. Prisoners themselves know why leaves are granted or not. . . . Such information spreads around the wing within seconds after a decision has been made. This is what prisoners discuss most of the time. They can even tell by the way someone moves whether he has been granted leave or not. . . . For instance, they all know that if they want a few days’ leave, they have to respect the prison rules and regulations.

Yet the perspective offered by the prison warden, prison officers, and even prisoners themselves—those who worked and lived “where the action was” in prison—was far more complex. Despite not denying or failing to consider the function of temporary release as a way to incentivize compliant prisoner conduct, all three parties suggested that the exercise of power and the promotion of order inside prison walls was a fundamentally associative process, where the evocation and application of formal rules and regulations was often a delicate balancing act.

On the one hand, prisoners conceived of prison officers as the main directly accessible embodiment of the carceral administration. This implied that relationships with prison officers acquired a potentially instrumental character insofar as they might further private ends. It was an open secret, for example, that establishing a good rapport with a prison officer could facilitate the granting of temporary release, given that the decision-making board commonly asked wing officers for an informal but crucial report on the custodial behavior and “character” of applicants. At the same time, an unwritten inmate code that discouraged fraternization with officers and prohibited submission to authority, combined with the “natural” compulsion to pre-

serve personal dignity vis-à-vis one's jailers, meant that prisoners' conformity was anything but granted; it often required more than mere "carrots," however appealing these might be.

On the other hand, custodial staff perceived their duty to keep order as largely dependent on the cooperation of prisoners themselves, and strict enforcement of the letter of the law was generally thought to be counterproductive, especially as it might exacerbate tensions already under way because of harsh prison conditions. In pursuing this associative form of order, officers did not directly lure prisoners with the prospect of temporary release, but linked it to what Gresham Sykes and Sheldon Messinger (1960) describe in a different penal environment as the "lost privilege" of being trusted and respected. This was due to at least three reasons. First, in the absence of any formal provision for release on temporary license as an incentive for good custodial conduct, officers systematically avoided presenting the scheme explicitly as such, in order to sustain an appearance of legality for the process. Second, officers seemed to believe that perceived trust and respect by staff are important for enhancing compliance among prisoners. Third and most importantly, however, the restricted granting of temporary release implied the need to shift the incentivizing energy of the scheme from the outcome it afforded to the process it involved. That is to say, by pairing the prospect of temporary release with symbolic gestures of trust and respect following observable acts of compliance, all reinforcing properties might be transferred to those gestures themselves.

But what exactly did trust and respect mean, and to what extent could their symbolic acknowledgment suffice to compensate for the relative lack of temporary release as an incentive for compliant custodial behavior?

The Ideal of *Philotimo*

The effort under way was to promote prison order by transferring the incentivizing properties of temporary release itself onto recognitions of prisoners' embodiment of the traditional Greek concept of *philotimo*, or honor. That honor should be deployed as a means of holding prisoners in check appears paradoxical inasmuch as the prison works to dishonor those it keeps confined within its walls (Wacquant 2001), thereby also pushing them toward alternative forms of honorability defined and attained in opposition to institutional structures (see, e.g., Sykes and Messinger 1960; and Sabo, Kupers, and London 2001). The paradox is resolved, however, as soon as *philotimo* is understood in its proper cultural context.

As the anthropologist of Greece John Campbell (1964: 41) argues, *philotimo* “as the recognised integrity and value of the individual personality is profoundly important to Greeks, whether they are peasants or cabinet ministers.” The basic ingredients of *philotimo* are manliness and honor of the family name, both ordaining archetypal patterns of behavior (Peristiany 1966). For the purposes of the present analysis, I focus on manliness. This concept, according to Campbell (1964: 145–46), expresses self-reliance and individual worth as measured by and against others, and connotes not only physical strength and the condition of being courageous but also “the ability of a man to do something efficient and effective about the problems and dangers which surround him . . . whilst disciplin[ing] animal strength and passions.”

Campbell’s understanding of composed manliness as an integral component of *philotimo* is of vital importance, for it breaks with widely accepted stereotypes that cast masculine honor solely in terms of virulent aggression, thus also anticipating later scholarship that has sought to reveal the inherently contested nature of the concept, including the role it may play in bringing various manifestations of violence to a halt (see, e.g., Gutmann 1996; Iliffe 2005; Appiah 2010). Indeed, Campbell has extended his analysis of peaceful expressions of masculine honor to include cases taken from groups of people commonly associated with criminal violence, such as the warrior communities of brigands in the mountains of mainland Greece during the period of Ottoman administration (see Campbell [1992] 2005; and Avdela 2011; Herzfeld 1985; Gallant 2002). Recent studies of prison life on both sides of the Atlantic (e.g., Inderbitzin 2007; Phillips 2012) lend a good deal of support to this observation.

Campbell’s remarks remain as relevant as ever in the contemporary Greek context, both because the ideal of *philotimo* still pertains as such and because it is commonly put to important political uses, especially in the prevention or arrest of social disorder. Since harsh austerity measures were introduced in Greece amid conditions of financial crisis in 2010, for example, various domestic political elites have made dramatic appeals to what they refer to generically as the “Greek *philotimo*” in a thinly disguised effort to preempt disaffection and unrest among the public. Criminologists of Greece, however, have yet to come to grips with the pacifying potential inherent to the observance of honor or with its deployment as a means of social control, as they theorize only its dangerous and deviant properties, from instigating killings to inhibiting former prisoners from seeking help to “reintegrate” themselves into the community. Prison officers in the course of my research, by contrast, openly acknowledged the malleable nature of masculine honor, even though its manipulability appeared to be safely

entrenched in the semiconscious, habitual aspects of their daily work; after all, officers themselves were praised by the warden as exhibiting *philotimo* in carrying out their custodial tasks under strenuous working conditions and on low wages.

***Philotimo* in Action**

That officers were able to draw on *philotimo* as a commonly shared cultural frame of reference, at once a descriptive idiom and a yardstick by which to gauge the moral worth of others, was crucial to their efforts to maximize control over prisoners. It is not simply that discourse must fit certain conventions in order for its essence and significance to be grasped; the very fact that they are grasped also enhances their apparent credibility and, ultimately, their appeal (Herzfeld 1992). The exclusive and agonistic micro-society that develops almost by nature in prison settings helped boost the punctiliousness of the code of masculine honor even further, and so did the gradual development of personal relationships between prisoners and prison officers. As John Peristiany (1966: 187) argues, “It is only when a personal relationship has been established that the inferior’s *philotimo* permits him to subordinate himself without self-abasement and tempers the necessity for the superior constantly to flaunt his superiority.”

In practice, officers encouraged prisoners to take responsibility for their own discipline by making somewhat vague commitments such as the following: “You show me that you have *philotimo*, and I will put in a good word for you when the time comes.” What was required of prisoners, in other words, was to execute performances of compliance, foregrounding a version of manhood premised on orderliness and predictability. Here the distinction between “being a good man” and “being good at being a man,” which Michael Herzfeld (1985: 16) notes in his ethnography of Cretan mountain villagers, was blurred to elicit prisoners’ subordination to the custodial regime, albeit not necessarily to effectuate a genuine transformation of their mindset, as Foucault and his followers would have us believe; recognition did not presuppose an actual change in cognition. If anything, and officers knew this well, prisoners might be pushed into games of trickery, putting on appearances of submissiveness so as to achieve their own ends. From the perspective of the authorities, however, such dissembling by prisoners was in itself sufficiently convenient insofar as it entailed observance of institutional rules.

But if, as mentioned earlier, the political utility of the traditional Greek notion of *philotimo* rests on the cultural capacity of audiences to appreciate it in the dual sense of understanding and valuing it accordingly, then the

immediate question for present purposes is whether it was deployed with foreign prisoners. Surprisingly, perhaps, foreigners were no less expected by prison officers, all of whom were Greek, to appreciate the language of *philotimo* and adjust their conduct to the model of composed manliness that inheres in it.³ This expectation seemed at first sight to grant *philotimo* an important degree of universality, disassociating the possibility of its actualization from one's ethnoracial background. Yet several members of the custodial staff still thought of tamed masculinity in ethnocentric terms, as an innately Greek ideal and one that foreign prisoners were especially in need to pursue, or at least enact, so as to restrain their allegedly enhanced propensity to insubordination and violence. Officers frequently argued, for example, that non-Greek and especially Albanian prisoners were significantly more likely than their Greek counterparts to form cliques, settle disputes by violent means, and seek vengeance on trivial issues.

There was considerable irony in this situation, given that foreign prisoners were called on to perform the values of a society that so often wished their physical exclusion by way of imprisonment (and, in many cases, through eventual deportation). According to the warden, the goal for the prison was nevertheless fulfilled:

When Albanians first came here, we faced serious problems. They were having fights all the time, big fights, they were splitting each other's heads open. They were divided into Northerners and Southerners and they were sorting out political differences from their homeland. . . . I had to separate the groups into different wings and send their leaders to different prisons. . . . The rest of the foreigners also formed groups to defend themselves. . . . But we never had such problems with Greeks. They have *philotimo*. . . . Nowadays, foreigners also have *philotimo*, they seem to have adopted our values.

Whether in relation to Greek or foreign prisoners, however, the warden's account exaggerated the degree of order achieved on the landings. Sooner or later, the limits of the language of *philotimo* as a mechanism of prisoner control were bound to be laid bare by the restricted use of temporary release itself.

The Limits of *Philotimo*

The prospect of release on temporary license has historically been used by prison authorities as a way to incentivize prisoner compliance with the institution's rules and regulations. This obviously reflects how coveted

temporary release tends to be among prisoners, which itself speaks volumes about the painful nature of the experience of imprisonment. All too frequently, however, the extent to which temporary release can actually be granted is restricted by factors external to the prison, such as “law and order” politics and punitive public opinion, although it would be wrong to presume that prison authorities themselves would otherwise be in favor of expanding the granting of temporary release.

Alternative incentives may be deployed to promote prison order, some of which allow for contact with the outside world (e.g., access to telephones or in-cell television; see Jewkes 2002; Liebling 2004b; Crewe 2009). But lack of resources and, once again, political and public pressures often imply restrictions to the use of such alternatives as well. And even when alternative incentives are available, whatever potency they may possess is likely to be undermined by other problems commonly found in prison establishments, from overcrowding to poor health care provision, themselves no less contingent on the extra-institutional dynamics of political and public will.

Such was the situation in the male prison of Korydallos, although matters were complicated further by how the authorities sought to address them. While there were reports that brute force was threatened and, on occasion, carried out by prison officers against disobedient prisoners, order in the cell-blocks was still mainly pursued by recourse to “softer” means of influence. Chief among these remained the incentive of temporary release, its restricted actual granting notwithstanding. Seemingly unconsciously, or rather semi-consciously, prison officers engaged in a continuous “behaviorist” effort to pair the prospect of temporary release with the characterological attribution of *philotimo* to prisoners who exhibited compliant conduct, thus potentially shifting the reinforcing properties of temporary release to the attribution of *philotimo* itself. This was no attempt at remaking prisoners’ characters; what was at stake was instead the relatively superficial and short-term goal of stimulating their compliance so as to serve the immediate institutional need for order.

One should take care not to mistake the invocation of the language of *philotimo* for a sign of genuine respect toward prisoners. At the level of intentions, as Alison Liebling (2004a: 208) writes, “respect shown by staff in order to achieve something (like compliance) [is] not respect.” In terms of content and application, moreover, true respect “acknowledges the dignity of the individual and the possibility of difference. . . . It places obligations on others . . . to treat individuals as to who they are and not as a representative of a ‘type.’” Although officers recognized prisoners’ capacity to distinguish

themselves as individuals, such distinction was defined as divergence from a typified category of deviants, and indeed as alignment of one's conduct with the pattern of an alternative, honorable collectivity, to say nothing of the fact that the definition of distinction was not of prisoners' own choosing in the first instance.

Such "philosophical" questions, to the extent that they were considered at all, were quickly overshadowed by officers' pragmatic preoccupation with order. This was where the real test lay, from the perspective of the authorities, for any effort to promote prisoner compliance. What, then, of the effectiveness of the "behaviorist" usage of *philotimo*? Despite the warden's self-assured declaration of success, symbolic gestures of recognition of compliant prisoners' masculine honor had at best only a transitory positive effect on institutional order. Practical restrictions in the granting of temporary release, whether in terms of the number of prisoners released or the promptness and frequency of their release, could not but eventually give rise to feelings of resentment among the majority of hopeful prisoners. It was not simply that recognition of one's *philotimo* was in itself inadequate as a long-term substitute for temporary release; the moral weight of masculine honor attached to compliance made the authorities' failure to grant the earned reward of temporary release all the more egregious. Ultimately, in fact, resentment helped undermine rates of prisoner compliance itself.

Unrest and even riots were becoming ever more frequent in the prison, with the underuse and unfair administration of temporary release being consistently one of protesting prisoners' key grievances, alongside degrading physical conditions of confinement and inadequate medical provision (see Cheliotis 2012). Commonly shared feelings of persistent injustice appeared to have triggered a cross-ethnic prisoner movement based on an instrumental type of solidarity, which, as Thomas Mathiesen (1965) notes, may be stronger than "pure" peer solidarity in that the movement in question could, in addition to lobbying for certain demands to be addressed, also point out to the authorities the illegitimacy of their actions (see also Hepburn 1985).

With the benefit of hindsight, it should nevertheless be recognized that prisoner unrest and rioting have commonly been evoked in mainstream political and public discourse in Greece to lend retrospective justification to stereotypical representations of prisoners as untameable and incorrigible, thereby also helping rationalize recourse to continuing and intensified punitiveness against them. There is no doubt that this has made matters worse for prison administrators and officers in that it has created a cycle of disorder within prison walls. Beyond the confines of the prison, however, the punitive policies and practices facilitated by the repeated surfacing of violent pris-

oner imagery have supported important symbolic and material functions in the political arena and social life in Greece, from the politically convenient cathartic discharge of socioeconomic insecurities among the public to the sustenance of an exploitable labor force.

Notes

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- 1 In the former case, “responsibility” is just another descriptor of compliance, whereas in the latter case it connotes the cognitive and other skills that may be acquired through acculturation into compliance during custody.
- 2 The majority of research on imprisonment and its various facets in Greece concerns male establishments. For a collection of studies on women’s imprisonment in Greece, see Cheliotis (forthcoming).
- 3 Most foreign prisoners spoke Greek sufficiently well to be able to communicate directly with prison officers about basic aspects of prison life. In any case, the concept of *philotimo* is hard to translate into another language.

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