Custodial Parole Sanctions and Earnings after Release from Prison

Although the labor market consequences of incarceration in prison have been central to the literature on mass incarceration, punishment, and inequality, other components of the growing criminal justice system have received less attention from sociologists. In particular, the rise of mass incarceration was accompanied by an even larger increase in community supervision. In this paper, we examine the labor market effects of one frequently experienced aspect of post-prison parole, short-term custody for parole violations. Although such sanctions are viewed as an alternative to returning parole violators to prison, they have the potential to affect labor market outcomes in ways similar to imprisonment, including both adverse and positive effects on earnings. We estimate that parolees lost approximately 37 percent of their earnings in quarters during which they were in short-term custody. Although their earnings tended to increase in the quarter immediately following short-term custody?consistent with the stated intentions of such sanctions?parolees experienced further earnings loss over the longer term after such sanctions. In the third quarter following a short-term custody sanction, earnings are lowered by about 13 percent. These associations are larger for those who were employed in the formal labor market before their initial incarceration.

Reference Information

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