Reautonomising: Shaping the Passage of Parole

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the Requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOCSAR</td>
<td>Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSP</td>
<td>Basic Social Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSPP</td>
<td>Basic Social Psychological Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSSP</td>
<td>Basic Social Structural Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBP</td>
<td>Court Based Parole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCMG</td>
<td>Community Compliance Monitoring Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCO</td>
<td>Community Correctional Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Community Impact Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS</td>
<td>Community Offender Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSP</td>
<td>Community Offender Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRES</td>
<td>Corrections Research, Evaluation &amp; Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSNSW</td>
<td>Corrective Services New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAGJ</td>
<td>Department of Attorney General and Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLM</td>
<td>Good Lives Model (of offender management)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GTM</td>
<td>Grounded Theory Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICO</td>
<td>Intensive Correctional Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSI-R</td>
<td>Level of Service Inventory-Revised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSWDoJ</td>
<td>New South Wales Department of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSWDP&amp;J</td>
<td>New South Wales Department of Police &amp; Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RNR</td>
<td>Risk, Needs and Responsivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPA</td>
<td>State Parole Authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Certificate of Authorship

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a certain extent has been accepted to the award of any other degree or diploma at Charles Sturt University, or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis. Any contribution made to the research by colleagues with whom I have worked at Charles Sturt University or elsewhere during my candidature is fully acknowledged.

I agree that this thesis be accessible for the purpose of study and research in accordance with the normal conditions established by the Executive Director, Library Services or nominee, for the care, loan and reproduction of theses.”

Signature………………………………………………………Date: 22\textsuperscript{nd} March 2017
Acknowledgements

This thesis would not be possible without the contributions of the parolee participants who gave their time to talk about their experiences. I extend my gratitude to them and hope their lives will be full of promise.

Acknowledgement is given to Dr Christine Jennett who gave me her valuable support and encouragement to keep going when times were tough. I am extremely grateful for her patience and guidance over the ‘thesis’ years.

Special thanks go to all my colleagues with whom I worked in the field of Corrections in New South Wales. Their keen insights and our shared experiences kept us all dedicated to our practice.

Acknowledgement of Assistance

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Ethics Approval

Ethics approval was sought and granted by the Charles Sturt University Human Research Ethics Committee on 24th October, 2008 (approval number 2008/158).

Ethics approval was sought and granted by the NSW Department of Corrective Services Corporate Research, Evaluation and Statistics Unit (CRES) on 28th January, 2009.
Dedication

This work is dedicated to my husband who walked the long journey with me and to my dear father and mother whose love has always nurtured my goals in life.
Abstract

When prisoners are released to the community on parole, they enter a controlled and contingent passage of their lives which affords them conditional citizen status until their sentence expires. Parole in New South Wales (NSW), Australia has two functions: to protect the public by monitoring parolees for compliance with court and parole orders, and to provide support for their community reintegration. Given that a large proportion of parolees return to prison for breaching their parole, an examination of their re-entry experience is warranted in light of the emphasis on risk management and its role in recidivism reduction.

The assessment, calculation and management of the risk of recidivism in the offender population remain as the central organising features of the supervision of parolees in the community. The research aim was to explore the experiences of prisoners released to the community on parole and to explain how they managed ascribed risk in the first six months of re-entry.

Fourteen parolees were interviewed in four regional NSW locations as they re-entered the community and again approximately six months later. Data from twenty four in-depth interviews was analysed using the classic grounded theory method developed by Glaser & Strauss (1967) to discover the concern of the parolees and to develop a substantive theory explaining how they resolved their concern. As a result of the systematic analytical procedures of the grounded theory method, the central concern of the parolees to restore a felt sense of autonomy in their lives was conceptualised as reautonomising.

The substantive theory of Reautonomising: Shaping the Passage of Parole explained the resolving behaviour of the participants as a pervasive basic social process which varied with conditions and changes over time. In this study, the process of reautonomising was defined by three discernible stages: orientating to the passage of parole, manoeuvring to optimise autonomy and sustaining autonomy. Each stage of the process involved the
interaction of social-psychological and social-structural processes, thus shaping the way the participants in the study experienced their trajectory through the passage of parole.

Although managing ascribed risk did not emerge as the main concern of the participants in the study, the behaviours employed by them in their attempts to reautonomise revealed how risks were perceived, situated and managed in the first six months of their time on parole.
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Prompted by escalating prison populations, poor results from rehabilitative efforts, populist punitive approaches to crime and limited resources, governments in the Western world are constantly seeking different ways to reduce crime, recidivism and manage prison populations.

When Feeley and Simon (1992) proposed their ‘new penology’ thesis over twenty years ago, they captured the ideological shifts which were to continue shaping the approach to managing offenders to the present day. They contended that the ‘new penology’ was not a theory of crime or criminology, rather a conceptual integration of the changes in discourses, objectives and techniques which have coalesced to form a “new strategic formation” in the penal field (Feeley & Simon, 1992, p. 449).

As part of this strategic formation, a risk management approach to crime accepts the notion of offending not as a sign of abnormality but rather as a contingency, or ‘normal social fact’ (Garland, 1996, p. 445). Crime as ‘risk’ therefore implies a modification of modern penality’s quest to eliminate crime by correcting its underlying causes in favour of modest managerial objectives.

Despite the pessimistic ‘nothing works’ edict of Martinson’s (1974) review of offender programmes in the 1970s, rehabilitation retains partial legitimacy in the form of the ‘new rehabilitationist’ or the ‘What Works’ movement (Robinson, 2005). This movement, led by a number of Canadian, North American and British criminologists and correctional practitioners, has demonstrated how the concept of risk has permeated the discourses and practices of the correctional field and opened up a new range of challenges and possibilities to manage the problem of re-offending. The ‘strategic formation’ of the current managerialist model with its attendant risk discourses and risk technologies has dominated the Australian correctional
A risk-based model of offender management has become firmly entrenched in the policies and practices of correctional management in the Australian state of New South Wales (NSW), with an increasing focus on the utility of risk technologies to organise the provision and structure of services to the offender population. However, in spite of the contribution made by risk technologies to the problem of re-offending, 50.7% of NSW prisoners released during 2013-14 returned to prison within two years (2015-16), the second highest rate of recidivism compared to other Australian States and Territories, and higher than the national average of 44.6% (Australian Productivity Commission Report on Government Services, 2017). The NSW government has tacitly acknowledged a failure to reach its performance target to reduce juvenile and adult re-offending by 5% by 2016 (NSW Government State Plan, 2011, p. 35), and has now modified its target to a 5% reduction in adult re-offending by 2019 (NSW Government Premier’s Priorities, 2015).

Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW), under the auspices of the NSW Department of Justice (NSWDoJ) is the lead agency responsible for delivering effective services to meet the Government targets. The process of return to the community, commonly referred to as re-entry, is a most crucial time for parolees to adjust to community living while being monitored and supervised by Community Corrections employing a risk-based model of offender management. Under this model, all parolees re-enter the community with an ascribed level of predicted recidivism risk derived from statistical assessment of their past lifestyle factors and offending history. The intensity of supervision and services allocated to parolees while completing their sentence in the community is determined by their level of ascribed risk and the identification of risk factors (or ‘needs’) related to past offending that may respond to intervention. Managed as ‘bearers of risk’ (Ward & Maruna, 2007, p. 20), this contingent passage of time is wrought with difficulty for the parolee as he tries to negotiate everyday life within

---

1 The NSW Attorney General’s Department and the NSW Department of Corrective Services were amalgamated in 2009 to form the Department of Justice and Attorney General. In 2011, the NSW Department of Attorney General and Justice was created and renamed as the Department of Police and Justice in 2014. The department was retitled as the Department of Justice later in the same year.

2 Males form the largest cohort of parolees in NSW and are the focus of this study.
the constraints of the ‘disciplinary gaze’ of authority (Foucault, 1975/1991), the moral gaze of the community, and his own subjective gaze to model himself as a law abiding citizen.

Where previously criminologists focused on recidivism rates of offenders serving a sentence or parole in the community, the past fifteen years has seen a resurgence of interest in the re-entry experience of prisoners to understand desistance and recidivism. A re-entry paradigm offers a multi-faceted approach in continuing this interest by seeking out theoretical explanations of the problems and patterns of behaviour experienced by individuals in correctional settings where they are managed as ‘bearers of risk’.

Whereas most NSW research literature on the subject of parole focuses on re-offending rates as a measure of parole success or failure, few researchers have delved into the re-entry experiences of individuals in the substantive setting of parole—a setting which is controlled and shaped by the rubrics of risk management—to ask how and if individuals adopt the notion of managing risk into their daily lives. In order to understand what is really going on for parolees in the initial stage of re-entry, an exploratory method of inquiry was needed to seek out and conceptualise their concern and to explain theoretically the patterns of behaviour they use to resolve it.

The remainder of this chapter provides an introduction to the current setting and purpose of the study and is structured according to the following sections:

- Background to the study
- The research aim
- The significance of the study
- Overview of Grounded Theory
- Outline of the thesis
- Chapter summary

**Background to the Research**

The most significant strategic shift for correctional practice in Australia since the late 1990s has been the formalisation and standardisation of risk
technologies. Although offenders and prisoners were previously managed according to their individual needs and offence categories, the new technologies provide a neutral method of prioritising and managing offenders according to their statistically ascribed risk and assessed criminogenic ‘needs’. Risk based technologies serve a utilitarian, organisational function by prioritising services and providing a common discourse for managing offenders between agencies and departments.

One of the main organising risk technologies of CSNSW has been the adoption of the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R), an instrument originally devised by Canadian psychologists, Andrews and Bonta (1995), to rationalise resources according to the recidivism risk of offender populations. This tool has been accepted as the standard instrument to categorise risk of recidivism of offender populations with the focus on the degree “to which individuals constitute a menace to the community and then setting out to reduce or minimise their risk factors in the most cost-efficient manner” (Ward & Maruna, 2007, p. 20).

The widespread acceptance of this risk technology has provided a reprieve for the rehabilitation ideal, in the form of the Risk-Need-Responsivity Model (RNR model), developed by Andrews & Bonta (2003). In their publication *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*, the three principles of the RNR model lie primarily in the allocation of resources, where correctional interventions applied to offenders are linked to their assessed level of risk, to the factors associated with offending (*needs*) and the ability of the offender to respond (*responsivity*) to the interventions provided. This model has gained ground over the last twenty years in Canada, North America, Britain and New Zealand, with empirical research evidence showing encouraging results from a range of correctional programs.

The reliance on this model and the accumulation of statistical evidence to support it has increased the spread of risk discourse and associated evidence-based programming for offenders from sentencing to release to the community. The RNR model of governance has continued to raise concerns from criminologists regarding the identification and marginalisation of
dangerous’ groups (Hannah-Moffat, 2005; Robinson, 2002; Hudson, 2001), and an over-focus on the tendency to put more time, effort and resources into the processes of risk assessment than into actions that manage risks (Kemshall & Maguire, 2001, p. 253).

Whereas the RNR model implies that risk is an assessed ‘attribute’ of the offender who has deficits or ‘needs’ which require treatment to reduce the likelihood of re-offending, the Good Lives Model (GLM) of offender rehabilitation (Ward & Brown, 2004; Ward & Maruna, 2007; Ward & Stewart, 2003) implies that offenders share the same inclinations and basic needs as other people and are naturally predisposed to seek certain goals; the primary human goods of relatedness, creativity, physical health and mastery. Rehabilitation, according to this model requires not just the targeting of isolated factors, but also the holistic reconstruction of the self (Ward & Maruna, 2007).

A binary narrative has surfaced regarding the discourses about re-entry, with the emphasis on recidivism reduction on the one hand and reintegration on the other. Hannah-Moffat (2005), proposed that both narratives can work together, however the current dominance of risk reduction and public protection overshadows the social, political and economic factors which are related to offending behaviour. Steen, Lacoc and McKinsey (2012) revealed their scepticism of a merging of the narratives by commenting that the recidivism reduction narrative stays close to the retributive model of punishment and that there is more to consider in the discourse on re-entry:

Another distinction between the narratives lies in underlying assumptions about agency, the question of whether we can trust offenders themselves to change (whether we believe they have the initiative and the potential to change), or whether the system has to force change upon them.


The recidivism reduction narrative has acquired particular significance for the NSW Government, with its current modified target of a 5% reduction in adult re-offending by 2019 (NSW Government Premier’s Priorities, 2015). As a result of increased prisoner numbers the pressure to provide resources for the Community Corrections arm of CSNSW, as well as to involve and
assist non-government community based programs to support re-entry, has increased.

Current strategies and goals for the NSW Department of Attorney General & Justice (DAG&J) Strategic Framework (2012-2014) have continued to focus on preventing and reducing the level of reoffending by the more rigorous application of risk technologies to the practices of supervision, monitoring, management and rehabilitation of serious violent and sex offenders on release from custody. Peter Severin, the Commissioner for CSNSW announced to the press:

While the community impact of reoffending always plays an important role in offender management, our new Community Impact Assessments combined with Risk Assessments place an even higher emphasis on community safety.

This new system is an Australian first. It creates a range of new categories including a high-risk, high-consequence group at the top end of the scale, to which we are targeting extra resources.

Corrective Services NSW Media Release (2013, paras.5-6)

The discourses and practices based on risk assessment and management are firmly embedded in organisational rationales and procedures in the delivery of services and in the relationship between correctional authorities and offender populations in their care. The proliferation of risk technologies such as statistical risk assessment and risk prediction instruments, and the practices based on the technologies, have identified and isolated specific offender groups for intensive risk management in custody and on release to parole. In order to manage specific categories of offenders in the community, CSNSW established a number of Community Compliance and Monitoring Groups (CCMG) in various NSW locations. The groups consisted of specialist Community Correctional Officers (CCOs) who provided intensive monitoring and surveillance of serious high risk offenders released to the community on parole, and offenders who were placed on community-based Intensive Correctional Orders (ICOs). However, after an independent review (Hamburger, 2012), the CCMG was merged with Community Offender Management to form a restructured Community Corrections Division of CSNSW.
**Risk technologies in CSNSW**

Efforts to manage parolees more effectively in the community pose particular policy and fiscal management issues for CSNSW, given the cost per day for an incarcerated offender is $194.04 compared with $23.54 per day for an offender managed in the community (NSW Department of Police and Justice Annual Report, 2013-14, pp. 67-79). In response to these organisational economic demands, risk technologies have proliferated to improve the allocation and efficiency of the limited resources available to government departments. Standardised risk assessment tools, in particular the LSI-R (Andrews & Bonta, 1995), have been the central organising mechanisms used by CSNSW to target and distribute resources to those offenders assessed as having the highest need.

The actuarial assessment of risk is a core function of CSNSW and serves the dual purposes of identifying the risk the offender might pose to him/herself and the risk the offender might pose to the community (Corrective Services NSW Compendium of Offender Assessments, 2016, p. 5). Assessment of offenders is based on a five tiered system (see Figure 1 below), with each tier containing a discrete set of assessments which increase in depth as the tiers increase:

*Tier 1* refers to intake-type assessments which screen, collect and record information about all offenders.

*Tier 2* assessments apply to all sentenced and court-ordered offenders in order to establish their risk of re-offending, criminogenic needs and readiness for intervention. The LSI-R (Andrews & Bonta, 1995) is the standard instrument used for Tier 2 assessments by CSNSW.

*Tier 3* assessments concentrate on the criminogenic needs identified in the domains of the LSI-R as well providing more in-depth information on issues related to specific types of offences (for example, violent and sexual offences).

*Tier 4* is comprised of a group of assessments applied in the pre and post stages of program delivery to evaluate the outcomes of intervention programs (for example whether an offender’s problem solving skills have improved).
*Tier 5* assessments consist of a range of clinical assessments carried out by psychologists or other specialists (such as IQ tests, tests for emotional states, cognitive functioning and personality tests).

![Tiered Assessment Diagram](image)

**Figure 1. Tiered Assessment**  
Source: Corrective Services NSW Compendium of Offender Assessments (2016, p. 5)

The LSI-R is a standardised actuarial tool used in CSNSW to assess all offenders across ten lifestyle domains containing both static (unchangeable events) and dynamic items (amenable to interventions): Criminal History; Education/Employment; Financial; Family/Marital; Accommodation; Leisure/Recreation; Companions; Alcohol/Drug; Emotional/Personal, and Attitude/Orientation. Each domain is scored according to the weighting of 0 or 1 for the number of items corresponding to questions about the domain. For example, in Figure 2 below, Criminal History has 10 items with a possible weighting from 1 to 10. The guideline for classifying risk level is based on the sum of scores for each domain where Low risk = 0-13, Low/Medium risk = 14-23, Medium risk = 24-33, Medium/High risk = 34-40, and High = 41-54.
Apart from the static domain of Criminal History, criminogenic needs (often referred to as dynamic risk factors) can be identified by the loading on the scores for each of the domains and the needs identified therein, as targets for invention. The higher the scores for each domain, the more services are required to reduce the risk of further offending.

Pro-social influences provide a level of protection against the likelihood of re-offending and are measured by a simple scale comprising of 13 ‘rater boxes’ each with a loading of possible scores from 0-3 across the domains. The total measure ranges from 0-39, and is inversely related to total risk scores. This score is particularly useful as a benchmark to compare scores on a continuum from higher to lower scores as an indicator of positive or negative change in criminogenic needs over time. Figure 2 below shows the number of items and possible scores on each domain of the LSI-R. Protective factor scores serve to ameliorate the scores on each of the lifestyle domains.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Protective Factor ‘Rater Boxes’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01-10</td>
<td>Criminal History</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>Education/Employment</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-22</td>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-26</td>
<td>Family/Marital</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-29</td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-31</td>
<td>Leisure/Recreation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32-36</td>
<td>Companions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37-45</td>
<td>Alcohol/Drug Problems</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>Emotional/Personal</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-54</td>
<td>Attitude/Orientation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>13 (39 total)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2. Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R) Scoring Scales**

LSI-R (Andrews & Bonta, 1995) showing maximum scores for each domain and protective factor scores for ‘rater boxes’.
In the period 2013-14 a total of 26,751 assessments were carried out by CSNSW on both community and custody sentenced offenders using the LSI-R instrument. Figure 3 shows the numbers of assessments carried out in the year 2013-2014, with the significant proportions of assessed offenders falling in the low-medium and moderate categories of risk of re-offending.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Level</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Medium</td>
<td>7955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>9796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate-High</td>
<td>3874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>26751</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 3. Offender Risk Assessments 2013-14*
Offender Assessments using the LSI-R Instrument (NSW Department of Police and Justice Annual Report, 2013-14, p. 35)

The ‘layering’ of risk technologies is evident in the number of standardised risk assessments used to both identify criminogenic factors for certain offence types, as well as to guide the level of service delivery to groups of offenders. In this form, risk tools and technologies serve a procedural role for managers of the organisation to prioritise and deliver services with more efficiency, as well as provide a means to measure and account for its management strategies. In addition to the LSI-R risk assessment tool, Community Corrections utilise Community Impact Assessments (CIA) to provide a tiered rating of the risk offenders’ pose to community safety. More recently, the Criminal Re-imprisonment Estimate Scale (CRES) based on Australian offender populations, has been developed to enhance the utility of the LSI-R (NSW Department of Justice Annual Report 2014-15, p. 4).

While the LSI-R provides a general guide for practice based on the level of risk scores, it is constrained in recognising important changes in circumstances and does not really account for why, when and how someone
offends (Pearse, 2012, p. 55). Although scored across a number of lifestyle domains, offending may be dominated by one or two factors, such as alcohol abuse and companions.

There are also factors that the LSI-R does not identify, for example whether the offender’s criminal history is confined to one category of offence (such as personal offending or property offending) and whether offending is becoming more or less frequent or more or less serious (Pearse, 2012, p. 54). While the LSI-R assesses the probability of re-offending occurrence it does not indicate the gravity of a prospective risk (Ashworth & Zedner, 2014, p. 122).

The proliferation of technologies to assess risk casts a wide net over larger and more diverse offending populations, which in turn requires more specific resources for monitoring and surveillance. As the numbers of offenders on Extended Supervision Orders (ESOs) increase, particularly for sexual and violent offence groups, strict management protocols and accountability measures will continue to be a focus for Community Corrections.

One of the consequences of the more rigorous administrative policies and procedures of managing offenders in the community is that risk management practices based on risk assessments have not only limited the discretionary power of CCOs (Hannah-Moffat, Maurutto & Turnbull, 2009, p. 401), but also serve to justify their decisions in situations where the actions of the parolee are unpredictable (Ballucci, 2012, p. 205).

**Parole in NSW**

Parole is ordered by the courts at the time of sentencing and is the proportion of the offender’s sentence which is served in the community. When an offender is sentenced to a period of more than three years, a parole order must be considered by the NSW State Parole Authority (known as the SPA). The SPA has jurisdiction in relation to granting and revoking parole, revoking sentences of home detention and revoking intensive correction orders (ICOs). The legislation under which the SPA operates is contained in two major Acts; *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999*, Part 6
Recent changes to the legislation indicate the tightening of the discretionary basis for parole (Hutchins, 2012, pp. 1-11) and are listed below:

- The parole order must include a post release plan prepared by the probation and parole service which addresses the likelihood of the offender being able to adapt to normal lawful community life, risk of re-offending and measures taken to reduce the risk, the offender’s attitude to the offence, the victim and willingness to participate in rehabilitation programs.
- There is no longer the option for reconsideration of parole at a date to be fixed such as in 3 or 6 months time. There is now a mandatory deferral of 12 months for further consideration. There is a similar mandatory deferral for 12 months for reconsideration of parole revocation.
- The Authority can refuse to have a public hearing of parole consideration with no appeal if it is satisfied it is not warranted whereas previous legislation allowed for appeal.
- Insertions have been made in the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999 which permit the Commissioner of Corrective Services to make submissions concerning the release of an offender, as well as allowing him to apply to a judicial member of the SPA for an order suspending a parole order and issuing a warrant.
- The Minister for Corrective Services is entitled to access all documents held by SPA. Victims of a serious offender are also entitled to all documents except medical, psychiatric and psychological reports.

Hutchins (2012) comments that the insertion of s2A (2008) into the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999 defining the objects of the Act includes conflicting objects (a) and (d) and part (2):

(a) to ensure that those offenders who are required to be held in custody are removed from the general community,
(b) to ensure that other offenders are kept under supervision in a safe secure and humane environment,

(c) to ensure the safety of persons having the custody or supervision of offenders is not endangered,

(d) to provide for the rehabilitation of offenders with a view to their reintegration into the general community.

(2) In pursuit of these objects, due regard must be had to the interests of victims of the offences committed by offenders.

The SPA can revoke parole, not only for prisoners serving more than three years and who have been released at their discretion, but also for court-based parole orders where prisoners are ‘automatically’ released once they have served their non-parole period. Court-based parole orders are issued by the courts for sentences of less than three years, however automatic parole does not always mean the prisoner is released from prison unconditionally. A court-based parole order may be revoked by SPA if the prisoner has no suitable accommodation in the community or has relapsed to substance abuse while incarcerated.

Parole can be revoked for any breach of the conditions of the parole order, such as re-offending, not maintaining contact with the supervising probation and parole officer, failure to abstain from drugs and alcohol, failure to attend mandated programs, changing address or leaving the state without permission and failure to attend drug rehabilitation services. Prisoners subject to court-based parole orders formed the largest cohort of releases to the supervision of Community Corrections. Of the 6047 releases in the 2014 calendar year, 5084 were court based orders subject to automatic release and the remaining 963 were releases ordered at the discretion of the State Parole Authority (SPA). In the same year, 2527 parole orders were revoked, with 82.2% accounting for those released on court based orders. Of this number, 1,172 were the result of breaches other than conviction for re-offending (NSW Department of Justice, State Parole Authority Annual Report 2014).

The percentage of revocations for breaches other than conviction for court-based parole orders could be seen as a ‘successful’ way to legitimise the parole system in the eyes of the public by their swift response to the
potential risks posed by non-compliant parolees. Conversely, the high revocation rates also suggest a ‘hardening’ of the response to non-compliance, especially in relation to the risk categories ascribed to offenders, and the more stringent legislative changes which have closed the discretionary gap for granting and revoking parole.

A similar trend is occurring elsewhere. The significant increase in parole ‘recalls’ occurring in England and Wales has been considered in light of the “centrally led and politically driven transformation of the culture and practice of probation, from a social service orientation to a surveillance-led focus on public protection” (Padfield & Maruna, 2006, p. 338). In the U.S, high trends of revocations have been explained by the ‘sensitivity’ of the supervision system to parole violation (Reitz, 2004, p. 215).

The increasing rate of breach actions and re-offending by released prisoners on parole in the community, especially in the early stages of re-entry, show that apart from the structural difficulties for parolees in finding housing and accessing services for substance abuse and employment opportunities, there is a need to explore other factors, such as the impact of prison life, which may shed light on the re-entry experience for parolees. The SPA comments on the difficulties parolees face:

Inmates live a form of institutionalised life which ill equips them for life in the community. They spend the term of their sentence strictly living a regimented lifestyle, being told when to eat, when to shower, when to leave their cell and when to return to it. By the time their sentence ends, many will have rarely made a decision for themselves.

(NSW Department of Justice State Parole Authority Annual Report, 2011, p. 1)

**Re-offending on parole in NSW**

In the decade spanning the years 2006 to 2016, three significant studies of NSW parolees have focused on re-offending trends and characteristics of recidivist parolees. In a study conducted by Jones and colleagues (2006), the re-offending patterns of 2,793 parolees released to parole supervision in the financial year 2001-2002 were examined. Results of the study showed that
52% of prisoners released to parole were reconvicted within 1 year of release, while 64% were reconvicted within 2 years of release (Jones, Hua, Donnelly, McHutchison, & Heggie, 2006, p. 6). The strongest predictive factor in the groups who re-offended more quickly was found to be those with a higher number of previous incarcerations, followed by factors such as being younger at the time of release, identifying as Indigenous, having served sentences for violence, property crimes or for breaching justice orders, having been released with a parole order issued by the court, having had prior drug offences, and having spent less time in custody on the index offence (Jones, Hua, Donnelly, McHutchison, & Heggie, 2006, p. 9). A limitation of the Jones et al. (2006) study was that it was not clarified whether re-offending occurred while the subjects were on parole or after their parole had expired.

Weatherburn and Ringland (2014) sought to address this limitation by measuring the rates and types of re-offending while on parole of a sample of 9,656 NSW offenders released in the calendar years 2010-2011. The researchers found that in contrast to the Jones et al. study, 60.8% of parolees neither re-offended nor were re-imprisoned during their parole period. While the group correlates for re-offending are similar to the Jones et al. study, Weatherburn and Ringland (2014) found that there was a significant influence of age on the risk of re-offending on parole, with higher risk of re-offending on parole in the 18-24 year old age group. The study results also revealed that re-offending was more common with those offenders with a longer time on parole (>180 days), and those with a LSI-R risk category score in the medium to medium-high range.

The results of this study led the researchers to conclude that future research should focus on whether it is possible to improve the accuracy of the risk assessment process, whether supervision support reduces the risk of re-offending following release from prison, and whether offenders released to parole are less likely to re-offend if released by the SPA than if released to parole by a court (Weatherburn & Ringland, 2014, p. 1).

In a more recent study, Stavrou, Poynton and Weatherburn, (2016) compared a matched sample of SPA ordered and court-ordered parolees to
determine rates of re-offending while under supervision or not, and to see if rates of re-offending increased after parole expiry for both groups. Of a matched sample of 1,644 offenders, SPA-ordered parolees who had served 18-36 months in custody were found to be less likely to re-offend than matched court-ordered parolees. In terms of re-offending on and off parole, there was no significant difference between the two groups when both were on parole and being supervised, however, when both groups were off parole, SPA parolees had significantly lower rates of re-offending (24.7%) at the 36 month mark than court-based parolees (31.8%). There was found to be little difference between the groups in types of re-offending (Stavrou, Poynton & Weatherburn, 2016, p. 9).

Stavrou and colleagues (2016, p. 10) considered the relative rates of re-offending among SPA-ordered parolees and court-ordered parolees in their study to be similar in the Jones et al. (2006) study, but not in the previous study conducted by Weatherburn & Ringland (2014). This difference was considered to be due to their focus on matching pairs of SPA and court-ordered parolees with LSI-R risk scores, time spent in custody (18-36 months) and controlling for time spent on supervision, in contrast to the Weatherburn and Ringland (2014) study, where 80% of the parolee cohorts were court-based releases and nearly 70% had spent a year or less in custody.

An outcome of interest in the Stavrou, Poynton and Weatherburn (2016) research pointed to the possibility that parole conditions have no effect on recidivism while both groups of parolees (SPA and court-based parolees) were on parole. However, when off parole, there appears to be other mechanisms at play to account for the lower rates of re-offending by SPA ordered parolees compared to the matched cohort of court-based parolees. As a result of the study, Stavrou, Poynton and Weatherburn (2016) suggested further research to explore whether rates of participation in rehabilitation programs before release from prison may account for the differences in re-offending by SPA and court-based parolees after parole expiry.
Initiatives to address recidivism

CSNSW has increasingly turned to a mode of governance which invites public groups and stakeholders to participate in the risk-handling process (Renn, 2008, p. 273). In their efforts to meet targets for recidivism reduction, CSNSW has cemented public-private partnerships between government and non-government agencies (NGOs) to collaborate with custodial and community-based programs. In the year 2013-14 CSNSW managed a number of Corrective Services and external funded projects totalling over $6 million through the Funded Partnership Initiative (FPI), including projects the Drug Summit and the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH). The focus on delivering government budget and savings targets has recently seen the closure of six CSNSW Community Offender Support Program centres (COSPS) in favour of a mixed model of transitional support involving private and non-profit organisations, with savings providing increased funding for the CSNSW Funded Partnership Initiative (NSW Department of Justice Annual Report 2014-15, pp. 38-39).

In CSNSW, rehabilitation focused programs have also undergone major changes in content and service delivery. A suite of four intervention programs called EQUIPS (Explore, Question, Understand, Investigate, Practice and Succeed) was implemented by the Offender Services and Programs Branch to replace existing fragmented rehabilitation programs in NSW prisons. The four standardised and evidence-based EQUIPS programs are designed to address general offending, aggression, addiction and domestic abuse. Each program consists of 20 two-hour sessions and target empirically derived risk factors for offending (DoJ Annual Report, 2014-15, p. 50). The criteria for program entry is specified by the offence type, a LSI-R level between medium to high risk of re-offending, and three months to two years left before release. The EQUIPS programs have also been rolled out to Community Corrections together with the Practice Guide for Intervention to improve the integration of supervision and the content of the group programs (DoJ Annual Report, 2015-16, p. 61). However, despite all of the CSNSW initiatives to address recidivism and the rigorous
standardisation of risk technologies and discourses, re-offending rates in NSW remain constant.

NSW research has provided the most definitive evaluation for the success or failure of the offender risk management project for CSNSW, by informing fiscal and managerial policies of the NSW government in the provision of services and programs to reduce re-offending. However, NSW research provides little information about whether parolee risk levels and associated risk factors have decreased or increased during and after parole or how the risk management project is embraced by the parolees themselves. Given the emphasis on assessing and categorising levels of risk and identifying risk factors related to re-offending of parolees managed by CSNSW, it may be reasonable to ask, “How do these parolees respond to their ascriptions of risk as they go about their everyday lives in the community?”

The remainder of this chapter presents the aim and objectives of the study as well as an overview of the chosen methodology. An outline of the structure of the thesis is also provided.

**The Research Question**

Having worked as a psychologist in CSNSW for almost twenty years, the most disturbing and disappointing experience for me in this role was to see a constant stream of individuals returning to prison after spending only a short time on parole. The fatalistic acceptance of their failure to ‘make it out there’ combined with the intention that they can ‘do better next time’, clearly indicated that there was something about the re-entry experience that was of concern to these individuals and that the ways they attempted to resolve their concern had not been sufficiently explored.

The research question asks “how do parolees manage ascribed risk on re-entry?” The question is an exploratory one which allows for the discovery of what is really going on for parolees in the field of inquiry. It was considered that situating the study purely as an analysis of risk can ignore other frameworks that may be operating in the processes and logics employed by parolees (Green, 2009, p. 505).
The Research Aim

The aim of this study is to understand how parolees manage ascribed risk on re-entry. The objectives of the study are:

1. To use a suitable method of inquiry to discover the problem of concern for parolees, or more succinctly, how they construct and report their realities within the context of the risk management structures of parole
2. To identify and explain the interactive mechanisms and processes contributing to the concern of parolees
3. To identify the factors influencing the way parolees manage ascribed risk on re-entry
4. To contribute to the knowledge base of re-entry studies
5. To offer a different perspective for intervention with parolees

An Overview of the Research Methodology

The research aim posed a challenge in choosing a method using qualitative data which could render the complexities of the parolee’s experience on re-entry as a theory to explain how they manage ascribed risk. The original or ‘classic’ version of Glaser and Strauss’ (1967) grounded theory was considered to be the most flexible and creative way to gain knowledge about parolees in the re-entry context.

Grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) is described by Glaser (2003, 2011) as a general research methodology. It was chosen for this qualitative study, but is not exclusively a qualitative research methodology. Grounded theory is “a distinct paradigm with its own principles and procedures for what constitutes valid research within this paradigm” (Holton, 2007, p. 267) and can be used to fit any epistemological lens by accommodating any type of data. It examines social processes and allows for the generation of theory.

Grounded theory was developed to “bridge the gap between theoretically ‘uninformed’ empirical research and empirically ‘uninformed’ theory, by grounding theory in data” (Goulding, 1999, p. 6). It is a method where the theory evolves from the continuous interplay of data collection, interrogation and analysis, using the scientific logics of induction, deduction and abduction.
It was felt that although quantitative meta-analytic studies provide useful information and trends related to parolees, these measures miss the complexity of the realities and meaning-making of parolees in their experience of re-entry. In order to avoid missing relevant factors which are often made invisible when risk frameworks dominate or bias research, a more suitable method was required to tap into the parolee’s experience of re-entry. The grounded theory method was chosen for the following reasons:

- The method uses both quantitative data and qualitative data within a number of research paradigms to discover sociological knowledge, and as such, is considered by Glaser (1967, 1978) to be trans-epistemological.

- The goal of grounded theory is to discover the main concern of the individuals and how they process or resolve this concern (Glaser, 1998, 2003, 2011; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In this sense, concern refers to what preoccupies and motivates the behaviour of individuals in the area of study. Grounded theorists set out to discover theory. There is no specific hypothesis or theory speculation which drives the research, as these assumptions would bias the discovery process.

- The grounded theory method discovers the social actions of individuals in their own setting and explains these actions as theory. Duchscher and Morgan add that using the method produces:

  ... an enduring theory that is faithful to the reality of the research area; makes sense to the persons studied; fits the template of the social situation being studied, regardless of the varying contexts related to the studied phenomenon; adequately provides for relationships amongst concepts; and can be used to guide action.

  (Duchscher and Morgan, 2004, p. 611)

- Grounded theory is a method which is “learned by doing” (Glaser, 2009, p. 2), and allows for creativity by the novice grounded theory researcher. Glaser adds that grounded theory develops its own skill level:
The novice need only have an ability to conceptualise, to organise, to tolerate confusion with some ‘incident’ depression, to make abstract connections, to remain open, to be a bit visual, to thinking multivariately [sic] and most of all, to trust to preconscious processing and to emergence.

(Glaser, 2009, p. 2)

These informal requisites fit the core essentials needed for qualitative analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 309) as well as this researcher’s personal preference for using a creative and flexible method of inquiry.

**Significance of the Research**

Although there is a growing body of research interest in the social, cultural and contextual factors of prisoner re-entry research, it has not maintained an equal status with the volume of hypothesis-based, quantitative research focusing on risk and re-offending. In addition, most of the latest re-entry knowledge is informed by studies in high density city areas, ignoring those unique problems faced by released offenders in large rural centres and outlying villages (Wodahl, 2006; Pugh, 2007).

Grounded theory is an appropriate methodology where there has been little or no research in a particular substantive area, therefore, a grounded theory of parolee re-entry experience will add to the content knowledge of parolee re-entry by developing a sufficiently rigorous ‘in-situ’ theory. The method has built-in rigour based on a non-linear systematic process of constant comparison of empirical data. It also opens up new ways of looking at the problem of prisoner re-entry by focusing on the lived experience and meaning-making of parolees.

This research is valuable because it has a focus on the nexus between the parolee and the assumptions of correctional practice. It is important to bring parolee experiences into the scholarly debate to understand the impact of risk governance on the everyday life of individuals and the viability of risk as the motivational basis for positive change.
Outline of the Thesis

The thesis consists of seven chapters. This chapter (Chapter One) introduced the study by providing a brief background of the context and current management of parolees in NSW. The research interest and the question motivating the study was presented, followed by the research aim, an overview of classic grounded theory as the chosen method of inquiry and the significance of the study.

Chapter Two positions the research interest within a broader field of literature relating to risk theories and risk governmentality. Desistance and rehabilitation literature is reviewed in light of the different logics of risk employed, specifically in the offender rehabilitative models well known in the correctional arena, namely the Risk-Needs-Responsivity (RNR) model and the Good Lives Model (GLM). The literature is presented to highlight the agreements and controversies within the field of corrections and criminology and to explore how the research question fits with the contemporary research on the subject of re-entry. The literature serves to contextualise the research and to provide information to set the tone for the study, rather than to confine the parolee re-entry experience to the domains of the theories presented.

Chapter Three begins with a description of the contemporary social science research paradigms and the philosophical assumptions underpinning them. The philosophical perspective taken in this research is one of critical realism. Critical realism is explained in terms of its ontological and epistemological assumptions which bridge the gap between realism and relativism. The ‘craft’ of the research is introduced by explaining how the research question shapes the design of the study. An overview of classic grounded theory is presented including a discussion of the controversies, its tenets and the place of reflexivity and theoretical sensitivity. The terminology used in applying the procedures of the grounded theory method is provided. This is followed by a detailed description of the procedures used in the classic grounded theory method and the evaluative measures used to assess the rigour of a substantive grounded theory.
Chapter Four is presented in two sections.

Section 1 discusses the steps taken in the preparation for the research. Details of the ethical considerations for the study, how participants were identified and recruited, and how data was collected and managed are contained in this section.

Section 2 presents a step-by-step account of how the data was analysed using the grounded theory procedures of constant comparison, together with the procedures of theoretical sampling and writing memos. The section shows how the substantive categories were integrated by the core category of *reautonomising* to explain the main concern of the participants. This is followed by the process of theoretically coding the relationships between the core category and the substantive categories to reveal the basic social process explaining how participants resolved their main concern.

Chapter Five presents a detailed description of the core category of *reautonomising* which is generated from the empirical data in the study. The core category and its properties are discussed using excerpts from participant interviews to illustrate the concepts.

Chapter Six explains how the main concern of participants is resolved as a basic social process which encompasses social-psychological processes and social-structural processes. The substantive theory of *Reautonomising: Shaping the Passage of Parole* is then discussed in light of these processes and their relevance to the initial research question and extant theoretical literature.

Chapter Seven concludes the thesis by discussing the implications of the research for present and future correctional practice. Strengths and limitations of the research are presented to situate the findings of the study within current criminological knowledge.
Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the research and situated it in the contemporary field of CSNSW. While empirical positivist research forms the basis of the practices in contemporary correctional programs, there is a need to investigate other perspectives which reach beyond the positivist realm of inquiry and statistical incidences of re-incarceration, in order to understand the meaning-making of individuals as they experience the re-entry process.

The aim of this research is to understand how parolees manage ascribed risk on re-entry. The classic grounded theory method of Glaser & Strauss (1967) was considered as an appropriate method to use in the substantive setting of parole. The procedures of the method allow for the discovery of the concern of importance to parolees and the generation of theory to explain the processes involved in resolving their concern.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction
The contemporary constructions of risk are not so much new, as more informed, efficient and rational given the advances in scientific knowledge and technologies which are characteristic of the postmodern society. Changes in lay expectations of governments to deal with risks related to health, welfare, the environment and crime for example have been met with an approach which reflects private sector techniques such as cost cutting and performance driven allocation of resources.

The growth of risk ideas and risk techniques by Western governments and corporate bodies over the last decade has become the basis for sound corporate governance and central to good government (Horlick-Jones, 2005, p. 293). In particular, the government of crime and social problems has been reshaped around techniques and models of risk management. Risk assessment, risk management, the monitoring of risk and risk-taking itself are becoming the raison d’être of agencies such as social services, and parole, supplanting ideologies of meeting need or welfare provision (Kemshall, Parton, Walsh & Waterson, 1997, p. 213). Risk technologies have become the key to priority setting and rationing, the basis for organisational rationales and structures, the central focus for professional activity and accountability, and for managing quality (Kemshall, Parton, Walsh & Waterson, 1997, p. 213). Consequently, there are an increasing number of professionals who now find their everyday work articulated in the language of risk, which has become an all purpose language of administration and organisation.

In this chapter, literature has been reviewed to ‘set the stage’ for the impending analysis, by providing an introductory and sensitising platform from which to understand the context and current management of offenders and ex-prisoners in the community.
The chapter begins with a discussion of the ‘risk society’ theories of Beck and Giddens which are underpinned by how societies deal with the effects of progressive modernisation. The Cultural Theory of Mary Douglas gives a different perspective on the perceptions of societal dangers and the competing structures of social organisation. The governmentality thesis of Foucault provides an explanation of the power relationship between the state and its subjects and the means by which populations are controlled. The review takes a critical look at risk technologies as methods of managing offenders, particularly in the field of corrections in NSW.

The implications of risk governance in the management of offending behaviour and the scientific applications to develop prediction of risk are examined in light of interventions and re-entry strategies. The final topic of the review outlines the current position of re-entry as a unique and important research area which has become more urgent because of the continued high rates of recidivism.

Risk Theories

The ‘risk society’

In his landmark ‘risk society’ theory, Ulrich Beck contended that while disasters beyond human control have traditionally posed risks, the ‘risk society’ is one that is continually focused on the hazards and insecurities introduced and induced by modernisation (1992, p. 21). As risks and hazards become more intensified and more global, societies become more reflexive and defensive about ways to control or counteract the negative consequences of the modernisation process (for example inequality in wealth distribution, crime, and environmental pollution). Beck contends that in this state of reflexive modernity, the scientisation of risk (knowledge of ways to control risks) and commerce with risk (public expenditure to protect from risk) becomes a “bottomless barrel of demands where risks can be manipulated” (1992, p. 56).

Progressive modernisation has not only impacted upon the formations of state power, distribution of wealth, division of labour, mobility and mass consumption since the advent of industrialisation, it has also involved an
array of social consequences such as declining traditions and customs, employment insecurity, and changes in family and gender based roles.

Beck sees reflexive modernity as characterised by a change in position from individuals assessing and making decisions about hazards to a concentration of decision-making power in the hands of external scientific-technological experts; a position where citizens lose an essential part of their cognitive sovereignty in defining hazards (1992, p. 54). This divestiture to authority experts (for example, institutions and governments) means that decisions are made about who are afflicted (such as the population concerned), the extent and type of hazard, and the measures to be taken.

The notion of infallibility of scientific-technological knowledge is tenuous in a risk society. When governments fail to prevent hazards, or in their attempts they generate new risks, there is an erosion of trust in sources of expertise, a chronic sensitivity to risk issues and lived experiences of bewildering choice and anxiety (Horlick-Jones, 2003). An implication of Beck’s thesis is that the risk society marks the end of the age-old distinction between nature and society. Whereas the foundation of classical modernity considered nature and society as separate, and that the social guided by science could overcome and dominate nature, what has happened today is that science has established its rule over both (Delanty, 1999, p. 153).

Giddens also shares Beck’s concern that risk is a social consequence of modernisation. Central to his thesis is the notion of ontological insecurity experienced by individuals and collectives in their efforts to counteract possible risks by employing means to control and colonise the future. For Giddens, risk refers to hazards that are actively assessed in relation to future possibilities (Giddens, 1999). Thus, it is no longer the risk experiences of the past that determine present decisions, but rather, it is the predictions of the future that determine risk planning and management decisions (Ekberg, p. 353). His analysis of modernity has also focused on the way individuals reflect upon consequences of modernisation and how the notions of self and identity have been influenced by the uncertainties and insecurities stemming from progressive modernity; “the self today is for everyone a reflexive
project—a more or less continuous interrogation of past, present and future” (Giddens, 1992, p. 30).

The paradox at the heart of the risk society is that the more attempts are made to colonise the future with more and more sophisticated technologies to predict and manage risk, the more it slips out of control, resulting in a continuing spiral of unintended new risks (Kenny, 2005). Beck (1992) predicted a ‘legitimation’ crisis that he suggests will be suffered by bureaucracies unable to control endemic risks (Horlick-Jones, 2005, p. 295).

It is these concerns about legitimacy in the face of adverse perceptions by the lay public which has placed risk management centre-stage in the development of corporate governance standards. However, apart from providing an explanation of the societal changes associated with modernisation, risk society theory does not explain the significance of risk as a language and a set of techniques that has come to form the basis of administrative practice, especially in the criminal justice arena.

**Cultural Theory of risk**

While Beck and Giddens construe risk as inseparable from the consequences of modernity, with risks generated from the interaction between human agency and structures, the second approach is drawn from a cultural theory of risk as a framework to understand how societal groups interpret danger and build trust or distrust in institutions creating or regulating risk (Tansey & O’Riordan, 1999, p. 71). In this approach, the constructions of risk are seen as products of cultural meanings and social processes which mediate the structure and agency domains.

The importance of the cultural meanings and perceptions applied to risk are raised in the work of the anthropologist Mary Douglas (1992). Douglas emphasises the political nature of risk, where risk is used to attribute blame and responsibility for negative outcomes of events—risk analysts are “employed by corporations and governments who want to know something more than the technical calculation of probabilities” (Douglas, 1992, p. 44).

The main distinction in this perspective lies in the cultural strategy of risk where communities or subgroups make sense of danger and threats they perceive from outsiders, or ‘Others’. In this way, beliefs or practices of risk
maintain social cohesion in dealing with deviance and threats to moral principles (Lupton, 2006, p.12).

Douglas and Wildavsky (1983) examined social position and risk and contended that “some classes of people face greater risks than others”, for example, poorer people are on average sicker than rich people. They added that these risks are involuntary; “either involuntary risk is an empty logical category or it has to be a complaint against the particular social system which gives some people a harder life” (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1983, p. 18). The distinction here is that involuntary risk is imposed by the society in which one lives, with control determined by bodies other than the individual (such as government agencies and leadership groups).

In this sense, the individual’s judgement about risk and the pattern of social justice and responsible government are set in cultural relationships, namely the expectations and value systems of people belonging to the distinctive groups (Tansey & O’Riordán, 1999, p. 71). Thus cultural theory helps to understand the social construction of risk—in the lay-expert dichotomy of how risk is perceived, the value and usefulness of scientific knowledge about risk and the legitimacy of power of government and institutions in controlling risks in society.

**Foucault’s governmentality theory**

Although not exclusively a risk thesis, Michel Foucault’s concept of governmentality examines the power relations between the State and the populations they control. Foucault’s notion of governmentality can only be understood by the tactics wielded by the state to govern; making possible the definition and redefinition of what the state can and cannot do and where its survival and limits can only be understood on the basis of the general tactics of governmentality (Foucault, 1991, p. 103).

In neo-liberal government, the polarity of subjectivity and power ceases to be plausible, with government referring to a continuum extending from political government through to forms of self regulation or “technologies of the self” (Lemke, 2015, p. 12). Direct interventions of regulatory and specialised state apparatuses, and indirect strategies to guide and control individuals (such as methods of parenting and maintaining one’s own
health), feed back into centralized state operations to provide for a
government logic that is both generalized and localized (Danaher, Shirato &
Webb, 2000, p. 91). It is in this sphere that the interventionist, regulatory
state and civil society are intertwined with a multiplicity of power relations
and the diversity of their origins and effects (O’Malley, 2009, p. 2).

Foucault developed the idea of biopower to examine the techniques used by
the state to manage its subjects. Here, the population becomes the site for
techniques of control and regulation through the establishment of discursive
norms—technologies of classification of individuals and behaviours deemed
to be within the normative standards of the collective (Danaher, Shirato &
Webb, 2000, p. 126). It is through the practices and discourses of the state-
divested institutions that different groups are given subjectivities which can
be identified through technologies of differentiation, that is, those who do
not fit the standard of a genuine subject of the state (for example, offenders).

However, contrary to the notion that subjects are ‘docile bodies’ being
controlled and worked on by the state by technologies of domination,
Foucault’s later work (1986) described the techniques of self-examination
subjects use to regulate their bodies, thoughts and actions. It is through these
technologies of the self that subjects become the objects of their own
subjectivity, by constructing their own identities and managing their lives
according to the norms of the society in which they live.

The focus on risk as a ‘technology of government’ emerged in the writings
of Foucault’s colleagues, particularly in Robert Castel’s (1991, p. 281)
analysis of risk in the field of psychiatry, where the applications of
technologies such as risk assessment and management were replacing
professional judgement and the case method, and in the process,
marginalizing specialist psychiatrists and dissolving the notion of a subject.
Instead of the essential component of intervention being one of the helper
and the helped, under a regime of risk, individuals were objects of risk
governance—as ‘actuarial’ entities, statistically knowable and calculable
risks (O’Malley, 2009, p. 8).

Writers in the criminological field who follow the governmentality
perspective are concerned with the way risk knowledges and discourses are
employed to deal with social disorder, as well as to regulate and ‘responsibilise’ individuals to manage or avoid risk (Fox, 1999; Garland, 2001).

**Risk Technologies in the Criminal Justice System**

Although the above approaches provide insights into the rich vein of criminological theory which has emerged to interpret the changing contours of crime and penal sanctions, there has been less agreement about the precise nature and extent of the transformations which have occurred under the banner of risk.

In the midst of the social, cultural and political changes occurring in America and other western capitalist societies in the late 1960s and early 1970s, there were also major shifts in the professional ideologies of criminologists which reinforced the rejection of rehabilitation model to manage offenders. Concerns with the unfettered discretion accorded to criminal justice officials, the entrenched powers of the state and the view that offenders were casualties of social injustice implored criminologists to become collective deconstructionists to ‘unmask’ the hypocrisy of the well intentioned state in its justified repression efforts in dealing with crime (Cullen & Gendreau, 2001, p. 324). This ideological shift was supported by the Martinson (1974) review of rehabilitation programs in the USA that “nothing works” to reduce offending, a review which was regarded as being partly responsible for the trend towards the increased use of punitive sanctions in the United States (for example the abolition of discretionary parole, the Three Strikes Law in California) and in the penal policy in a number of other jurisdictions.

The increasing prison population, with the main contributions being the arrest and confinement of drug offenders, meant that incapacitation was the prison’s major concern, more so than rehabilitation with the emphasis on providing a low-cost, no frills environment that will keep criminal offenders and parole violators off the streets (Feeley & Simon, 1994). This shift in penal ideology supported by the ‘populist punitiveness’ sentiment of the time, saw the demise of the welfare penal mode in favour of a punitive, expressive, risk conscious penal mode characterised by techniques of
identification, classification and management of dangerous groups of offenders (Garland, 2001).

Feeley and Simon (1992) claimed that these changes constituted a “new penology”—a conceptual integration of the changes in discourses, objectives and techniques which have coalesced to form a “new strategic formation” in the penal field (Feeley & Simon, 1992, p. 449). The ‘new penology’ perspective, which explained the move away from normalisation to management, was penned at the time when risk technologies used mainly static offence based risk criteria in the assessment of offenders. This rigid knowledge of risk produced a ‘fixed risk subject’ who was designated to a particular risk category (low, medium or high) based on accumulated historical risk factors which could not be changed (Hannah-Moffat, 2005, p. 32).

However, risk cannot be confined to technologies of statistical calculation or predictive validity. Ashworth and Zedner (2014) argue that risk calculation is not isolated from the social and political environment within which it occurs, and while its calculation may be more or less robust, “what is perceived and targeted as hazardous at any one time is partly a matter of social construction, susceptible to changes in public toleration and shifting perceptions of what threatens” (Ashworth & Zedner, 2014, p. 119). The political construction of risk, defined by the priorities of public policy, political climate and changes in official views about what constitutes a threat to public safety and national security, should also be taken into account when considering the technical questions of the reliability and applicability of risk assessment. It is important to recognise these contextual factors as a corrective to a purely technical analysis of the validity of risk-assessment tools (Ashworth & Zedner, 2014, p. 120).

**Risk assessment**

Risk assessment serves as a useful technology in the management of offenders by underpinning case planning, referral and release decisions. In this manner, risk assessment has evolved as “another way in which crime becomes an object of expert knowledge” (Horsefield, 2003, p. 375) and the organisation can avoid the ‘political risk’ of being seen as not doing
something effective in its primary function to manage crime and the criminal justice system (Carlen, 2002). Douglas (1992) raises similar concerns about the value laden character of risk assessment by commenting that “the morally neutral scientific actuarial terminology of risk disguises the condemmatory pariahdom created by classifications” (1992, p. 52).

Renn (2008, p. 12) proposes that all current approaches to risk provide different conceptualisations of the three elements that form the essence of risk: the outcomes that affect what humans’ value; the possibility of occurrence (uncertainty); and a formula to combine these two elements into one concept. He points out that the technical application of risk has drawn criticism from the social sciences on the following issues (Renn, 2008, p. 18):

- people’s perception of an undesirable effect depend on their values and preferences
- the average probabilities used in technical risk analysis do not capture the full complexity of human activities and consequences
- institutional structures managing and controlling risks are prone to failures and deficits which may increase the actual risk
- risk analysis cannot be regarded as a value-free scientific activity, because values are reflected in how risks are characterised, measured and interpreted
- technical risk analysis can provide only aggregate data over large segments of the population and long time duration

It is a characteristic of risk assessment that risk labels are applied not only to particular conduct or patterns of behaviour but also to people. Particular concerns arise where the question before the court is not ‘under what conditions or subject to what difficulties, provocations or triggers is this person at risk of re-offending?’ but ‘does this person pose a risk?’ or, more problematically still, ‘is this a high risk individual?’ This view of risk assessment may exclude relevant considerations in two important ways. First, the individual may become the sole object of assessment to the exclusion of external circumstances, hazards, and opportunities. Second, assessment tends to focus upon one aspect of the defendant’s disposition—
riskiness—to the exclusion of other considerations (such as character, attributes, and personal prospects). It also shifts attention from risky conduct to the identification of risky people, be they anti-social youths, sexual offenders, dangerous offenders, or terrorists.

Risk assessment also can also have the effect of applying enduring labels to individuals by assigning them to a status (such as ‘high risk’) which is difficult to escape, and as a consequence is often self-fulfilling (Ashworth & Zedner, 2014, p. 123). Categorical risk labelling is problematic because it is prognostic; with the questionable assumption that the individual before the court is indistinguishable from their future self (Ashworth & Zedner, 2014, p. 123).

Shaw and Hannah-Moffat (2006) comment that the offender is governed according to his membership of identified risk categories, and that these risk categories or factors are “ascribed to the individual and constructed as having a causal relationship with probable future conduct” (2006, p. 95). They also argue that the evaluative criteria of the assessment instruments represent white middle-class moral and social standards and that failure to conform to such standards implies an unacceptable deviation from the norm. They suggest that “the scientific claims of objective assessment mask the inherently moralistic/normative elements of this penal exercise” (2006, p. 37).

Recent research also suggests that there are a number of mixed models of governance where welfare (now ‘need’) strategies have been replaced by the proliferation of actuarial risk based models (Kemshall, 2002; Robinson, 2002; Hannah-Moffat, 2005). O’Malley (2004, p. 332) argues against the welfare/risk binary, commenting that risk is ‘hybridised’ or melded with other policy orientations, such as rehabilitation and restorative justice, suggesting a departure from the pessimistic theoretical accounts of risk associated with the ‘new penology’.

Hannah-Moffat (2005, p. 31) lends support to this approach by arguing that “risk knowledges are fluid and flexible and capable of supporting a range of culturally contingent penal strategies”. She adds that the understanding of risk has shifted from static to dynamic categorisations, and that the concept
of need is fused with risk, and that ‘need’ constructs risk and revives correctional treatment as an efficient risk minimisation strategy (2005, p. 31). The essence of this argument supports a more optimistic view that the concept of risk and its associated technologies can be used in a transformative rehabilitative paradigm.

**Risk and Rehabilitation in Corrections**

**What works in reducing offending?**

The claims that “nothing works” in offender rehabilitation (Martinson, 1974) have since been countered by the gradual increase and persuasiveness of meta-analytic evidence since the 1980s (the ‘What Works’ movement) which has shown a swing back again in the rehabilitative direction (McGuire, 2004). The principle beliefs underpinning the ‘What Works’ professional ideology is that scientific criminology should be used to construct knowledge about what does work both in effective correctional interventions and to reduce crime (Andrews & Bonta, 1998; Cullen & Gendreau, 2000).

In contrast to the ‘nothing works’ paradigm, the ‘what works’ paradigm believes that there is heterogeneity in individual propensities to engage in crime, propensities that reflect both traits and differential exposure to social circumstances. At present, the research is strongest in showing the proximate causes of crime, such as anti-social attitudes and relations, faulty cognitions, low self-control, and dysfunctional family relations (Andrews & Bonta, 1998). These factors are more amenable to intervention than are causes that are more distal (e.g., concentrated disadvantage in neighbourhoods, social inequality). This state of affairs, however, may reflect the failure of criminologists to investigate systematically and empirically how interventions targeted at social arrangements beyond the level of the individual offender might affect criminal involvement (e.g., specific housing, welfare, or employment policies).
The Risk-Need-Responsivity Model (RNR)

The most widely accepted model throughout Western criminal justice systems is the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model of offender rehabilitation, which stemmed from three principles of effective offender rehabilitation proposed by Andrews, Bonta and Hoge (1990):

Risk principle: the level of program intensity should be matched to the offender risk level.

Need principle: services should target criminogenic needs and non-criminogenic needs which are functionally related to criminal behaviour.

Responsivity principle: the design and delivery of interventions should be matched to the offender’s leaning style and abilities.

The LSI-R (Andrews & Bonta, 1995) is one of the most important and widely used products based on these principles (Andrews, Bonta & Wormith, 2011). The RNR model is underpinned by an enormous body of empirical meta-analysis research initiated by Canadian psychologists (Andrews & Dowden, 2005; Cullen & Gendreau, 2000), and has shown that well-constructed and well-delivered programs adhering to the three RNR principles ‘work’ in reducing offending behaviour, particularly those drawn from the psy-sciences such as the cognitive behavioural therapies.

The technologies associated with risk assessment and management have become increasingly more refined in assessing not only risk levels of general offending, (see Figure 1) but also in the specific domains related to types of offending (for example, domestic, sexual and violent crimes).

Based on the risk-need-responsivity (RNR) principles of effective offender rehabilitation (Andrews, Bonta & Hoge, 1990), the key assessment instrument used by CSNSW is the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R; Andrews & Bonta, 1995), a standardised statistical tool originally designed for the purpose of prioritising scarce resources to offenders in the Canadian correctional setting (see Chapter 1 for a description of the instrument). Since the late 1990s, the suite of Level of Service (LS) instruments have been extended to include the Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI; Andrews, Bonta & Wormith, 2004) and the Level of Service/Risk-Need-Responsivity (LS/RNR; Andrews, Bonta &
Wormith, 2008). The LSI-R is scored on a number of lifestyle domains of the offender, and identifies those factors which are static (historical facts such as number of convictions) and factors which are dynamic or amenable to change (such as drug use and antisocial attitudes). Dynamic risk factors are described by Andrews, Bonta, and Hoge (1990, p. 31) as ‘dynamic attributes of offenders and their circumstances that, when changed, are associated with changes in the chances of recidivism’. Here, the narrow definition of need (based on aggregates) can be effortlessly coupled with risk under the umbrella of ‘criminogenic factors’.

Interventions are designed to target those areas of need deemed to be criminogenic (such as substance abuse, anti-social attitudes, associations with criminal others) resulting in ‘one size fits all’ interventions with offenders (Ward & Maruna, 2007, p.103).

**Dynamic risk factors**

The question of ‘need’ has been subject to scrutiny in the last few years on both conceptual and empirical grounds (Polaschek, 2016, p. 171). In current standardised risk assessment tools, needs are identified as those characteristics an individual shares with aggregates of offender populations which have been statistically correlated with recidivism. However, there are a number of needs an offender may have which are not easily changed by interventions and which are not considered to be criminogenic (for example, environment, poverty, social stigma). Criminogenic ‘needs’ are those factors identified as changeable or dynamic, because of their linkage (correlation) to risk of re-offending. In this definition, needs included the recognition of the trait-like factors of individuals (such as impulsivity) and environments that could be similarly stable (for example exposure to criminal associations and lack of employment opportunities).

More recently, dynamic risks have been re-defined by their static and dynamic qualities—separating the trait factors from those that were considered as triggering states or transient events (Ward & Beech, 2006; Hanson, Harris, Scott & Helmus, 2007; Mann, Hanson, & Thornton, 2010). Protective factors (see Figure 2, Chapter 1) were added to assessments to
determine the ameliorative or buffering effect of pro-social influences on reducing the impact of risk on outcomes (Polaschek, 2016, p. 172).

While the definition of dynamic risk is theoretically ‘thin’, Polaschek adds that empirical research has supported the utility of the concept in guiding decisions when interventions are to be provided on a large scale. However, he also notes that it is important to develop a more conceptual and theoretical understanding of dynamic risk factors to avoid a truncated view of criminal behaviour and our ability to change it through intervention (Polaschek, 2016, p. 173). Polaschek’s comments find support in the writings of Ward, who has focused on the need to offer a more thorough theoretical analysis of dynamic risk factors to direct the development of sound programs and assessment practices (Ward, 2016, p. 3). He calls for a theoretical re-definition of the concept of dynamic risk factors to clarify whether it is a scientific or normative concept or whether it is best viewed as a predictive construct in order to integrate them into case formulation and treatment.

**The Good Lives Model (GLM)**

The Good Lives Model (Ward and Stewart, 2003; Ward and Brown, 2004; Ward and Maruna, 2007) contrasts with the RNR model of offender rehabilitation. The RNR model implies that risk is an ‘attribute’ of the offender who has deficits or needs which require treatment to reduce the likelihood of re-offending. Treatments are informed by the psy-sciences and have a cognitive-behavioural approach. The goal of these approaches is in ‘reconstructing’ anti-social thinking through a variety of self-management strategies to promote pro-social behaviours.

The Good Lives (GLM) model contends that offenders share the same inclinations and basic needs as other people and are naturally predisposed to seek certain goals - the primary human goods of relatedness, creativity, physical health and mastery. From this perspective, individuals commit criminal offences because they lack the capabilities to realise valued outcomes in personally fulfilling and socially acceptable ways (Ward, Day & Casey, 2006). The GLM is based around two core therapeutic goals: to promote human goods and reduce risk (Ward, Day, & Casey, 2006, p. 78),
thus incorporating the strengths of the RNR model and the capabilities approaches to treatment. The rehabilitative focus for this model is on the establishment of skills and competencies needed to achieve a better life; ‘a good life’ alongside the management of risk. One of the major strengths of this model is in the re-integrative and inclusive potential when applied to the transitional process of release and community re-integration.

Given the utilitarian benefits of the current RNR model to underpin the way services are organised and prioritised, and the surge of empirical research to support the RNR principles in interventions with offenders, there is a hopeful optimism that the inclusion of needs means a revival of a rehabilitative paradigm as well as satisfying managerial goals. The resurgence of a ‘new rehabilitationist’ paradigm encompassing both goals of rehabilitation and organisational management offers a way to garner fiscal and managerial support (Hannah-Moffat, 2005, p. 40), and has generated a wealth of research to support and legitimate the RNR model in correctional practice.

**Treatment in Corrections**

Canadian psychologists Andrews and Bonta (2003, 2006, 2010) have provided a powerful heuristic with the risk-needs model (RNR) in their influential publications of the *Psychology of Criminal Conduct* (PCC). In their latest publication of the PCC (Andrews & Bonta, 2010), the authors have broadened their analysis of the psychology of criminal conduct to keep pace with contemporary criminological research. The RNR model of correctional assessment and treatment is drawn from a general human psychology knowledge base, in particular from a general personality and cognitive social learning psychology (Andrews & Bonta, 2010, p. 43), and is supported by a strong base of empirical research. The model is built on the notion that there is a criminal personality typifying offenders regardless of race, gender, ethnicity or class and that this personality type is characterised by cognitive inadequacies or thinking deficits (Kendall, 2006. p. 73). This assumption is at the heart of the What Works movement, and although What Works initiatives are broader than cognitive behavioural programming, the basis of treatment draws on assumptions from meta-
analytic studies that offending behaviour is the consequence of ‘faulty thinking’ (2006, p. 74).

Andrews and Bonta (2003) contend that social-structural and systemic issues are not central to the problem of criminal behaviour and that dissenters to their approach are engaged in ‘knowledge destruction’ (2003, p. 93). There have been critics of the meta-analytic evidence based claims that are used to legitimate the What Works initiatives (Kendall, 2006, pp. 75-78). Some of the criticisms lie in the problems with the ‘scalability’ or difficulty of turning small scale successes of pioneering programmes into effective standardised practices, the short follow up period of interventions, and reliance on recidivism as the indicator of lack of program success, have all been raised as criticisms of the attempts to apply the risk model to practice (Merrington & Stanley, 2000; McNeill, 2004).

Despite claims that the What Works initiative has been adopted in an ‘evangelist’ manner (Mair, 2006, p. 16) and is not delivering in terms of reducing re-offending (Merrington & Stanley, 2000), the movement towards widespread acceptance of the risk-based principles and practices of the What Works research has not abated. Smith (2006) examines the claims of positivist social science to produce ‘law-like’ universal statements based on assumptions of prediction and control and backed by research, as a justification for managerial prescriptions for practice. He comments that the universalist assumption that one particular program can have the same effects across different places, contexts and times is ill-founded and the managerial faith that research can be used to identify effective programmes and ‘formulaically’ roll them out in different settings is misplaced (Smith, 2006, p. 34-52).

**Positivism and Risk**

Positivist accounts of criminal behaviour, or the traditional trait perspective which continues to dominate criminological thinking, do not fully explain the variability of behaviours across situations. Horney (2006) suggests that the situational specificity of behaviour would lead us to look for environmental consistencies in individual lives “we need to pay as much attention to assessing change and stability in environmental factors as to
assessing change and stability in offending behaviour” (2006, p. 9). The developmental and life-course approaches to the study of crime (Laub, 2005; Laub & Sampson, 2003) have also raised questions about the long term predictive utility of personality dispositions and criminal behaviour. Role transitions associated with age are linked to considerable situational change, with behavioural change following for many individuals at about the same point in life (for example becoming a parent, getting married).

**Parole Supervision**

Probation practice has also been affected by the changes brought about by the What Works initiatives and the concomitant managerial risk model of offender rehabilitation. Traditionally a social welfare oriented arm of the criminal justice system, probation practice and policy now focuses on the differential treatment of offenders in accordance with risk profiles (Robinson, 2005). The United Kingdom has undergone restructure to a complex and bureaucratic National Offender Management (NOM) system which has brought about the separation of service delivery into ‘offender management’ and ‘intervention’. Under this system, individual offenders’ assessed needs are divided into separate categories and addressed in isolation through visits to a variety of service providers, thus paying insufficient attention to the interactive effects of different kinds of needs, problems and feelings, and “where the sight is lost of the whole person”(Maguire & Raynor, 2006, p. 28).

McNeill (2004, p. 242) claims that probation practice in England and Wales, and to a lesser extent in Scotland, is moving towards a correctionalist paradigm in the way offenders are managed. McNeill (2004, p. 242) adds that the paradigm locates the responsibility for crime within the individual, and as one classified by risk as a member of a dangerous group who poses a threat to public safety. Consequently, practice is constructed as the punishment, management and/or treatment of offenders in the public interest, with the primary focuses of practice being the enforcement of punishment and the management of risk (2004, p. 242). McNeill argues that “the idea of rehabilitation endures in the correctionalist paradigm only as the enforced re-education of offenders to redress their deficits and to develop within them the requisite skills for compliant citizenship”, and in doing so
the ‘lived realities’ of the offender’s lives are misrepresented by “ignoring the wider social contexts both of their difficulties and of their efforts to change” (McNeill, 2004, p. 242).

There is rising criticism from the English experience of the What Works approaches (McNeill, 2004; Robinson, 2005) that the centrally prescribed and centralising ideology of ‘what works’ at the level of aggregate offender management does not necessarily work for offenders, or indeed the practitioners responsible for supervising them (Robinson, 2005, p. 307).

Building on an earlier longitudinal study of 199 probationers in England and Wales (Farrall, 2002), Farrall and Calverley (2006) retraced and re-interviewed 51 of the subjects in the study approximately five years later to examine the processes involved in desistance from crime and effects of probation supervision on the behaviour of probationers. Farrall and Calverley (2006) found that supervision had little impact on the resolution of obstacles (such as substance abuse, friends and family problems), that few probationers had cited social problems (such as employment and housing situations), and that there were few citations of cognitive behavioural obstacles (such as poor thinking skills or anger management). Motivation to avoid further offending appeared to influence the extent to which obstacles were both faced and overcome (Farrall & Calverley, 2006, p. 197), a factor which has previously been found to be associated with explaining desistance from crime (Shover & Thompson, 1992; Pezzin, 1995). Social and personal circumstances were also found to be related to desistance-positive life changes and were associated with changes in employment and family relationships.

The evidence to support the effectiveness of supervision is weak. A recent NSW study examining the effectiveness of supervised bonds in reducing recidivism found that offenders placed on supervised bonds are no less likely to re-offend than a matched group of offenders placed on non-supervised bonds (Weatherburn & Trimboli, 2008). Another study by Ross (2005) found no evidence that some of the new post-release surveillance options, such as intensive parole or home detention, are more effective in
preventing re-offending than conventional parole or no parole at all (Ross, 2005, p. 169-175).

The question of the effectiveness of supervision is further compounded by the increasingly stringent enforcement of supervision orders (such as failing to maintain contact with the supervising officer) resulting in re-incarceration of parolees (Austin, 2001). The NSW Standing Committee on Law and Justice (2006, pp. 32-39) has highlighted significant gaps in the provision of services to rehabilitate offenders, especially in rural areas. Similar findings regarding the lack of services for released offenders, such as housing, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, domestic violence programmes and mental health services were made by the NSW Auditor General (2006, pp. 1-5).

The provision of social supports does not answer the question of why released prisoners keep returning to gaol. Wodahl, Garland, Culhane and McCarty (2011) found that behavioural interventions incorporating rewards into the supervision regime to balance sanctions, increased compliance to supervision. However, they concede that contextual factors such as discretionary powers of revocation as a sanction, at both the organisational and policy level are difficult to control for across agencies (Wodahl et al., 2011, p. 401).

Parole revocation decisions can be shaped by outside political forces that influence both individual and organisational responses to offender noncompliance (Grattet, Petersilia, & Lin, 2008). A brutal crime committed by an offender under community supervision, for example, may result in political pressure that causes individual officers to be less tolerant of offender transgressions. This same political pressure may also bring about agency-level policy changes that dictate more rapid termination of non-compliant probationers and parolees. Thus, it is imperative for future studies to incorporate these contextual variables into the research design to explore the potential ways in which the effectiveness of sanctions and rewards may be influenced by these factors (Wodahl, Garland, Culhane & McCarty, 2011, p. 401).
**Re-entry**

The transitional stage of release from prison to the community is known as re-entry. Although often seen as a neutral action of stepping out of prison, re-entry is a time of orientation and adjustment for parolees, and a time which is contingent on their being able live according to the imposed conditions of their parole order. Maruna (2011b) compared the ambiguous status of prisoners returning to the community with Van Gennep’s (1909/1960) early anthropological studies of social-cultural rituals to mark life transitions, where the returning prisoner is seen as *liminal personae*—one who lacks a transitional ritual to declare his new status as citizen. Maruna points out that in both Britain and America, people are “particularly bad” at re-integrating and re-accepting individuals who have committed offences back into their respective societies (Maruna, 2011, p. 4). The experience of re-entry is often traumatic for parolees who are exposed to media and community pressure (reports such as “Bulli rapist to go free in weeks”, 2006). Parole authorities also face public and media outrage when things go wrong, for example, “296 sex fiends on loose” (Fife-Yeomans, 2013).

Werth argues that the parolee enters the community with a ‘fractured subject position’ (2011, p. 303); a conflicted position where he is constituted by the State as having served out his punishment and ready to rejoin the community as a governable ‘reformed’ subject on the one hand, and on the other, he is monitored and regulated as a custodial/criminal subject until his time on parole is completed.

The most important elements which have been identified in re-entry studies in the American context, involve a complex interrelationship between the *individual*, the *community* to which he is released, the *social networks* available and the *policy environment* of the agencies involved in the release and supervision process (Lynch, 2006). Re-entry studies break from the largely individualistic explanations for recidivism and have isolated elements in the environment such as the community (including family and social networks), health and social services, and the supervision organisation responsible for the person returning (Travis, 2005).
Australian research shows similar findings, indicating that chronic homelessness, unstable accommodation, poverty and lack of social support are critical post release factors which need policy attention (Baldry, McDonnell, Maplestone & Peeters, 2006; Borzycki & Baldry, 2003). Most of the research concerning re-entry is not based on a theory of re-entry (Lynch, 2006, p. 404). The ‘common wisdom’ about re-entry points to criminological theories of social control (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Laub & Sampson, 2003; Travis, 2005), theories of social disorganisation and strain (Agnew, 1992; Shaw & Mackay, 1969), desistance studies (Maruna, 2001; 2004) and the prison experience itself (Leibling, 2005). These theories, including contributions from sociology and psychology, have all informed the analysis of re-entry and policies governing the re-entry process.

Currently, the domains of criminology, penology and correctional practice have shown a shift towards the postmodern paradigms of social enquiry after being abandoned in the late 1970s for the reductionist and positivist surge fulfilling the utilitarian needs of legislators and policy makers.

The process of re-entry involves a range of behaviours which cannot be fully explained by deviance theories and there are conflicting results from a number of studies and projects.

**Desistance**

Although there has been some confusion about the definition of desistance as being both an outcome (cessation of offending) and a process (the pathway to cessation of offending), desistance studies seek to understand the nature of desistance and the factors which promote or hinder it in offending populations. Laub and Sampson (2001) propose that a life-course perspective is the most beneficial approach to understand desistance from and persistence in criminal activity “because of its explicit focus on the unfolding of lives in social context” (2001, p. 4). The life-course history and narrative data in their follow-up study of 500 delinquents at age seventy, underscored the need to examine desistance as a process consisting of interactions between human agency, salient life events and historical context (Laub & Sampson, 2001, p. 4).
A life-course framework differs from a developmental perspective on crime and desistance in its commitment to the idea of social malleability and the focus on the dynamics of change and stability. Developmental accounts of desistance include age related identity change (Maruna, 2001), and shifts in behavioural patterns at certain stages of development, for example, Moffitt’s account of the continuation and stability of antisocial behaviour in two developmental pathways: adolescent-limited offending behaviour and life-course-persistent offending behaviour (Moffitt, 1993).

A later study by Maruna and Farrall (2004) explained desistance in terms of the processes that bring about the cessation of offending. They identified the process as occurring in two stages: primary desistance, which characterises a temporary absence of offending behaviour; and secondary desistance which involves a sustained change in self-identity over time. McNeill (2016) proposed a tertiary stage of desistance which involves not only the changes in self-identity as a non-offender, but also a shift in the ex-offender’s sense of belonging to the moral community—thus taking the study of desistance into the sphere of how ex-offenders see themselves and how others see them. Nugent and Schinkel (2016) have offered a more definitive account for these intra- and interactional social features which uncouples time and linearity from the desistance process. They propose the terms ‘act-desistance’ for non-offending, ‘identity-desistance’ for an internalised identity change towards non-offending, and ‘relational-desistance’ for recognition of change by others (Nugent & Schinkel, 2016, p. 570).

The desistance process continues to be explored from a social-structural perspective (Farrall, Bottoms & Shapland, 2010; Weaver & McNeill, 2015) and perspectives which examine the interstitial mechanisms operating between the polarities of structure and agency—the ‘deep’ (Ackroyd & Fleetwood, 2000) operating mechanisms, such as the relations of power, and social and psychological factors which influence the desistance process (Halsey & Harris, 2011; Halsey, Armstrong & Wright, 2017).
Contributions from Other Disciplines

Other disciplines such as health, have studied risk from the social interactionist perspective (Mead, 1934; Goffman, 1967; Blumer, 1969) to capture the detail of specific risk-related situations. Myers (2003) draws on Goffman’s work (1967) to explore the relevance of ‘face-work’ and ‘framing’ in the relationship between professionals and participants and how they present themselves in these interactions. Lupton and Tulloch’s (2002) research investigated the meanings given to voluntary risk-taking of participants, and Ryan (2000) has explored the risk perceptions and strategies of mental health users, carers and professionals. These researchers include examples of context in their analysis by integrating macro-level social environmental conditions and micro-level influences on action and interaction, especially the meaning-making and symbolising in which individuals engage in their everyday lives.

Middle-Range Theory or Integrated Theory?

When considering risk in the criminal justice system in terms of the re-entry experiences of offenders, a middle range theory would include the macro and micro levels of analysis. This would encompass the community to which the offender returns, the policy environment of agencies involved in the re-entry process, the experience and social interactions of the released offender, and the social network that may or may not await him (Lynch, 2006, p. 401).

The astructural bias of symbolic-interactionism has been discussed in health promotion research with calls for a more balanced approach in the relationship between the individual and the environment. This approach considers the mutual interdependence of the macro-level structural forces (economic, political, cultural and organisational) in society which shapes the lives of individuals, and the everyday actions of individuals which shape those same larger structural forces (Robertson & Minkler, 1994). Similarly, with this study of the re-entry process of released prisoners, a tempering of the notion of structural determinism with the notion of human agency is necessary if there is to be ‘good theory’ to inform intervention programs.
In the course of reviewing the criminological and risk literature, the following questions were raised which were pertinent to the interest in this study of parolees:

- When parolees enter the community, they make the transition from prisoner to a ‘conditional’ citizen; from a state embedded in routines and a range of solidarity affirming rituals, to a state as ‘liminal personae’ (Bell, 1997; Maruna, 2011b; Turner, 1969) which rests on sentence expiry rather than a ceremonial event of inclusive citizenship. How the parolee responds to the risk-management structures of parole as ‘liminal personae’ in this ‘betwixt and between’ period of parole requires further investigation to find answers to the causes of the high rates of parole revocation.

- How the RNR model acts as a transformative element in the parolee’s early release experience has not been sufficiently explored in the NSW parolee population. Re-entry needs a narrative explaining how current risk discourses and practices impact on the transitional experience of parolees rather than re-entry being simply a neutral concept (Travis, 2005, p. 87). Whether parolees operate within a rational risk-calculability framework or some other framework, especially when risk is assessed and ascribed to them, remains to be discovered.

- Vulnerability to re-offending has been explained by psycho-social risk factors (Andrews & Bonta, 1995, 2003). However, there may be latent and manifest consequences of institutionally based risk discourses and practices which have not yet been explored.

- Maurutto & Hannah-Moffat (2006) propose that risk assemblages (risk logics and knowledge, and risk assessment tools and practices) can be more fluid and transformative when combined with other welfare and rehabilitative rationalities, thus weakening the association of risk with actuarial calculations typified in Feeley and Simon’s ‘new penology’ (1992). Their optimistic proposal that new
assemblages of risk can be more ameliorative and productive remains to be examined from the service user (offender/client) perspective.

Chapter Summary
The literature review offers a broad view of risk theory in contemporary society and then focuses on the trajectory of risk discourse and practices in the criminal justice arena and correctional institutions. The review served a sensitising role to focus the research on the re-entry experience of parolees.
CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

The research question “how do parolees manage ascribed risk” aims to explore the experience of parolees on re-entry and to explain theoretically the phenomena central to their experience.

According to Silverman (2006, p.27) a methodology is comprised of four components: a preference for certain methods among the many available to us; a theory of scientific knowledge, or a set of assumptions about the nature of reality; a range of strategies used in tackling a research problem; and a systematic sequence of procedural steps to follow once our method has been selected.

Contained within any research design or methodology is a whole set of values reflecting a particular world view or paradigm (Duffy & Chenail, 2008, p. 23). Assumptions about what is defined as real (ontology), how this reality can be known (epistemology), how it can be studied (methodology), and the values inherent in conducting research (axiology), justify the choice of a particular methodology used in research. The chapter provides a synopsis of the philosophical assumptions pertaining to the main paradigms in social research and discusses the assumptions which anchor the critical realist perspective taken in this study. This is followed by an overview and description of the procedures of the classic grounded theory method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) which was chosen for the study.

Paradigms in Social Science Research

In the discipline of the social sciences, a paradigm is defined as the basic belief system or world view that guides the way research is carried out (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 14-47). Different world views on the nature of social reality (ontology) and how knowledge is produced about that reality (epistemology) may influence the researcher to focus on certain issues, to favour a particular methodology and employ different sets of criteria for
evaluating the social research (Punch, 2006, p. 32). The philosophical approach used by the researcher therefore constitutes the foundations of the research topic by shaping the nature of the investigation, by influencing the choice or rejection of certain methods as well as by specifying what types of things are worthy as evidence (Denscombe, 2009, p.117).

Guba (1990) proposed that paradigms in the social sciences can be framed by three fundamental and interrelated questions. The first question is ontological and asks ‘what is the nature of reality?’ The second epistemological question refers to the relationship between the researcher and the researched and asks how can reality be known? The third methodological question asks ‘how can the knowledge be acquired?’ Logically, the answer to the epistemological question is constrained by the reply to the ontological question, and the answer to the methodological question is always dependent on the answers to the preceding questions.

Guba & Lincoln (1994) categorised the established and emergent paradigms framing social science research according to the axioms of ontology, epistemology, and methodology. The paradigms they considered at that stage were positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism. They have since added the participatory paradigm proposed by Heron & Reason (1997) to their classifications. The defining axioms and values of each paradigm are drawn from the works of Guba & Lincoln (1994, 2000, 2008), and are described below:

_The positivist paradigm assumes that there is an objective ‘knowable reality’_. Objectivity is the key issue in the positivist paradigm where a ‘knowable reality’ is assumed. Observable, sense data is assumed to determine reality and this is ‘apprehended’ or sought to be known by using quantifiable methods such as controlled trials and experiments. The research goals are to measure, discover and test hypotheses to offer explanations which can predict, generalise and identify cause-effect links. The view of the positivist researcher should be neutral, objective and detached from the objects of research. Quality control rests on objectivity, validity, reliability and rigour. Quantitative studies seek causal relationships by quantifying relationships or manipulating data by experimental means to interpret
empirical data. Proponents of quantitative research can therefore claim a neutral, value free stance which assumes a closer relationship to reality or truth in their scientific endeavour. Although positivist research has a place in social science research, contemporary understanding accepts that positivist assumptions cannot claim a fully independent objective ‘truth’ about the world, as research is subjectively interpreted and individual events are unpredictable.

*Post-positivism is not so much a scientific phase but more the acceptance that pure objectivity is impossible.* In response to beliefs about positivism, which theoretically (though not practically) sought pure objectivity, post-positivists understand that only partially objective accounts can be produced about the world, as knowledge about reality is imperfect and probabilistic. The post-positivist’s stance is one of modified objectivity to apprehend the reality of the knower as closely as possible without contamination by researcher bias. Research methods may include experimental designs, surveys, correlation studies, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative and oral history and action research design.

*Critical theory paradigms encompass the ideas of inequality, power differences and social injustice.* The aim of critical theory is to bring about transformative change generated from the knowledge gained from the situation being studied. This approach acknowledges the impossibility of pure objectivity, and instead focuses on the reality of social structures relating to the inequalities (culture, class, power, gender and race) which shape human experience within society. Guba and Lincoln (2008, p. 262) see critical theory as more commensurable with constructivist and participatory approaches and incommensurable with positivist paradigms. Research methods are collaborative and the goal is to produce knowledge which provides a blueprint to improve, reform and to change the view of reality or the situation, such as in feminist, participatory, action, and Marxist research. Data collection methods consist of interviews, storytelling, review of theory, and critical debate.
The constructivist/social constructivist paradigm has the ontology of multiple realities with an emphasis on subjectivity and is often called the interpretive paradigm. The actors’ embodied knowing is the determinant of reality; therefore there are multiple constructed or storied realities. The research goals are to understand, interpret, seek meaning, illuminate and theorise. According to Weber (1962), the hallmark of this paradigm is with understanding (verstehen) whereas explaining (erklären) is the distinctive hallmark of the natural sciences. In a constructivist paradigm, control is shared between the inquirer and participants. The researcher’s involvement and reflexivity is crucial. Sampling is opportunistic and purposive, with data collection drawn from interviews, case studies, storytelling, review of texts and creative arts media. Analysis is iterative, inductive and interpretive. Quality rests on credibility, ethicality and rigour. Social constructionism also sits within an interpretivist paradigm with the same epistemological target as that of constructivism; to seek an understanding about the actor’s constructions of reality. However, where constructivists believe reality and the knowledge about it is constructed within individuals, social constructionists view reality and the knowledge about it as socially created through collective interactive processes which are historically and culturally specific.

Participatory paradigms focus on the reality of experience within subjective-objective ontology. This paradigm emphasises ‘practical knowing’, underpinned by a “world view based on participation and participative realities” (Heron & Reason, 1997, p. 280). Here, the interaction of subjective realities about the world and the way they are objectively experienced and encountered is the main assumption of the paradigm. This paradigm shares the self-reflexive world view of constructivism, but extends to a participative world view where practical knowing is achieved through co-operative relations between the researched and researcher. Epistemology and methodology is based on participatory knowing and has an axiology that affirms the primary value of human flourishing (Heron & Reason, 1997, p. 275).

Over the past twenty years there has been a distinctive turn in the social sciences towards interpretive, post-modern, critical and participatory
approaches, which not only challenge the legitimacy of received positivist and post-positivist paradigms, but have also created a platform to challenge other contending paradigms. Guba and Lincoln (2008, p. 256) note that the paradigms are beginning to ‘interbreed’ allowing for the previously irreconcilable positions of the different paradigms to inform and complement each other by introducing strategies and methods which have departed from defined paradigmatic rules. This situation supports the ‘blurring of genres’ prophecy of Geertz (1980), and the contention of Gioia & Pitre (1990) that paradigms thought to be incommensurable may be bridged. For example, Giddens (1984) rejected the objective-subjective duality in his theoretical work on Structuration Theory, proposing that subjects (people) and objects (structure) do not constitute separate realities, but a duality within the same reality. Here, “Structuration theory takes up a central location on the objective-subjective continuum, effectively bridging the transition zone between the two extremes” (Goles & Hirscheim, 2000, p. 259).

Given that the research is focused on discovering the main concern of parolees who experience re-entry within the structured context of parole, the perspective and design of the study required a methodology which could explore the way individuals interact with the social structures that exist in their world, and how these structures in turn structure their subjective and objective reality of the world. The ontological assumption underpinning this research is based on the understanding that only partially objective accounts can be produced about the world, as knowledge about reality is imperfect and probabilistic—thus placing the research within a post-positivist paradigm. However, this researcher also favours constructivist and social-constructionist assumptions which are both concerned with how realities are individually and socially constructed. A constructivist perspective assumes that people, including researchers, construct the realities in which they participate (Charmaz, 2006, p. 187), while social-constructionist and symbolic interactionist (Blumer, 1969) perspectives are derived from pragmatism which assumes that people construct selves, society and reality through social interaction (Charmaz, 2006, p. 189).
This blending of paradigm genres was considered to fit more comfortably within the assumptions of the critical realist perspective and informed the design or ‘craft’ (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 48) of the study.

A Critical Realist Approach to the Study

The critical realist’s commitment to the production of social scientific knowledge “is to think about the social world as a complex and stratified open system where explanation takes the form of modelling causal mechanisms and testing models empirically” (Potter & Lopez, 2005, p. 19).

For critical realists, social reality is stratified on three levels: the empirical (observable experiences); the actual (events and actions); and the real, or ‘deep’ level which includes the structures, mechanisms, powers and relations that produce or generate the events and actions (Ackroyd & Fleetwood, 2000, p. 13).

Critical realism bridges the gap between positivism, with its perspective of a mind-independent reality, and constructivism, with an understanding that this reality is subjective (McLachlan & Garcia, 2015, p. 198). The objective-subjective ontological distinction is resolved by the critical realist view that social structures are constructed and shaped by human activity and practices, and although they may be unobservable, they are real in the sense that they influence observable human behaviour (Lewis, 2000, p. 249). Roy Bhaskar (2008, pp. 46-50) coined the term ‘generative mechanisms’ to explain a picture of reality as a complex interaction between open and dynamic systems where particular structures give rise to certain causal powers, tendencies and ways of acting. In this view of critical realism, the relationship between social structure and human agency is seen as a dynamic and temporal one, where human activity takes place in the context of pre-existing social structures which have been the product of past human activity (Lewis, 2000, p. 250).

This position sees human activity and structures as entwined, each shaping and constraining the other. For example, the criminal justice system is built on pre-existing structures such as laws and risk technologies, which are real in the sense that they do not merely exist as social constructions but also as...
social entities, each depending on human activity to sustain and shape their construction or destruction.

The ‘deep’ level of the critical realist ontology (Ackroyd & Fleetwood, 2000, p. 13) is also reflected in Archer’s (1995, 2013) concept of morphogenesis. This concept provides a frame to understand how structures pre-exist individuals and are in a constant state of being sustained and elaborated by the action of individuals who may or may not be aware of their existence. Critical realism is similar in some respects to the critical theory paradigms, however where critical theories locate reality in power asymmetries and dominant discourses (such as gender, class and race), critical realists draw upon the notion of ‘unseen’ power structures that have an influence on people’s social realities (Archer, 1995).

From an epistemological stance, concerning the nature of knowledge claim, this researcher takes a critical realist approach which is aligned in part with a constructionist epistemology. It is acceptable that a critical realist approach can offer an explanation of the underlying ‘generative mechanisms’ which may be unobservable by exploring the constructed realities of social actors. Consequently, the epistemological question of “what can be known?” is answered by seeking new knowledge through researcher-participant communication. However, where the constructionist/constructivist epistemological approach focuses on co-construction of the data in a reciprocal representation of researcher-participant experience, this study takes a more objective epistemological approach by ensuring that the data remains close to the social actor’s experience and is not contaminated by the researcher’s constructions and professional bias. This does not mean that the relationship between the participant and researcher is subordinate or that it requires a detached, impersonal approach to data collection; it means that the researcher applies an objective method of collection and analysis to the data rather than try to describe and represent the meaning-making of the participant through a co-constructed process of interpretation.
Grounded Theory and Critical Realism

The emphasis of the grounded theory method to anchor the findings in the realities of the individual resonates with the ontological perspective of critical realism in that it seeks to provide a conceptual explanation of the multivariate conditions and dimensions of the generative mechanisms realised in patterns of social behaviour. The procedure of conceptual abstraction in the grounded theory method isolates essential aspects of concrete courses of events; the properties of which determine the nature of an object or phenomena under study (Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen & Karlsson, 2002, p. 45). Danermark adds, “conceptualisation is a crucial activity in social science … it should take it as its starting point in a critical realist ontology and epistemology” (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 16). For critical realists the scientific project is to understand and explain phenomena (Kempster & Parry, 2011, p. 107).

Atkinson and Delamont (2010, p. 8) comment that grounded theory has ties to symbolic interactionism based on the Mead-Blumer pragmatist view that the different realities of the social and natural worlds can be known. They consider that by default the grounded theory method also has the same critical realist ontological basis reflected in the language used by Glaser (1992) in his assertions that grounded theory focuses on “concepts of reality” (p. 14), by looking “for what is, not what might be” (p. 67), while searching for “true meaning” (p. 55), and that the generated grounded theory “really exists in the data” (p. 53).

In the remainder of this chapter, grounded theory is described in more detail as a general method which provides the flexibility and fit for discovering social processes and developing a theory to explain how parolees manage ascribe risk on re-entry.

The Grounded Theory Method

Background

When researchers Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss worked together at the University of California in San Francisco in the 1960s and early 1970s, they combined their research interests from two of the most influential schools of sociological thinking in America.
Glaser came from a quantitative research background and studied under the guidance of methodologist Paul Lazarsfeld and theorist Robert Merton at Columbia University. His interest in the integration of quantitative and qualitative methods was shown in his paper on *The Constant Comparative Method of Qualitative Analysis* (1965), which introduced quantitative methods of coding and constant comparison to the analytic induction methods of qualitative analysis.

Strauss trained under Herbert Blumer and Everett Hughes, and was an established qualitative social researcher at the Chicago School of Sociology. This School was well known for its pragmatist, symbolic interactionist and ethnographic traditions. When Glaser and Strauss collaborated on studies of patients in hospital, their contrasting traditions of research methods were also brought together. In their research, Glaser and Strauss studied the social processes and practices in hospitals dealing with the terminally ill. Their research method combined the practices of qualitative data collection and the refined coding and analytic methods derived from Glaser’s earlier studies in quantitative methods. The result was the publication of *Awareness of Dying* (1965) with the subsequent works, *Time for Dying* (1968) and *Status Passage* (1971).

To explain how they carried out their method of theory discovery in their social research, Glaser and Strauss published *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967). This seminal work, mainly written by Glaser, described a method of developing theory from qualitative data using quantitative analytic techniques and canons of rigour which were adapted to studies of complex social phenomena. However, in their efforts to render the processes and procedures of qualitative investigation visible, comprehensible and replicable, Glaser and Strauss may have unwittingly mimicked the positivist orthodoxy which was dominant at that time (Bryant, 2009, p. 4).
Controversy about the grounded theory method

After collaborating on *Status Passage* (1971), Glaser and Strauss moved on to pursue their own respective research interests. Glaser continued to advocate for the original version of grounded theory (identified as classic, traditional or Glaserian grounded theory) by establishing the web-based *Grounded Theory Institute* in 1999, and shortly afterwards, the publication outlet *Sociology Press*, and the edited journal *The Grounded Theory Review*. Glaser has continued to support novice and experienced grounded theory researchers by also providing workshops and seminars in America and other countries.

Strauss went on to collaborate with Juliet Corbin on two main publications, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Technique* (1990) and *Basics for Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Doing Qualitative Research* (1998). In these major works, Strauss and Corbin gave novice grounded theorists a more user friendly introduction to the analytic process of grounded theory by remodelling the coding steps and providing an alternative perspective on the placement of the literature review (Walker & Myrick, 2006).

As grounded theory became more widely accepted and popular among qualitative researchers, controversy erupted over the methodological schism between the classic version and the remodelled version of Strauss and Corbin. Glaser claimed that the changes made by Strauss and Corbin forced the data into defined qualitative parameters and contaminated the process of conceptual abstraction with the “worrisome need for accuracy” of qualitative description. He set out to distinguish the classic grounded theory from Strauss and Corbin’s version in a number of publications (Glaser, 1992, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007), by clarifying the procedures and intentions of the classic method. Glaser views the method as one which should not be contaminated by co-construction of the data or by researcher’s preconceptions (1978, 1998). He remains resolute in his neutral philosophical stance of the method, defending his adherence to the method.

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3 Strauss (1987) introduced ‘axial coding’ as a system of micro-analytic steps to examine the relationship between open codes, such as causal conditions, the phenomenon under study, context, actions and consequences.
as a general methodology, free of paradigm constraints. His “all is data” (Glaser, 1998, p. 8) edict allows for a range of perspectives and interpretations for theory building according to the type of data sought for the development of theory.

Strauss, on the other hand, considered grounded theory as a “particular style of doing qualitative analysis” (Strauss, 1987, p. 5), which moved the method more into the realm of qualitative research, thus undermining the general use of the method across both quantitative and qualitative domains.

Other contentious issues centre around the argument that the method is based on positivist ontological and epistemological assumptions; assumptions which are an anathema to post-modern paradigms, such as the constructivist grounded theory approach of Charmaz (2006), who views grounded theory methods as “a set of principles and practices”, not “as prescriptions or packages”, contending that the basic guidelines of the grounded theory method can be used with twenty-first century methodological assumptions and approaches (2006, p. 9).

The literature review in classic grounded theory research

Most academic research ethics committees follow a set of procedures which require a thorough literature search be carried out before commencement of a research project in order to assess the breadth of knowledge and competence of the researcher. This is an ethical issue and quite an understandable one, where participants need to be protected from research practices which do not meet ethical standards and have no value to the research community (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Following this formal requirement in order to conduct the research was not considered incompatible with the methodology chosen, given that Glaser himself acknowledges that this is a common feature of doing any kind of academic research.

The task for a grounded theorist is to remain open to discovery, to generate theory from the data. Glaser stresses the importance of “not doing a literature review in the substantive area and related areas where the research is to be done” (1998, p. 67). He clarifies his position on the literature review; “grounded theory is for the discovery of concepts and generation of
theory, not for testing or replicating theory” (Glaser, 1998, p. 69). He reinforces an objective stance to the data by insisting that researchers avoid imposing received concepts and theories onto the data, which subsequently derails the discovery process. However, this does not mean that researchers enter the field ‘empty headed’, as it is acknowledged that most researchers have an extensive knowledge of their substantive area of research (Glaser, 1998, Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

On the other hand, Glaser advises the researcher to constantly read literature in other disciplines outside the substantive setting of the research to increase theoretical sensitivity, the learning of theoretical codes and knowledge of the use of social theory (Glaser, 1998, p. 68).

Given this researcher’s professional experience and theoretical knowledge in the substantive area, it was not considered that professional bias would trump the idea of remaining open to the data, especially as the research focus was one of curiosity and openness to discovery rather than hypothesis testing. A two-pronged approach was used in the placement of the literature in this study. The first approach was to situate the concept of risk in the context of prisoners re-entering the community on parole (Chapter 2). The second approach involved engaging with literature from a range of areas and disciplines to provide more data for analysis and to support the substantive theory.

**Researcher reflexivity and sensitivity**

Reflexivity in research terms can be translated as thoughtful, self-aware analysis of the inter-subjective dynamics between the researcher and the researched (Finlay & Gough, 2003, p. ix). Rather than being considered as merely ‘thinking about’ something after the event, reflexivity involves a more critical self-reflective stance towards the ways in which a researchers’ background, assumptions, positioning and behaviour impact on the research process (Finlay & Gough, 2003, p. ix).

There are several ways reflexivity can be used by the researcher to accord with the aims and functions of the exercise at stake (Finlay, 2003, p. 16). In this study, researcher reflexivity served as a valuable means to examine personal assumptions and philosophical perspectives, to consider potential
theoretical bias in the process of analysis, to remain aware of ethical issues, and to critically evaluate the procedures, process and outcomes of the research.

Glaser does not promote the notion of researcher reflexivity in grounded theory. His contention is that a grounded theory explains group patterns of behaviour which is *conceptual* not interactional. This is in contrast to the interpretive approach of qualitative data analysis (QDA) which focuses on individual experiences and the accurate representation of the participant’s voice using reflexivity to reduce researcher bias in the co-construction of the data (McCallin, Nathaniel & Andrews, 2011, p.74). For this researcher, reflexivity was essential in providing transparency for many parts of the research design and process. The insightful action of reflexivity was employed consistent with the research objectives, and involved: accounting for the methodological decisions made to carry out the research; interrogating the ethics involved in conducting research with vulnerable individuals; acknowledging researcher-participant interactions in interviews and sampling; and giving importance to the central concern emerging in the data.

Reflexivity is entwined with the capacity of researcher sensitivity, as they both require what Glaser refers to as “the social psychology of the analyst” (1978, p. 2). Glaser & Strauss (1967) explain that the researcher must have a perspective in order to abstract significant categories and discover grounded theories from the data and this cannot be done without a quality they call theoretical sensitivity. They add that this sensitivity is an ability to have theoretical insight into one’s area of research and to apply this insight to theory building (1967, p. 46). Glaser (1978) emphasised in his later work as well, that theoretical sensitivity is a quality of the researcher; where he or she is able to pick up on relevant issues, understand the meanings and significance of data from the participant’s perspective, and use their own knowledge and experience to respond to what is in the data. In the words of Charmaz (2006, p. 17), “guiding interests, sensitising concepts and disciplinary perspectives often provide us with such points of departure for developing, rather than limiting our ideas.”
Sensitivity grows with the grounded theory process. In some cases, the researcher has to evaluate the fit between their initial research interests and their emerging data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 17). For example, this study began with an initial interest in how parolees managed ascribed risk, however, the central concern of participants emerged as wanting ownership and control of their lives. It was this concern and its constituent conditions and processes that were pursued in the study. Managing ascribed risk was not central to the parolee’s experience; however their meaning-making actions in response to the ascription of risk were found to be embedded in the discovered grounded theory.

_Taping interviews_

Glaser does not recommend taping and transcribing interview data in his grounded theory method. His statement leaves no doubt to this; “one of the strongest evidentiary invasions into grounded theory is the taping of interviews” (Glaser, 1998, p. 107). He emphasises that the confusion lies in using the interview data as evidence to substantiate findings or to obtain descriptive completeness rather than using the interview as data for conceptualisation and generation of hypotheses for a grounded theory. He relates that new researchers can be caught in the trap of over-coding the data; where they become confused and overwhelmed by a large number of unrelated one-incident concepts when coding data instead of looking for interchangeable indicators which show a pattern in the data (Glaser, 2011, p. 8).

Although Glaser advises that coding field notes enables the researcher to move onto the conceptual level of analysis without being derailed by minute descriptive detail, taping and transcribing the interviews in this research provided a means to attend to the language used by participants; to be more aware of the subtle nuances and emotional content that is often missed or forgotten in writing field notes. Taping was also a way to pick up on unexplored concepts in the data which provided a guide for further sampling of data.
The Procedures of the Grounded Theory Method

Before the procedures of the Grounded Theory Method are explained, a list of terms commonly used in the language of the method is given below. The terminology used in the grounded theory method were drawn from the work of Corbin & Strauss (2008, pp. 87-117), and Glaser (1978, pp. 56-65).

**Terminology used in classic grounded theory**

- **Concept**: A label representing the analyst’s understandings of what is happening in the data. Concepts vary in levels of abstraction, with the higher-level concepts resting on the foundation of the lower-level concepts
- **Codes**: link data and theory by conceptualising the underlying pattern of a set of empirical indicators within the data
- **Coding**: the action of conceptually grouping the data into codes
- **Substantive coding**: conceptualises the empirical substance of the of the area of research
- **Theoretical coding**: conceptualises how the substantive codes relate to each other
- **Incident**: a fragment of empirical data representing an event or action
- **Indicator**: part of the data which refers to a particular event named by a concept
- **Category**: higher-level concepts under which the researcher group lower-level concepts according to shared properties. Categories are sometimes referred to as themes. They represent relevant phenomena and enable the analyst to reduce and combine data
- **Properties**: conceptual aspects or elements of a category which are lower order concepts
- **Dimensions**: variations within properties that give specificity and range to concepts
- **Core category**: the highest level conceptual category, which occurs frequently in the data, is central, relates to other categories, and accounts for the variation in a pattern of behaviour
- **Constant comparison**: a method of joint coding and inductive analysis (often called a concept-indicator model) which includes the processes of multiple comparisons of incidents and concepts, theoretical sampling, integrating categories, delimiting of theory and writing the theory
• **Memos**: notes written by the researcher of varying analytical depth and length which help to conceptualise and hypothesise happenings in the data. Memos guide data sampling and theory generation. In the writing up stage of the constant comparative process, memos are sorted in order to be coded theoretically for the relationships between substantive categories thus integrating the theory.

• **Emergence**: the gradual generation of theory using the logics of induction, deduction and abduction.

• **Saturation or Density**: the varying levels of category development in terms of conceptualising the full range of the theoretical properties of the category (for example; dimensions, conditions, contingencies, consequences and structural context).

**Coding in classic grounded theory**

Glaser (2011, p. 51) explains that naming social or psychological patterns emerging in the data with concepts is a form of latent structural analysis. He comments “it is a conceptual levels phenomenon that relates to how the analyst is formulating the integration of the theory” (1998, p. 136). Grounded theory is based on a third-level conceptual perspective analysis; the first level is the data, the second level is the conceptualisation of the data into categories and their properties, and the third level is the integration of the categories by theoretically sorting them into a substantive theory (1998, p.136). Glaser adds a fourth level perspective which is the formalisation of a substantive theory to a more general conceptual level. Coding allows the researcher to transcend the empirical nature of the data, and raise the conceptual levels by conceptualising underlying patterns in the data and accounting for the processes in the data in a theoretically sensitive way (Glaser, 1978, p. 55). This is done by using two types of coding: substantive coding and theoretical coding.

**Substantive coding**

Substantive coding conceptualises the empirical substance of the research area (Glaser, 1978, pp. 55-65) and involves open coding, questioning the data, writing memos, theoretical sampling and selective coding on a core category. In open coding the researcher inspects the raw data line by line, ‘fracturing’ the data by naming events and actions (called incidents) with codes which explain what is happening or ‘what is going on’ in the data, an essential step in “transforming raw data into theoretical constructions of
social processes” (Kendall, 1999, p. 746). A feature of the grounded theory method is that coding can be modified as the analysis progresses to better express the grab, fit and relevance of emerging categories (Glaser, 1998).

Charmaz points out that this initial stage of coding helps to separate data into categories and to see processes (2006, p. 51) and moves the researcher towards fulfilling the two criteria for completing a grounded theory: fit and relevance (Charmaz, 2006, p. 54). A study fits the empirical world when codes have been constructed and developed into categories that crystallise the participant’s experience. A study has relevance when an incisive analytic framework is offered that interprets what is happening and makes relationships between implicit processes and structures visible (Charmaz, 2006, p. 54).

A common practice in grounded theory is to add the gerund (ing) to substantive codes to imply a process in action; a method of abstracting a basic social process (BSP) leading to substantive theory. However, care must be taken that these gerund codes have interchangeable indicators which show a pattern and are given to words suggesting action and not types or dimensions (Glaser, 2011, p. 52).

At first the researcher may code incidents in the data with descriptive names rather than with an abstract concept, but as the researcher becomes more familiar with conceptual coding, descriptive codes can be re-organised, collapsed and re-ordered into more representative conceptual categories to explain patterns and actions in the data and where [codes] “start to bring an abstract order to the descriptive mixes” (Duchscher & Morgan, 2004, p. 608; Glaser, 2011, p. 18). The researcher may also use the participant’s own expressions as codes (called in vivo codes) if they have relevant explanatory power in the emerging theory. The example in Box 3.1 shows initial open coding of excerpts from the first interview with Donny.
During the coding and comparative analysis of data, it is important that the researcher stop coding to record ideas and hypotheses about the data in memos. Memos provide a way to think conceptually and raise the codes from the descriptive to the theoretical level by drawing out theoretical properties of the categories and directing further sampling to develop the category. Memos help to “conceptualise the boundaries and properties of each generated code while illuminating gaps in the emerging theory” (Glaser, 2011, p. 19).

The example in Box 3.2 is drawn from one of the study’s handwritten memos on the concept of goals. Note that the language of the participant (in vivo codes) helps to capture his perspective and motivations. A diagram helped to picture the concept in terms of its properties and conditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOX 3.1</th>
<th>EXAMPLE OF OPEN CODING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Open codes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Excerpt: Donny, Interview 1.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present self</td>
<td>I don't take no risks anymore … I think um … gaol … got to me this time … I was only in for a dirty urine … [gaol] but it got to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restraining</td>
<td>I know that's just what I did [used drugs] … and because I've done that for so long, it's just … yeah, it's just a pattern, as soon as I have it boom! … I’m there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of gaol</td>
<td>This time I’ve just been spending a lot of time at home … this time … I'm just tryin to stay out of it … you know? And I know I won't even do that unless I stay at home. I'll just figure it out from there, do you know what I mean?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wearing-down</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-knowing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing connections</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tipping points</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Isolating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confining options</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempting change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in the present</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**BOX 3.2 MEMO EXAMPLE**

**Code: Parole Goals**

Damien’s goal is to ‘stop drinking’. He has made his own decisions about how he wants to do it and is disdainful of attempts by others (his CCO and program facilitators) telling him what his problem is. Having control over his life is important to him and he looks forward to having the freedom to live the way he wants to live.

“Doing what I want to do”
“Getting parole over and done with”
“Getting my life back”
“Do what I have to do, get my control back”

Parole goals: goals that are taken on to please others (family, ‘the system’) and to ‘get through parole’ by following the rules.

Personal goals: goals owned by him but will be pursued when free of parole – e.g. “wait out parole” (uses lots of ‘then’, ‘when’s’ and ‘afters’)

---

N.B. What influences the goals parolees have made for their time on parole? Damien has only six months on parole – how does the length of time on parole affect the way parolee’s configure their goals? What about SPA parolees, who have longer parole periods, are they also ‘waiting out parole’?

The researcher looks for any recurring theme or pattern in the data which captures the problem of concern to the participants in the setting. This central or core pattern of behaviour is the prime organising feature of grounded theory research and explains what is really going on for participants; expressed in grounded theory terms as the main concern. It is essential to have the main concern clearly in focus in order to develop a substantive theory to explain most of the behaviour in the problem resolving process (Glaser, 1998, p. 132).
The main concern leads to the resolving process or the core category, and is the second organising feature of the grounded theory. The process of selective coding and theoretical sampling delimits the analysis to only those categories related to the core category. Sampling of the data focuses on the developing theory by selectively coding for properties and dimensions of the categories. This increases the depth and relevance of the categories and confirms their place in the emerging theory.

Data collection and analysis becomes faster and less cumbersome as the researcher is able to recognise properties and dimensions of the core category. The process also provides the researcher with a more consistent sense of the emergent core variable and “verifies the core category by its constant relationship to all other codes” (Glaser, 2011, p.19). This means that the core category stands as an acceptable substantive code which has fit, relevance and workability, as shown by its interchangeable indicators (Glaser, 2011, p. 19). Categorisation is only the beginning in generating a grounded theory, however, as Glaser notes; it is often the end for a number of grounded theories which have the goals to describe categories which are concluded at this stage (Glaser, 1998, p. 134). When further coding, analysis and sampling can no longer add more properties, conditions and dimensions to the core category and its related categories the researcher stops coding or moves on to new or existing categories to compare with emerging concepts and categories.

Theoretical coding

Theoretical coding provides the relational model through which all categories are related to the core category (Hernandez, 2009, p. 52). Theoretical coding can be a simultaneous process along with substantive coding, but most often goes on at the time when memos are sorted to integrate the core category and its properties into the grounded theory. Memos provide the conceptual picture of this relational model as they serve to capture, track, and preserve conceptual ideas (Glaser, 1998, p.180) of varying analytical depth. It is the conceptual maturity of the memo bank amassed by the researcher which provides the rich explanation of the grounded theory. Memos direct the sampling for theoretical completeness,
weaving the ideas from the literature into the theory and preparing the mature memos for sorting and writing up the theory.

Whereas substantive coding fractures the data and provides the empirical substance of the research through open coding, theoretical coding has also to ‘earn’ its way into the theory by its theoretical fit to “weave the fractured story back together again” (Glaser, 1978, p. 72). Theoretical codes are derived from the researcher’s sensitivity to a range of sociological processes and models which integrate the categories. Glaser offers a number of theoretical ‘coding families’ which are models and processes found in sociological studies. These ‘families’ include models and their variants pertaining to the social processes of causality, stages, degree, dimension, type, strategy, interaction, identity, tolerance, social control, and conformity (Glaser, 1978, pp. 75-77).

Theoretical coding provides the conceptual model of the theory explaining the interaction of the variables. The resultant theory is one which fits, works, has relevance and is modifiable. Grounded theory is not based on verifying facts but offers integrated conceptual hypotheses based on empirical data which fits the experiences of participants, makes sense to those in the substantive area, has practical value and can be modified with additional data in different contexts.

**Theoretical sampling**

Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory which is guided by the initial joint data collection, coding, analysis and memo writing. This process provides the theoretical leads which tells the researcher where to go next in order to develop the theory as it emerges (Glaser, 1978, p.36). Open coding and substantive coding, together with memo writing, direct the researcher to collect and code data to develop the properties and connections with other codes until they are “saturated, elaborated and integrated into the emerging theory” (1978, p. 36). The researcher follows up on hypotheses generated in the data and this can only occur as the data is coded and ideas emerge from the data.

Theoretical sampling contains three logics of inferencing. It is an *inductive* method because the concepts (which are mental constructions of the
researcher to represent what is going on in the data) emerging from the data lead to discovery of new hypotheses. It is *deductive* in the sense that the researcher theoretically samples to confirm or disconfirm the emerging hypotheses to see if they fit or work with the problem in question. The third type of inferencing has been somewhat neglected in the criticisms raised about the method, and it is here that Glaser and Strauss may have unwittingly placed themselves at odds with a naïve inductivist position with their original claim that all discovery comes only from the data.

Grounded theory has more in common with the American Pragmatist Charles Peirce’s concept of *abduction* (1898/1992). In terms of grounded theory being a method of discovery, it is a method to seek (new) order in the data, to suspend preconceptions to allow for creative thinking, and it is a method which does not propose to reflect pure reality or truth, but to offer a slice or a part of the picture of what is going on in the social setting under study.

Abductive inferencing is not an *exact* method or a mode of reasoning that delivers new knowledge. It is an *attitude* towards data and towards one’s own knowledge - an “attitude of preparedness to abandon old convictions and to seek new ones” (Reichertz, 2010, p. 5). Abductive efforts aim for the discovery of an (new) order which fits or solves the practical problems arising from the question of interest and this order remains in place as long as it helps to explain problems and is useful (Reichertz, 2010, p. 6).

As the researcher gradually builds up the emerging theory through the logics employed in theoretical sampling, it is important to be aware of theoretical biases. Researcher sensitivity can hinder (forcing of pet theories on the data) or help the logics of theoretical sampling. Sensitivity can guide the researcher to uncover data that may be overlooked and can help the researcher to “deductively formulate questions which may elicit data that leads to inductive concepts being formulated later” (Glaser, 1978, p. 39).

In a grounded theory, theoretical sampling is guided by the criteria of theoretical purpose and relevance rather than being constrained by the structural circumstances of research where data collection is pre-planned.
and “more likely to force the analyst into irrelevant directions and harmful pitfalls” (Glaser, 1967, p. 48).

For the grounded theorist, this means that she is not seeking data as factual verification of existing hypotheses but can adjust and control data sampling throughout the conjoint process of data collection and analysis. This sampling control ensures the relevance of the data to the criteria of the emerging theory (Glaser, 1967, p. 48).

**The constant comparative method**

In their original publication (*The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, 1967), Glaser and Strauss explained the scientifically rigorous approach they employed in analysing data to discover theory. Glaser introduced the method of constant comparison derived from his training with Lazarsfeld in quantitative methodology and qualitative math (Glaser, 1998, p. 22). The method of constant comparison links data closely to theory as the researcher jointly codes, analyses and samples the data based on the emergent categories and their properties. By using this procedure, properties and their categories earn their way into the theory. Glaser advises to ignore data which has not earned its way into the theory, “non earning categories or properties are irrelevant and should not be allowed to clutter the theory’s parsimony and scope” (Glaser, 1998, p. 148). There are four stages to explain the method of constant comparison, with earlier stages remaining in operation simultaneously throughout the analysis by providing continuous development to its successive stage until the analysis is terminated: comparing incidents applicable to each category, integrating categories and their properties, delimiting the theory, and writing the theory.

**Stage 1 Comparing incidents applicable to each category**

The basic rule for the constant comparative method is that while coding an incident for a category the researcher must compare it with the previous incidents in the same and different groups coded in the same category. In this iterative process, constant comparison yields a provisional set of theoretical properties, dimensions, consequences and relationships of the emergent categories which explain the main concern of the participant and how he resolves his concern.
Holton adds:

the purpose of constant comparison is to see if the data support and continue to support emerging categories…while at the same time the process further builds and substantiates the emerging categories by defining their properties and dimensions

(Holton, 2011, p. 175)

**Stage 2 Integrating categories and their properties**

In conjunction with comparing incidents for underlying uniformities, the researcher examines the data for indicators which will integrate the existing categories by developing the properties and dimensions of the category. Sampling for new data becomes theoretically driven by analytical memos serving to guide sampling to saturate emergent categories with as many properties as possible. The researcher follows the edict of “all is data” by seeking different sources of data to constantly compare and add density to the emergent provisional categories.

**Stage 3 Delimiting the theory**

Delimiting the theory is an important stage of the analysis. This curbs the problem of the researcher being overwhelmed with too many categories which are not related to the core category and/or are not sufficiently supported by the data or ‘saturated’ to earn their place in the theory. Delimiting data collection and analysis to focus on only those categories related to the core category refines and increases the potential scope and applicability of the theory in a process which satisfies what Glaser and Strauss call “parsimony of variables and formulation” (1967, p. 111).

Open coding ceases when the core and its related categories have emerged to provide the framework for the emergent theory. This is a stage when data may be revisited to seek out more properties of the concepts which may have been missed in open coding as well as a time to assess the categories for their fit with the data and relevance to the emerging theory. Guided by the deductive logic of the emerging theory, non-relevant categories can be dropped, collapsed into more abstract or higher order concepts, subsumed by other categories or re-named to better fit the change in meaning through elaboration of its properties. Refining the categories in this manner produces
fewer categories with more specificity and a higher level of abstraction. This method of delimiting restricts the categories and allows for more focused constant comparison of further incidents to elaborate, expand or in Glaserian terms, to theoretically ‘saturate’ the reduced categories (Glaser, 2011, p.141).

Memos work in tandem with data collection and analysis, providing the source for the direction of theoretical sampling, and delimiting the data by forcing a focus on the emerging framework. At the same time, memos also open the researcher up to new ideas and possibilities in related substantive and conceptual areas (Glaser, 1978, p. 88).

Stage 4 Writing the theory

The stage of writing the theory relies on the theoretical sorting of the accumulated memos written on the core category and its properties throughout the study. The researcher looks for similarities, underlying uniformities and connections and decides on the location of a particular memo based on the theoretical coding of the data grounding the idea. Sorting memos generates the emergent theoretical framework which articulates the grounded theory through an integrated set of hypotheses based on theoretical codes. Once sorted and fully integrated, the theoretical memos written at this stage of the constant comparative process become the outline for writing the theory (Holton, 2011, p. 189).

Quality in grounded theory

For the method to uphold the standards of theoretical credibility, the four criteria of fit, work, relevance, and modifiability need to be met (Glaser, 1998, 2011; Charmaz, 2006). The research fits the empirical world when the construction of codes and developed categories “crystallize participant’s experience” by fitting the data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 54). By constantly comparing new data to existing data, generated categories may be modified or refitted to ground the category as closely as possible to the data. The criteria of work is met when the categories are grounded in the data and the theory explains “the core of what is going on” in the substantive area (Glaser, 1998, p.5). Relevance follows with the analytic framework that
“interprets what is happening and makes relationships between implicit processes and structures visible” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 54).

Glaser insists that “grounded theory arrives at relevance, because it allows core problems and processes to emerge” (1998, p. 5), with generated theories representing a ‘slice’ of what is going on in the area of study. He states “the theory can never be more correct than its ability to work the data —thus as the latter reveals itself in research the former must be constantly modified” (Glaser, 1998, p. 5). 

**Modifiability** in this instance reflects the variation and relevance in the nature of basic social processes in an ever-changing world, and together with the previous three criteria “makes both the grounded theory and the action it purports to explain tractable” (1998, p. 6). Grounded theories can be further developed as they provide only a part of a range of explanations for social problems. Thus the grounded theory can be modified with different sets of data across different substantive areas (Glaser, 1978).

Glaser adds that grounded theory is transcending in many ways: it can go beyond the substantive area being studied to a more formal theory; it can be used as a general method of analysis with any form of data collection; and through the process of conceptual development, it can include and integrate other theories as part of the data and yield an integrated theory of ‘greater scope’.

The Grounded theory perspective is one way of handling data to systematically generate theory, as Glaser adds “our perspective is but a piece of myriad action in Sociology, not the only, right action” (1978, p. 3).

**Chapter Summary**

Grounded Theory can be used across a range of paradigms as well as incorporating a multi-paradigm approach. By using empirical data (obtained from the subjective realities of the parolees) to understand social processes within a substantive context, this researcher can recognise the strengths of a number of the paradigms to explain the framework of the theory.

This chapter has presented the major paradigms of the social science research methodologies to assist in the explanation of the philosophical
assumptions underpinning this study. The research question asking how parolees manage ascribed risk guided the selection of the research methodology for the study. This study is placed within a post-positivist ontology, epistemology and methodology which align with the philosophical assumptions of critical realism. The approach acknowledges that although society is an objective reality that is humanly produced, it exists as real on a subjective level for social actors.

The origins of the grounded theory method were presented and the debates and controversies related to the theory’s ontological and epistemological position were discussed.

The grounded theory method does not strive for accuracy in the representation of the voice of the participant, it is a theory which gives a conceptually abstract explanation of how individuals continually resolve or process their main concern. The next chapter describes the steps taken to prepare for the research in the first section and is followed by a detailed description of the application of the method in the study of parolees in the second section.
CHAPTER FOUR

Preparation for Research, Data Collection and Data Analysis

Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the grounded theory method and the procedures which lead to the systematic generation of a substantive theory. The aim of this study was to develop a substantive theory to explain how parolees manage ascribed risk on re-entry to the community. As prisoners enter the community on parole, they are supervised under the auspices of the CSNSW Department of Community Corrections and are assigned to the case load of a Community Corrections Officer (CCO). Case management of each parolee is informed by the LSI-R, a statistical risk assessment instrument used to monitor and direct services to individuals according to their level of risk and factors identified as related to their risk of re-offending.

Rather than beginning research with a set of assumptions which could bias the research towards a professional concern about risk, the grounded theory researcher enters the field of interest with an open mind to allow for the social concern of participants to emerge from the data and the resolving behaviour they use to be conceptualised as theory.

In Section 1 of this chapter, the preparatory process for the research is presented, with details of the ethics approvals sought from Charles Sturt University (CSU) and the NSW Department of Corrective Services. Preparation for the research included maintaining contact with CSNSW COS management and staff to identify prisoners re-entering the community on parole, meeting with potential participants to inform them of the study at the COS locations, and liaising with prisons and prison staff to access parolees who had breached their parole. Parolees are a difficult group to access in regions such as the Central West of NSW, given the distances

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4 The NSW Department of Corrective Services was abolished as a department in July 2009 and became a branch of the Department of Justice and Attorney General with the new title of Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW). CSNSW is currently a division of the NSW Department of Justice.
between town centres and the often erratic reporting attendances of parolees to their local COS office. The remainder of the section provides details of the participant sample, the types of data used in the study and how data was collected for analysis. The section concludes with how the data was managed.

Section 2 of the chapter details how the procedures of the classic version of the grounded theory method were applied to the data to discover the main concern of participants and the core pattern of behaviour which explained how they resolved their concern. Data analysis is presented in the four stages of the constant comparative method; a systematic, iterative and rigorous procedure which begins with fragmenting or ‘opening up’ the data and applying codes. As incidents are constantly compared and coded, the recurring central theme or problem of the participants emerges in the data and becomes the first organising feature of the grounded theory. The second organising feature of the grounded theory is the discovery of the core category which integrates the substantive categories to explain the behaviour participants employ to resolve their problem. Memo writing is integral to the analysis of the data and drives theoretical sampling to confirm and raise the conceptual level of the emergent categories, as well as to conceptualise the relationships between the categories to build the theory. These processes are not linear, as the researcher is constantly dipping in and out of the data, coding, sampling, refining and saturating categories, and using inductive, deductive and abductive logics to explore all possibilities raised in the data.

Section 1.
Preparation for Research
Preparation for research in the prison setting can be complex and requires the researcher to not only follow the procedures enforced by ethics committees but also to be reflexive about the unique situation of potential participants when collecting data.

Roberts and Indermaur, (2008, p. 311) discussed the ethical issues which surface when conducting research in the Australian prison setting by examining the relationship between ‘procedural ethics’ and ‘ethics in
practice’. They define ‘procedural ethics’ as the standards and procedures involved in accessing research as enforced by human research ethics committees (HRECs) under the guiding authority of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). ‘Ethics in practice’ complements procedural ethics and refers to the responses of the researcher to ethical issues arising in practice.

**Ethics approval**

In this research, procedural ethics were governed by the Charles Sturt University Human Research Ethics Committee and the NSW Department of Corrective Services Ethics Committee, Corporate Research Evaluation and Statistics Unit.

The research proposal was submitted to the Charles Sturt University Human Research Ethics Committee in August 2008 and approval was granted to conduct the study in October, 2008.

An application to conduct the study was also submitted to the NSW Department of Corrective Services Ethics Committee, Corporate Research, Evaluation and Statistics Unit (CRES). Final approval for the research was granted by the Commissioner of the NSW Department of Corrective Services on 28th January, 2009, contingent on an agreement between CSNSW and the researcher and supervisor to comply with the following NSW legislation and conditions:

i. Section 267 of the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999*.

ii. Sections 27B, 27C, 27D, 27E of the *Summary Offences Act 1988*

iii. The twelve information protection principles within Part 2 – Division 1, Sections 8 to 19 of the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*, and

iv. The requirement to provide a copy of the results of this research project when it is finished either through published papers or abstracts.

The first condition (i) refers to the requirement to have approval granted from the Commissioner of CSNSW for any research proposed in consultation with the Ethics Committee and CRES. This Act enforces the Commissioner’s discretion relating to access to information held by
CSNSW, how it is used and the penalties for misuse (such as disclosing the identity or crime information of a participant). The second condition (ii) the Summary Offences Act 1998 outlines the penalties for trafficking (such as offering inducements, giving access to phones, delivering letters). The third condition (iii) is an Act which is familiar to those working in agencies with a client/ customer base. The provisions of this Act relate to the collection, retention and security of personal information as well as the access, limits of use and restrictions of disclosure by agents. Section 316 of the Crimes Act 1900 contains the penalties for failure to disclose information that may assist in securing the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of an offender.

The guidelines contained in the current document published by the NHMRC (National Statement, 2007) and enforced by HREC’s, stipulate the welfare and rights of research participants, and the principles of respect for persons, integrity, beneficence and justice. The standards outline the importance of consent in the prison setting, given the dependent and unequal relationship of participants and the statutory obligations of researchers which limit confidentiality. The statutory obligations have been noted above.

Ethical practice is the hallmark of working with vulnerable populations, particularly when imprisoned individuals are deprived of many of the rights taken for granted by the ordinary citizen. As a psychologist working in the correctional system, this researcher was acutely aware of the imbalance of power in the status relationships between those who have been incarcerated and those who work in assigned roles to deliver interventions to reduce the risk of re-offending. When prisoners are released on parole, their degraded status is difficult to shed, given they are supervised and monitored while at the same time trying to lead a normal life. For this researcher\(^5\), having a working knowledge of the NSW correctional system and understanding the vernacular used by prisoners made it easier for the participants to discuss their experience of prison and parole life. Prison slang commonly used by parolees (for example, *dog* = informer, *lagging* = sentence), and the context in which they used the word ‘parole’ interchangeably in referring to the

\(^5\) ‘This researcher’ and female gender personal pronouns refer to the researcher-writer of this study.
system, the local COS office or CCOs, helped to maintain the flow of conversation without being interrupted to clarify the meaning of their expressions.

In acknowledgement of the setting and the vulnerability of the parolee participants, a design for ethical research was developed and used as a guideline for carrying out this study (Figure 4):

### Design for Ethical Research

- Participants were treated with respect and their contributions were acknowledged
- Consent was voluntary and this was made explicit to the participant. Parolees were assured that their treatment on parole was not contingent on their participation in the study.
- There were no inducements offered for parolees to participate.
- The researcher was mindful that the participant did not have any impairment which rendered him incapable of understanding the nature of the study and consent.
- The research was discussed with the participant and he was provided with easy to read printed information explaining the research. Parolees were not pressured or rushed to provide consent. Contact numbers for both the researcher and supervisor were also provided.
- Participants were invited to ask questions about the study.
- They were informed about the limits of confidentiality and mandatory reporting and assured of anonymity and security of information.
- Pseudonyms were used for participants in the study and their demographic and offence details were not included. Any risk assessment criteria was presented as a group category value and did not define specific factors related to their individual offending behaviour.

**Figure 4. Ethical Research Guidelines**

*Liasing with CSNSW community corrections management and staff*

Males represent largest cohort of persons released on court-based and SPA parole orders\(^6\). Given this high proportion, the focus for the study was

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\(^6\) NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) database sample of 9,604 offenders released to parole in 2010 and 2011 showed 90.6% were male and 9.4% were female (Weatherburn & Ringland, 2014).
confined to male parolees being supervised at four COS locations within a 200 kilometre radius in the Central West region of NSW.

The District Manager of the Regional Probation and Parole Service (now Community Offender Services or COS) was sent information about the study and was later contacted to arrange for the research to be carried out in four COS locations in the region. A meeting was carried out with each Manager, Unit Leader and CCOs in the four centres to explain the research and address their questions. All CCOs were co-operative and agreed to identify prisoners due to be released on parole and provide information about when they would be reporting to the COS office. The CCOs were open to sharing their opinions and give honest appraisals of their interaction with parolees allocated to their case loads.

**Providing a climate for participation**

A quiet and private space was made available for the interviews to be conducted in each COS location. After parolees had reported to their CCO, each parolee was approached informally to ask if they would be willing to hear about in the study. These meetings provided an opportunity to build rapport and a trusting relationship with the parolee by disclosing the researcher’s role in the correctional system, and her professional and personal reasons for wanting to understand the things that concerned them most while being on parole. Potential participants were informed about the legal boundaries of confidentiality and issues of consent were explained. In order account for any undisclosed literacy difficulties, the consent form and information sheets were read through with the parolee and a copy of each was provided to them before they left the meeting (see Appendix A).

The reasons participants consented to taking part in the study were noted as an opportunity to impart their experiences on parole for the benefit of potential parolees; “it might do some good for them”, “it might change some things” (Mark, Field Notes 15/10/2009), and to offer advice and opinions from their world; “yeah … [ I ] may as well let ‘em know what it’s really like, so they don’t make the same mistakes I did” (Donny, Field Notes 15/10/2009).
Concerns about their names and other information that would identify them in the study were addressed by ensuring that pseudonyms would be used throughout the study and COS locations would be referred to only by areas within the Central West region to preserve the participant’s anonymity.

**Sampling procedure**
Theoretical sampling proceeded when ideas and hypotheses emerged from patterns in the data and continued until the coded patterns (as conceptual categories) had sufficient explanatory power to give the theory rigour. For example, the emergent category of *time framing* directed the theoretical sampling of parolees who were serving different time periods on parole. The design of the research included access to parolees from four locations as well as the option to re-interview consenting participants after approximately six months had elapsed in order to confirm emergent categories and to account for change over time; a strategy employed to add rigour to the study.

**Data Collection**
In conducting a grounded theory, the process of data collection is *controlled* [emphasis in original] by the emerging theory (Glaser, 1978, p. 36). In this study, the male parolees formed the substantive group from which data was collected and participants were purposively recruited from areas within the Central Western region of NSW. The primary source of data came from recorded in-depth interviews with participants purposively sampled from the area of interest. In accordance with the “all is data” dictum of Glaser (1998, p. 8), extant theoretical literature, newspaper articles, Federal and State government documents, film transcripts, and observations were all considered as ‘data’ to be theoretically sampled for the purposes of developing the theory.

Data collection was driven by patterns or themes which emerged from the data by using the procedures of the grounded theory method and as such, written analytical memos provided an essential source for ideas and directions for theoretical sampling. Glaser insists that “all is data” (2011, p.10) and following this dictum, this researcher remained open to ideas.
arising from communication with colleagues and the observed interactions between parolees and CCOs.

**Challenges to data collection**

Glaser advises that each researcher develops their own pacing throughout the data collection and analysis phases of the method. Data collection may be restricted by access to the field, the time allocated for the study and the need for further sampling to develop the theory (Glaser, 1978, p. 47). Approval for an extension of time in the field was sought and obtained from both the CSU and Corrective Services Ethics bodies in order to access parolees who were released to each location at different periods of time. Some of the parolees lived in outlying villages and had to arrange for transport to the parole office, therefore interviews were conducted on the same day of their meeting with their CCO. Having worked for a period of time in Community Corrections, this researcher was not overly surprised that parolees failed to attend the COS office for mandated meetings with their supervising CCO given their somewhat unstable lifestyles and their difficulties in getting to the COS location. Many interviews had to be re-scheduled after contacting the participants personally and this required extra travelling time.

A considerable amount of time was spent travelling to each COS office and explaining the study to recently released parolees. Parolees were assisted with reading and comprehending the information and issues of consent were discussed in terms of the ethics bodies of both CSU and CSNSW. Some parolees were wary of becoming involved in the research and because interviews were to be held at the COS site, it was difficult to disentangle the voluntary aspect of the study from the compliance aspect of their supervision.

During the period of data collection (2009 and 2010), four potential participants gave verbal commitments to participate at the information sessions but were unwilling to continue with the study when contacted. The wary responses of these potential participants reflected the prison context, where loss of status, fear of reprisal from other inmates, and the abuse and misinterpretation of information by authority agents contributed to reasons
for caution in disclosure among the prison population (Leibling &Arnold, 2012).

Issues of trust are a common feature when working with prisoners and parolees, as they have little control over where information goes and how it is used in a system as complex as that of CSNSW. One participant expressed his concern about what would be done with the interview data, stating that he did not want “anything to come back to bite me” (Joe, Field Note Interview 1). Consequently, issues of confidentiality and by extension, trust, were met with a measure of scepticism by the parolees, as one parolee revealed, “nothing stays confidential in this place” (Neil, Field Note Interview 1). One potential participant declined to be involved with anything more than what was required by parole, stating “I’m out now and I want to leave all that behind” (Terry, Field Note, 11/03/2009).

Collecting data in the prison setting also presented challenges. Although permission was granted by the correctional centre authorities to audio-record interviews, data collection relied mainly on written field notes due to the difficulty of taping interviews in spaces which were not private and were subject to surrounding noise and other disturbances occurring in the overcrowded conditions of the prison.

**Participant sample**

Data collection took place from February, 2009 to August, 2010, during which time approximately 2,000 kilometres were travelled to and from four separate COS locations in the Central West region of NSW, Australia. A total of fourteen parolees drawn from the COS locations in the region consented to participate in the study. After approximately six months had elapsed on their parole order, ten of the participants were available for re-interview. Of the four participants who were unavailable, one had been re-incarcerated in a prison outside the region, one had moved location, one had an outstanding breach warrant yet to be served, and one participant did not reply to messages left on his phone.

Of the fourteen participants, only two had prior experience of consistent employment for a period of more than one year. On release, only one participant returned to a self-employed position, while the remaining
thirteen were supported financially by social security benefits. Two participants were released to their own homes, while twelve participants were released to reside with either their parents or other members of their family.

**Participant sample characteristics**

Ages of participants ranged from 21-54 years and all had experienced previous contact with the criminal justice system as a juvenile and/or adult offender, with four experiencing prison for the first time. Eleven of the fourteen parolees were serving sentences less than three years and were released on court-based parole (CBP) after serving the non-parole portion of the sentence in prison. Three parolees were serving sentences of more than three years and were released under the discretionary control of the State Parole Authority (SPA).

All parolees supervised on court based orders and by the SPA are assessed by CCOs using the LSI-R (Andrews & Bonta, 1995) on re-entry. Assessment provides a managerial means to prioritise and direct services according to the risk of re-offending category ascribed to offenders (risk principle) and as a guide to target those needs which are highly correlated with their offending behaviour (needs principle). Responsivity to treatment (responsivity principle) is determined by personal strengths and/or specific individual factors which influence effectiveness of treatment (Andrews & Bonta, 1995, 2003; Bonta, 2002).

All study participants were assessed using the LSI-R on re-entry and scores fell within the range of the Medium (Medium-Low, Medium, Medium-High) category of risk of re-offending within 2 years of being released. The probability of re-offending within this time is calculated as 31.1% for those who are assessed in the Medium-Low range and 57.3% for those within the Medium-High category of risk of re-offending.

Figure 5 gives details of the participant sample. Pseudonyms were substituted for participant names and the four COS locations in the Central West region of NSW were assigned with an area identity (East, West, Central and Outer Western) to also preserve anonymity for participants.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>COS Location</th>
<th>Parole type and time on parole</th>
<th>Risk Category</th>
<th>Recidivist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>CBP 18 months</td>
<td>Medium-High</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damien</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>CBP 6 months</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>45-50</td>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>CBP 10 months</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlie</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>CBP 8 months</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>CBP 15 months</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lenny</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>CBP 9 months</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>SPA 30 months</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mick</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>SPA 24 months</td>
<td>Medium-Low</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>CBP 18 months</td>
<td>Medium-High</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donny</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>SPA 30 months</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keith</td>
<td>50-55</td>
<td>Outer Western</td>
<td>CBP 6 months</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>Outer Western</td>
<td>CBP 9 months</td>
<td>Medium-High</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>Outer Western</td>
<td>CBP 6 months</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>35-40</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>CBP 6 months</td>
<td>Medium-High</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5. Participant Sample Characteristics**
Details of the participant sample. (Release ordered by court = CBP, release ordered by State Parole Authority = SPA)

**Interviews**

Initial interviews were held at each participant’s COS office location. Follow up interviews were also conducted at each COS location and, where accessible, inside the prison for those participants who had been incarcerated. Face to face interviews lasted for approximately 40-60
minutes. Details of the interview dates and locations are provided below (Figure 6):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Interview dates</th>
<th>Interview Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>1: 27/2/2009</td>
<td>Central COS office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2: no contact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damien</td>
<td>1: 4/3/2009</td>
<td>Eastern COS office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2: 12/8/2009</td>
<td>Eastern COS office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2: unavailable</td>
<td>Imprisoned out of area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lenny</td>
<td>1: 30/3/2009</td>
<td>Western COS office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2: 13/10/2009</td>
<td>Prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim</td>
<td>1: 30/3/2009</td>
<td>Western COS office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2: 1/6/2010</td>
<td>Prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>1: 31/3/2009</td>
<td>Eastern COS office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2: 10/12/2009</td>
<td>Prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keith</td>
<td>1: 11/5/2009</td>
<td>Outer Western COS office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2: transfer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>1: 11/5/2009</td>
<td>Outer Western COS office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2: 2/11/2009</td>
<td>Outer Western COS office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>1: 11/5/2009</td>
<td>Outer Western COS office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2: 2/11/2009</td>
<td>Outer Western COS office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mick</td>
<td>1: 22/5/2009</td>
<td>Western COS office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2: unavailable</td>
<td>Breached parole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>1: 12/8/2009</td>
<td>Eastern COS office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2: 10/12/2009</td>
<td>Prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>1: 14/10/2009</td>
<td>Eastern COS office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2: 5/5/2010</td>
<td>Prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>1: 15/10/2009</td>
<td>Western COS office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2: 8/2/2010</td>
<td>Western COS office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donny</td>
<td>1: 15/10/2009</td>
<td>Western COS office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2: 8/2/2010</td>
<td>Western COS office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 6. Interview Dates and Location**

Details of interviews are arranged by date of interview (in descending order) and location of each interview.

Unstructured interviews were conducted on first contact with participants to create an environment where participants could freely relate their experiences. This approach was made by considering the power imbalance in the correctional environment and to avoid any replication of an interrogative or bureaucratic information gathering approach by authority figures (police, welfare officers), which could result in an edited or a ‘designed’ set of responses delivered by the participant who has been reminded of that particular context (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 11).
Particular effort was made to spend time building rapport before interviews began as a means to establish a ‘more non-hierarchical relationship’ (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006, p.10) and to acknowledge the participant’s power of choice and control in his communication. In the initial stage of the study, an interview guide was prepared with questions focused on specific topics related to risk and parole. However, following a structured interview format runs counter to the grounded theory method. Glaser (1998, p. 48) maintains that the participant’s concern may not be related to the professional interest of the researcher at all, and he cautions against forcing received concepts and biases onto the way data is collected.

In accordance with the relativist epistemological dimension of the critical realist perspective, interviews with participants began with general questions about what they wanted to achieve while on parole, and problems they encountered and their experiences with settling in to the community. This approach was an effective way to tap into the subjective meaning-making practices of the participant and how they interpreted their reality.

Glaser advises that the grounded theory researcher “just instills a spill” by open conversation. That is, when participants are left to their own talk, they will most likely tell their concerns as venting, since “it is on their mind” (Glaser, 2011, p. 73). As concerns of participants showed similarities, questions and probes became more theoretically focused on expanding on the patterns emerging in the data. Consequently interviews varied on a continuum between unstructured and semi structured; funnelling down from the more open-ended questions allowing the participants to speak their mind, for example, “what has your re-entry experience been like?”, to questions focused on the topics raised by them, such as “can you tell me more about what getting your life back means to you?”

A list of open-ended questions shown in Box 4.1 provided a useful guide to elicit participant experiences and to follow leads and topics raised in the interview.
**Initial Open ended Questions**

How have things been for you since you got out of prison?
What has been hard/ easy for you?
What sort of problems have surfaced since getting out?
How have you managed them?
What is a typical day for you now?
What are you aiming for now?

**Questions focused on emerging categories**

Can you tell me more about that ___ (problem/ event/ situation)? What led up to it? What were your thoughts? What did you do? What happened after?
What does ___ mean to you?
Tell me about how you learned to handle___? What were your feelings about how you did this?
How will you go about___? What steps do you need to take?
What gets in the way of ___? What helps?
Could you describe that for me ___?
Are you satisfied with ___? What is needed do you think?

**Ending Questions**

What things haven’t we talked about that are important to you?
After having these experiences, what advice would you give to others?
What concerns do you have about what we have spoken about?
Is there anything that has occurred to you during this time together that hasn’t been mentioned?
What do you plan to do from this point in time – where to from here?
Have you any questions for me?

---

**Box 4.1** Interview questions adapted from K. Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory* (2006, pp. 30-31).

**Field Notes**

This researcher found that the field notes, which were recorded as soon as possible after the interview, conceptualised what was happening for the participants more succinctly, in contrast to the tendency to describe every detail in the transcribed interviews which resulted in a large amount of irrelevant and repetitive data. Field notes included key events, informal comments made by the participants, observations and themes which occurred before, during and after interviews. Because field notes generated less data, the pace of coding, analysing and theoretical sampling moved more quickly and was more conducive to conceptualising patterns in the
data than the coding of every detail in transcribed interviews. On many occasions the most informative and enlightening data came from participants when not being recorded. This occurred mostly after taping ceased; a time when they felt comfortable to reveal aspects about their lives with less attention given to editing their responses.

**Data Management**

Audio-taped interviews were transcribed as soon as time became available, and although a lengthy process, allowed for total immersion in the data. The pace of data collection was slowed by the process of transcribing, and was compounded by the trials of grappling with voice recognition software which tended to substitute similar sounding words and needed to be constantly checked for mistakes. Interviews were transcribed as word documents and imported into the password protected computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) product called NVivo 9™.

Eighteen interviews were fully transcribed, yielding approximately 600 typed pages, and entered into the computer. In addition to transcribed audio-recordings, field notes provided more coded data which was also entered into the computer with a reference to the participant interview. Field notes were a method to more succinctly conceptualise the meaningful events and incidents reported by the participants and proved to be easier to code without including all the extraneous minutiae typical of the transcribed interviews.

The coding function of the software was used for the initial open coding of the data, by screening the transcribed text and highlighting incidents in the data with the computer mouse and then naming incidents with a descriptive code as a ‘free node’ in the language of the software. To assist in the operation of constant comparison of the codes and the incidents which were contained within them, the accumulated codes or free node lists were printed out and used as reference points for writing memos on the codes. Codes were often modified, clustered and subsumed in the process of constant comparison and printed lists enabled the researcher to carry out this action by hand on the pages of the printed lists. This was a personal choice merely to accommodate the learning and thinking style of this researcher as
it was found that the task of mastering the more complicated features of the software was detracting from the inductive, deductive and abductive flow of logics used in grounded theory generation.

The use of computer software in this study was confined to storage, coding, and retrieval functions. The NVivo9™ program has a number of data analysis operations which can be performed in qualitative analysis, however, only the basic functions of the program to facilitate coding and retrieving code lists were used as this researcher preferred to do most of her thinking, hypothesising and exploring with pen and paper.

Data security
All research related data stored on the personal computer of the researcher was secured by the use of a password, and pseudonyms were used for names and places to protect the anonymity of participants. All hand written records, audio-recordings and documents related to the research were secured in a locked filing cabinet at all times to maintain a high standard of responsible research. Data related to the research will be destroyed five years after publication.

This section of the chapter detailed the preparatory measures undertaken to begin the research, including negotiations with authorities, the ethical design of the study, the relevant characteristics of the participant sample, and lastly the collection and management of data. The grounded theory method is well suited as an ethical way to discover the concerns of individuals and the social patterns of behaviour they use to resolve their concerns. Preparation and data collection in this study acknowledged the vulnerabilities and difficulties faced by people who are in controlled settings, and every effort was made to respect their choice to consent and to relate their experiences freely. Data collection adhered to institutional requirements to preserve ethical integrity of the research.

Epistemological reflexivity included the ethical considerations of data gathering with vulnerable populations. Apart from the practical difficulties in accessing the participants, those who consented to the study were genuinely interested in relating their experiences and concerns. The data
generated ranged in breadth and depth depending on the participant’s ability to reflect on and articulate his concerns. Consequently, some interviews were more substantial than others.

The next section describes the analytic phase of the study using the grounded theory procedures as discussed in Chapter 3.

**Section 2.**

**Data Analysis**

This section details the constant comparative method of analysis over four stages: comparing incident with incident; integrating properties and their categories; delimiting the theory; and writing the theory. Although the data analysis section is presented as a sequence of stages, the analytical process is not as discrete and linear in reality, as the stages often operate simultaneously until the analysis is terminated. The stages are differentiated by the conceptual ordering of the coded data as each unit of data is compared, beginning with low-level concepts (codes) generated by the comparison of incident with incident in the data, through to the integration of conceptual categories, and then to the final stage of theory development where concepts have been raised to the highest level of abstraction, with properties, dimensions and explanatory theoretical power (Glaser, 1967, p. 105). In this section, the terms ‘concepts’, ‘codes’ and ‘categories’ all mean the same thing (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 89) – they are all concepts, however, the distinction arises in the levels of abstraction developed throughout the stages of constant comparison.

**Stage 1 of the Constant Comparative Method**

*Comparing incidents applicable to each category*

As soon as the first interview had been transcribed and entered as a document into the NVivo\textsuperscript{TM} computer program, the initial substantive coding of the document began (see Chapter 3). Glaser advises researchers to question the data as it is inspected line by line (1978, p. 57) by asking “what is this data a study of?” and “what category does this incident indicate?” This procedure ‘opens’ the data up by fracturing the story within the data and allows full theoretical and grounded coverage by ensuring that no important piece of data is missed when coding (Glaser, 1978, p. 57; p.109).
As the data was inspected, each incident noticed in pieces of data (such as a meaningful word, event, expression or phrase) was labelled with a code to describe or conceptualise what was going on in the data. This was achieved by highlighting the text and entering the code as a ‘free node’ in the NVivo™ computer program. Free nodes were codes given to each noticed incident in the data and were unrelated to each other at this stage of the analysis (Bazeley, 2007, p. 83).

While closely inspecting the transcript, new incidents were constantly compared to existing codes and coded under them according to their similarities and differences. Handwritten field notes were also micro-analysed in the same way, and codes were written in the margins of the page beside the highlighted data incidents and later entered as free nodes into the software program. At the end of coding the first transcript and field notes, many codes were merely repeating the content of the incident (for example, the data incident “I want to run my own life” was coded with the concept of wanting to control my life) while other codes were more conceptual in nature (such as “after parole I can then do what I want” was coded as temporising goals).

Codes drawn in vivo from the expressions used by participants were often used as a way to preserve the grounding of the data and to suffice as a code until more comparison of data extended the meaning of the expression conceptually. In vivo codes such as getting my life back and waiting-out parole were carried throughout the analysis to keep the experience of the participants in the foreground. Excerpts from the first interview with Damien below shows how open coding (shown in italics) was applied to pieces of data (underlined):

“I want to get my life back, you know? (in vivo code: getting my life back)... get back control of my own life” (open code: restoring control)

“me’ main goal is to stay out of trouble (open code: having goals) and to do what I’m told I have to do” (open code: compliance goals)

Field notes provided more data to be coded, and included not only meaningful incidents remembered and recorded from the interview, but also
observational data such as the displayed emotions and the body language of the participant. As codes were generated, writing memos helped to grasp the meaning underlying what participants were saying and to get a sense of the problems they were grappling with. An early memo (Box 4.2) written after the interview with Damien, shows the complexity of his experience on re-entry, and the ideas raised by open coding the interview. Generated codes were shown in italics:

**BOX 4.2 MEMO  getting my life back  (12/04/2009)**

What does *getting my life back* mean? For Damien, this goal means *freedom from undesired controls*, such as those *imposed* by parole supervision. He wants to assert a *sense of ownership* over how to *deal with his self-assessed problems* and not those that are ascribed to him (although he recognises that the ascribed risk factor of drinking is one of his ‘problems’). He *chooses* to *comply with the ‘rules’* (supervision conditions) because he calculates it’s in his best interest to do so (what he *should* do – not what he *wants* to do). He wants to have control of his life without constantly getting into strife on the one hand and sees a return to prison as something out of his control - if it happened “it wouldn’t faze me”.

His recounting of the prison experience appears to influence his approach to parole. Ideas I want to explore further after coding this interview are: What does *getting my life back* mean to other participants? Does the prison experience influence their investment in getting their life back? Does freedom from external control (parole conditions) constitute the main threat to achieving this? Damien resents attempts by authority agents to tell him what he needs and he resists these attempts by discrediting and undermining them. He lacks any interest in *planning goals* while on parole and is prepared to *wait until parole is over and done with*.

For this researcher, the main pitfall of open coding with the computer software was the mechanical ease of highlighting and labelling pieces of data without spending enough time applying the analytical tool of questioning the data for meaning and comparing incidents for underlying uniformity. After three interviews and field notes were open coded, 92 codes (‘free nodes’ in the language of the NVivo™ program) were generated.

To organise the codes and provide a focus for further sampling, data collection was interrupted in order to examine, compare and organise the
seemingly disparate coded data. This was achieved by using diagrams to give a visual image of how codes may be grouped according to their relationships with each other.

Codes bearing similarities were clustered into provisional categories and many were re-labelled with a more abstract concept to encompass the variation brought about as a result of clustering. For example, the incidents coded as *length of parole, calculating time, allocating time, temporising goals, filling-in time, waste of time, private time, waiting-out parole* were organised under the temporary category conceptualised as *time framing*. The example in Figure 7 shows how open codes were clustered to identify connections between other open codes.

![Diagram showing clustering of open codes into categories](image_url)

**Figure 7. Clustering the Open Codes to Form Categories**

Open codes bearing the similarity to time are clustered under the provisional category of *Time Framing*. Arrows signify the relationships of codes to the category.

The NVivo™ computer software was used to rearrange the codes as ‘free nodes’ into classified groups or ‘tree nodes’ which depicted a hierarchical
ordering of the unrelated free nodes into categories – similar to the relationship of a tree and its branches. From this point, data analysis was facilitated by diagramming and writing memos with pen and paper, thus relegating the use of computer software to basic storage and retrieval functions.

Clustering the codes produced fifteen provisional categories as well as a number of unrelated codes to be compared with new data. Categories were considered provisional in this first stage of the analysis until they were raised to the highest level of conceptual and theoretical development by progressing through the stages of the constant comparative method. Consequently along the way to earning their way into the grounded theory, many of the categories were modified, collapsed and subsumed by higher-order concepts.

The result of reducing the data by clustering the codes into provisional categories provided a point of departure from purposive sampling to theoretical sampling. Writing memos helped to “capture, track and preserve” ideas (Glaser, 1998, p.180) about the properties, dimensions and boundaries of each of the categories and directed theoretical sampling of the data. Figure 8 shows the provisional categories (underlined) resulting from the constant comparison of coded incidents in the data. In vivo codes are shown in italics:
Provisional Categories and Codes

**Impact of imprisonment:** Easy time, Hard time, accessing programs / supports, Adjusting to prison

**Goals:** Getting my life back, Restoring control, Wanting control, Manage my own problems, Improving relationships, Finding work, Recover roles, Being normal, Getting ahead, Being free from authority, Do what I want

**Self-evaluating:** What hasn’t worked, Seeking causes, Self-identifying problems, Knowing my limits, Deciding my needs

**Biographing:** Reflecting, Bringing up the past, Searching for answers, Where things went wrong, Knowing what I’ve lost

**Constraining pressures:** Obligations to family, Comply with the rules, Living up to expectations

**Threats to restoration goals:** Being rejected, Intrusion, Lack of progress, Letting myself down, Losing control, Wearing-down, Being bored, They don’t help me

**Time framing:** Length of parole, Calculating time, Allocating time, Temporising, Filling-in time, Waste of time, Intrusion of private time, Waiting-out parole

**Investing:** Accessing supports, Complying, Aligning values, Co-operating, Responding to progress, Feeling confident, Taking risks, Predicting outcomes, Seeking opportunities, Being engaged

**Avoiding:** Abstaining, Self-restraining, Identifying people and places, Cutting-off relationships

**Managing stigma:** Protecting self, Isolating, Avoiding rejection, Reluctance to access supports

**Resisting controls:** Discrediting interventions, Not participating, Breaking the rules, Feeling inferior, Disputing risk, Not disclosing, Withholding, Resentment and Anger

**Relinquishing goals:** Being fatalistic, Resigned to consequences, Doing what I’m told, Indifference

**Self in the future:** Planning goals, Wanting change, Uncertainty, Anticipating better outcomes, Seeing opportunities, Me as a different person

**Past self:** Looking back, Routine, Security, Predictable, Old identity, Knowing where I stand, Reminiscing, Being me

**Being recognised:** Fair treatment, Relationship with CCO, Being made to wait, Assistance offered

**Codes to be compared with new data**

Knowing the rules, Expecting help, Parole is hard, Accepting restrictions, Getting on with CCO, Feeling confident, Doing what I have to, Recruitment

---

**Figure 8. Provisional Categories and Codes**

Preliminary categories generated from three interviews with participants are shown (underlined) with the subsumed open codes (in vivo codes are shown in italics). Some single incident codes remained to be compared with new data.

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**Stage 2 of the Constant Comparative Method**

**Integrating categories and their properties**

While initial open coding continued, the second stage of the constant comparative method raised the conceptual level of the data by integrating the categories and properties. In this stage, units of comparison changed to the comparison of incidents in new data with properties of the provisional categories that resulted from initial comparison of incidents. For example, length of time on parole was coded under the category of time framing
characterising it as one of its properties. As coding continued, new incidents were compared with the property of length of time on parole and coded under it, thus adding variance in the dimensions and the conditions under which it operates and, in turn, explaining the category of time framing as an integrated whole.

Comparison and analysis moved further towards integrating properties and their categories, and exploring the links between codes and between the codes and category. Using the previous example, the length of time on parole was also found to be related to the way participants decided on their goals to get their lives back. To follow up on the tentative hypothesis that participants were waiting until parole was over to pursue their goals (waiting-out parole), sampling included participants who were serving both short (< 1 year) and longer periods of time on parole (> 1 year). The preconscious processing of the codes and venting ideas about them produced a prolific amount of memos written in spiral bound notebooks, and these were always kept close at hand to quickly jot down ideas and hypotheses about the concepts and to provide a guide for questions to elaborate on them in sampling new data. This continuous mental processing became exhausting at times and required frequent periods of respite in order to return to the data with a fresh perspective. Data collection, coding and analysis became more theoretically informed by the developing categories and sampling continued over the following eighteen months as new parolees consented to participate in the study and follow-up interviews for existing participants were completed.

The developing categories began to reveal the ‘mini-processes’ involved in the way participants responded to the conditions impacting on their experience of the first six months of parole. The memo below shows how this researcher explored the various properties and dimensions of the category of time framing generated by the constant comparison of new data with the properties of the category:
Participants ‘framed’ their goals in terms of the length of time on parole and how they would allocate and spend their time. This conflicted with the demand on their time by their supervision conditions (such as attending agencies, community health services, education courses), especially when they afforded little legitimacy to the objectives of parole. Time on parole is conditional on satisfying these conditions and tasks, and it eats into their personal time. This causes conflict and resentment. Some felt that it wasn’t worthwhile starting any of their desired projects (such as finding a job or moving location) and chose to put off pursuing goals until parole was “over and done with” and then they could “get on” with their lives. Even though this goal was prospective, filling in time with unplanned daily activities was barely tolerated, with some relieving their boredom by reverting to familiar pastimes and old identities which ultimately led to breaching their parole (linking with codes past self, routine and old identity).

Short term parolees calculated time in terms of how long they had left to go and had few plans to do anything while on parole apart from time spent ‘doing what they had to do’ (i.e. satisfying the conditions of parole). Re-incarceration for breaching conditions was not seen as a real deterrent as they could serve the remaining few months of their sentence and be released “with no worries”. SPA parolees were released on the basis of having a plan to manage their risks and spoke of their efforts in trying to get ahead (in terms of a better life than the one they had) by following the directions of parole. A breach for these participants was considered to be more serious, as it meant serving another 12 months in prison before a review hearing for re-release. Parole structures provide the contextual conditions influencing this process – shaped by a fixed set of institutional practices and discourses. Participants have only spoken about ascribed risk in relationship to the programs they ‘have to do’ on parole, namely “manage ‘me risk factors”.

After a period of six months had elapsed between interviews, each participant was contacted and arrangements were made to see them in their parole locations. In cases where participants had been re-incarcerated for breaching their parole, permission was sought from CSNSW authorities to conduct the interviews in the prisons which could be reached by travelling in the one day. Second interviews allowed for theoretical sampling to confirm previously generated concepts, as well as to explore changes in conditions and dimensions of properties of the existing concepts. Questions focused on “how are things going now?”, “what is/was working for you?” and “how have your goals changed since we last spoke together?” After sixteen interviews had been transcribed, coded and analysed, seven new
categories had been generated from the concurrent comparison between incidents: defaulting, abandoning norms, persisting, disappointment in self, maintaining resolve, being accepted and legitimising parole. These codes were compared to the properties and dimension of existing categories and subsumed by them as well as forming new categories. For example, a new category being on parole was generated by comparing the existing codes knowing the rules, parole is hard, getting on with the CCO, doing what I have to do and legitimising parole, for their underlying similarities and became properties of the category. From this point, all indicators for the category being on parole were more readily identified in subsequent data collection.

**Discovering the core category**

Twenty two categories had now been generated from the data, with some more densely saturated with properties and dimensions than others. At this stage of the analysis, the main concern of the participants was somewhat intuitive, with the in vivo code of getting my life back provisionally capturing their problem. Incidents coded under this category defined it as a desire to restore control, with a range of future oriented motivators such as “being happy” or having a “better life”, while also encompassing properties such as being normal, managing my own problems and being free from the constraints of parole. Although the in vivo code of getting my life back is often a term used in everyday language, it did not sufficiently explain the different meanings or conditions attributed to it by the participants. Many months were spent trying to articulate a core concept which could integrate all or most of the categories and account for the variability contained in them. Most of the difficulty for this researcher was related to how the research question could be answered, as the data was taking the study into a different direction; one where emergent patterns were indicating a complex process participants employed to restore control of their life, more so than managing ascribed risk as their central concern. Glaser remarks:
There is a fundamental conflict between not knowing beforehand what the research is going to be about and the need to study a topic that is rooted in professional knowledge and need. In this sense the preconceived wrong problem can be tacitly and/or explicitly continually processed.

(Glaser, 1998, p. 126)

The quest to find a suitable concept which could articulate and integrate the emergent categories of wanting control, to be free from constraint and getting my life back was difficult and time consuming. Recorded interviews, field notes and memos were revisited to grasp a sense of the problem that was driving the behaviour of participants. New memos were written to vent ideas about the categories generated from reading literature from the fields of sociology, philosophy, psychology and health.

Glaser describes the researcher’s struggle as a transition from data input, into depression and then out through writing memos; leading to the “drugless trip which arises almost as a revelation” (1978, p. 24). He refers to these revelations as ‘eureka’ moments; the exhilaration felt when all of the possible ideas and hypotheses about the concepts grounded in the data finally come together to explain in theoretical terms what is going on for the participants (Glaser, 1978, p. 24).

Glaser points out that the analyst may have a feel for what the core variable is, but be unable to formulate a concept that fits well. He advises using a concept which will suffice until a better fit is later found (1978, p. 94). The category of restoring control was considered, however it did not sufficiently explain the categories pertaining to the self (self in the future and self in the past), or the essence of the in vivo code getting my life back.

The ‘eureka’ moment of ‘discovering’ a concept to integrate the categories occurred when a memo written on the category of restoring control was found when delving into the accumulated bank of memos for inspiration. The memo is shown in Box 4.4.
Re-entry is the catalyst for participants to ‘get their life back’. This *restorative* drive is most intense on re-entry; a sudden rebound effect from the deprivations experienced in prison. Restoring control means taking back their lives by evaluating how to spend time, choosing to do what they want, realising future oriented goals, getting back to the known old self, and to stop doing things that put them under someone else’s control.

Participants spoke about their goals in terms of what they most desired AND what others thought about them and expected of them AND the structural conditions which facilitated or hindered their attempts to restore control. Where does constraint and ownership fit in with this concept of control? To do things the way they want without external control suggests they desire autonomy. Would the concept of restoring autonomy be a better fit for the data? Restoring emphasises participant’s attempts to regain their autonomy after being in prison (where autonomy is deprived). Autonomy brings the concept of the *self* in its definition as *self*-government, although it is often conflated with self-control.

The concept of autonomy, with roots in the Greek *autos* (self) and *nomos* (government/rule), was considered as a suitable conceptual ‘best fit’ (Glaser, 1978, p. 94) because it accounted for most of the variation in the data by integrating the categories as properties of the concept. Restoring autonomy conceptualised the pattern of behaviour individuals employed to return to a state where they felt they had control in their lives—a state of *self*-government they wished to achieve without the interference and constraints of the authority structures of parole. Grounded theory tries to understand this continuing action from the point of view of the participants, as Glaser notes:

… their [participants] continual resolving is the core variable. It is the prime mover of most of the behaviour seen and talked about in a substantive area. It is what is going on! It emerges as the overriding pattern.

(Glaser, 1998, p. 115)
Stage 3 of the Constant Comparative Method

Delimiting the theory

In this stage of the constant comparative process, open coding ceased and data collection, coding and analysis selectively focused on categories related to the core category “in sufficiently significant ways to be used in a parsimonious theory” (Glaser, 1978, p. 61).

Closer inspection of the categories found that many were similar in meaning and could be subsumed as properties and dimensions of a smaller set of higher-order concepts. All twenty-two categories were listed on a poster sized sheet of paper, compared for similarities and differences and placed into groups on the basis of their common features. As a result, the twenty-two categories were reduced to five major categories with their respective sub-categories, properties and dimensions: crossing the passage boundary; determining goals; locating the self; reasoning threats to autonomy, and self-governing tactics. Condensing the categories in this manner provided an easier way to synthesise and explain the larger sets of coded data as well as providing a conceptual handle on them (Charmaz, 2006, p. 59). Reorganising the substantive categories into major categories showed the sequencing of the patterns of behaviour as a process with causes, conditions, actions and outcomes and committed further data collection and selective coding to the newly established boundaries of the theory (Holton, 2011, p.182).

To emphasise the dynamic process in the pattern of the core behaviour, the concept of restoring autonomy was re-named as reautonomising. This gave the category the ‘fit’ and ‘grab’ Glaser suggests are characteristics of a core category; by ‘fitting’ the data and having ‘grabbing’ implications for formal theory (1978, p. 95). A core category can be any kind of theoretical code which occurs frequently as a stable pattern, is central to and relates meaningfully with other categories, and varies with change in conditions (Glaser, 1978, p. 95). Reautonomising met the criteria for a core category and true to the words of Glaser, the main concern “will usually emerge full blast, with many substantive, in-vivo categories and properties surrounding the concern and core category … people have a natural way of coding their own life, its problems and its resolving” (Glaser, 1998, p. 150).
With the higher-level concepts as a guide, transcripts were inspected again to sift through any missed information to further develop the concepts. Memos directed interview questions to saturate the categories with properties and their dimensions. For example, to saturate the category *reasoning threats to autonomy*, participants were asked about the things that got in the way of living the way they wanted as well as the things that were working for them. External threats to the restoring of autonomy featured as a property of this category, for example, the excerpt from Joe’s interview in prison (after he was breached for positive urine tests) revealed the threat to his autonomy was related to his desire to deal with his drug use in his own way which didn’t work, and which conflicted with the normative objectives of his risk management on parole:

**Interviewer:** So how do you explain the drug use then, as part of your supervision requirements?

**Joe:** For me … that was just … listen, I've been using the drug every day since I was 14 years old.

**Interviewer:** But it was part of your supervision requirements to … [address drug use]

**Joe:** It was yeah … but listen, they put me on methadone. I've been on everything and it didn't work. I still used drugs, so I said to ‘meself, this time when I get out I'm going to do it ‘me own way and that's all I done and it was workin’.

(Joe, Interview 2 in gaol)

Coding and analysis moved at a faster pace as the categories were very familiar at this stage and indicators were easily recognised and coded to suffuse the categories with variation in properties and dimensions. Selective coding allowed for theoretical refinement of the categories and progression to the more advanced stage of constant comparison: writing the theory.

After a further eight interviews had been selectively coded, the data progressively failed to provide any new information relevant to the core category and its properties, or to spark new insights for further sampling. The categories and their properties had earned a place in the theory by their conceptual specificity and variation. At this point the decision was made to cease coding and to formulate the model for the grounded theory. Figure 9 shows the steps of data collection, substantive coding and constant
comparative analysis leading up to the discovery and saturation of the core category of *reautonomising*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>Constant Comparative Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviews 1-3</td>
<td>Open Coding 92 codes</td>
<td>Memos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposive sampling</td>
<td>92 codes compared for similarities and differences and subsumed under 15 provisional categories</td>
<td>Ideas / hypotheses about meanings of the codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews 3 - 16</td>
<td>Open coding</td>
<td>Memos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposive and Theoretical sampling on emerging categories</td>
<td>7 new categories added</td>
<td>Verifying emergent (provisional) categories with properties and dimensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open coding ceased after 16 interviews</td>
<td><strong>Main concern:</strong> in vivo code getting my life back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Core category:</strong> <em>reautonomising</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Delimiting data for parsimony to 5 major categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Framework of theory developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews 17 - 24</td>
<td>Selective coding on the core category</td>
<td>Memos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical sampling</td>
<td>Categories unrelated to the core dropped</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Saturation of categories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Core category confirmed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 9. Steps Leading to the Core Category of Reautonomising**

**Stage 4 of the Constant Comparative Method**

**Writing the theory**

The main purpose of this study was to discover a grounded theory to answer the research question asking how parolees managed ascribed risk on re-entry. By using the procedures of the grounded theory method, the data revealed that the main concern of participants was to ‘get their lives back’, a problem resolved by a core pattern of behaviour conceptualised as *reautonomising*. Although managing ascribed risk was not revealed as the
central concern of the participants, it was embedded in their attempts to self-govern and navigate the parole passage.

Some studies using grounded theory methods stop at the substantive category level, describing each category and the main concern, but not explaining the theoretical relationships between the categories as an integrated theory (Glaser, 1978; Holton, 2007). It was in the process of building the substantive theory by comparing, analysing and theoretically coding the relationships between the categories that the answers to the research question came to light and were incorporated into the grounded theory of reautonomising.

Building the substantive theory is a component of the fourth stage of the constant comparative method where the fractured story is woven back together into a coherent whole as theory. The progression from substantive coding to theoretical coding was not a linear process for this researcher, as memos written throughout the analysis often made theoretical connections between the generated codes and categories. Building the grounded theory was facilitated in three ways: using Glaser’s list of theoretical coding families to assist in exploring the relationships between the substantive categories; conceptual sorting of memos written about these relationships to generate the theory and; integrating the theory by theoretically coding the relationships between the memos to explain the resolving pattern of reautonomising.

**Sorting theoretical memos**

By this stage of the analysis, a large bank of written and typed memos of varying lengths and levels of sophistication had accumulated. Memos were already labelled with the concept(s) they referred to and were gathered together ready for sorting. Although memos written on concepts unrelated to the core category were not included in the sorting process, they were not discarded until the theory was finally integrated. Large pieces of poster paper were stuck together and placed on the floor to provide a flat surface to move the memos about, to visualise and draw the connections between them and to add comments. Sorting began by picking a memo from the pile and placing it on the chart. With each memo chosen from the pile and placed
beside another, the following key questions were asked “where does this memo fit?”, “what is the relationship between these concepts?” and “is this a condition, a cause, a consequence, or a strategy?”

Glaser notes that the fitting action occurs by constantly questioning and comparing each idea to the emerging outline … “this forces underlying patterns, integration and multivariate relations between concepts” (Glaser, 1978, p. 123). For example, a memo written on the concept of future self (a sub-category of the major category locating the self) was placed on the chart with arrows denoting the causal and consequential links to the memos written on the concepts of investing, personal goals and allocating time. These links generated new ideas and theoretical codes implicit in their relationships and resulted in more memos to be sorted in the outline.

As memos on the categories were questioned for fit and sorted, the theoretical coding ‘families’ offered by Glaser (1978, p. 72) helped to conceptualise how the memos were related to each other as “a modelled, interrelated, multivariate set of hypotheses in accounting for resolving the main concern” (Glaser, 2005, p. 11). Theoretical codes must earn their way into the theory in the same manner as substantive codes and not be ‘forced’ by using a pet code (for example, ‘role theory’). Glaser advises that it is necessary for the grounded theorist to know many theoretical codes in order to be sensitive to the “myriad of implicit integrative possibilities in the data” (1978, p. 73) and to maintain a conceptual level in writing about concepts, not about people. Theoretical codes are abstract models of integration based on the notion of ‘best fit’ to conceptualise relationships between categories; they rely on the substantive codes to keep the theory grounded but they also provide “integrative scope, broad pictures and a new perspective” (Glaser, 1978, p.72).

**Theoretical coding families**

Glaser’s early publication *Theoretical Sensitivity* (1978) presented eighteen theoretical coding ‘families’ which grew in number as new grounded theories were developed in a variety of fields (Glaser, 2005). Glaser’s coding ‘families’ consist of action descriptors to help the researcher explain the relationships in data, and as such, are not mutually exclusive; they may
overlap and one may ‘spawn’ the other (Glaser, 1978, p. 73). Glaser (2005) points out that the researcher may also be faced with a mix of codes to fit the complexity of the behaviour, with the choice of which code to use as the major focus in the study being both an empirical and personal decision:

On the empirical level, one looks for the TC (theoretical code) that brings out a category which accounts for a great deal of variation in the data...on a personal level the choice is more arbitrary. Quite simply, one chooses whatever is of personal interest.

(Glaser, 2005, p. 46)

In order to take the findings from the data into the realm of a grounded theory, the relationships between the substantive categories were explored by using the coding families provided by Glaser as models to assist in developing the theory.

As memos were sorted, the constituent categories and properties of reautonomising such as crossing the boundary from prison to parole, ways of determining goals, locating the self, and responses to things that helped or hindered their efforts, all pointed to a developmental sequence of change over time. However, reautonomising was not simply explained by the ways and means participants used to restore their autonomy. Inherent in their reautonomising efforts was the more complex story of how the participants ‘worked on’ or shaped the way they experienced the passage of parole, often to their own disadvantage by breaching their parole conditions and ending up back in gaol.

The action of sorting the bank of memos revealed the framework for the theory as sequence of conditions, causes, intervening conditions, actions and consequences which rendered the behaviour of reautonomising as a process. The overarching theoretical code from Glaser’s Process family (Figure 10) was chosen as the model for the theory and included most of the descriptors (underlined) elaborating on the code:

**Figure 10. The Process Family Theoretical Code**

The process family provided the model for the theory, incorporating the ongoing movement and temporal aspects of the social behaviour employed by the participants as they experienced the passage of parole. The theoretical code of shaping (a descriptor from the Process family) added to the meaning of the reautonomising experience of the participants by emphasising the agentic efforts of participants to achieve their goals by acting on the existing conditions under which they make their attempts.

In this study, another six theoretical codes from Glaser’s theoretical coding families (Glaser, 1978, pp. 72-82) also provided explanations of the relationships between the substantive categories and the core category of reautonomising. These are shown in Figure 11, with the contributing descriptors underlined.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding Families</th>
<th>Descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Six C’s</td>
<td>Causes (sources, reasons, explanations, accountings, anticipated consequences), Contexts, Contingencies, Consequences (outcomes, efforts, functions, predictions, anticipated / unanticipated consequences) Covariances and Conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Limit, Range, Intensity, Extent, Amount, Polarity, Extreme, Boundary, Rank, Grades, Continuum, Probability, Possibility, Level, Cutting points, Critical juncture, Statistical average (mean, medium, mode), Deviation, Exemplar, Modicum, Full, Partial, Almost, Half.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting Point</td>
<td>Boundary, Critical juncture, Cutting point, Turning point, Breaking point, Benchmark, Division, Cleavage, Scales, In-out, Intra-extra, Tolerance levels, Dichotomy, Trichotomy, Polychotomy, Deviance, Point of no return.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive</td>
<td>Mutual effects, Reciprocity, Mutual trajectory, Mutual dependency, Interdependence, Interaction of effects, Covariance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainline</td>
<td>Social control, Recruitment, Socialisation, Stratification, Status passages, Social organisation, Social order, Social institutions, Social interaction, Social worlds, Social mobility.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 11. Glaser’s Theoretical Coding Families** (Source: Glaser, 1978, p.72).
The interaction and influence in and between the substantive categories was identified and explained by referring to the above coding families and their descriptors.

The Six C’S family explained the relationship of Cause, Context, Conditions, and Consequences between the core category of reautonomising and the five major categories of crossing the passage boundary, determining goals, locating the self, reasoning threats to autonomy, and self-governing tactics.

The Identity-Self family provided the descriptors of Identity, Social worth and Self-transformation, to explain the properties of locating the self and their links between the categories of determining goals, reasoning threats to autonomy and self-governing tactics. Tactics chosen to realise the goals for an imagined future self were influenced by external and internal intervening conditions which either facilitated reautonomising (such as access to supports) or undermined reautonomising (such as being rejected, and letting myself down).

The descriptors from the Cutting Point and Degree family identified the Critical junctures as the re-entry to the community and a breach of parole resulting in a return to prison. Cutting points were identified by the consequences of Tolerating time while on parole and the Levels of progress in relation to the categories of access to support, relinquishing goals and recognition from others.

The Strategy family helped in recognising the parolees’ Goals, Tactics and Manoeuvrings as reautonomising behaviours employed to navigate the constraints of the passage in order to achieve their goals of reautonomising.

Descriptors from the Interactive family explained how the responses of parolees to the structural conditions of the passage brought about events and conditions (as Effects) which either facilitated or hindered attempts to reautonomise. For example, participants expressed feelings of achieving a level of autonomy restoration when they had access to resources, when they felt recognised, and where they had a range of skills to respond to barriers
they faced. These conditions influenced their forward **Trajectory** in the passage.

The Mainline, Degree and Cutting Point families assisted in explaining the tensions in the relationship between the structural properties of crossing the passage boundary (*parole as a passage* and *being on parole*) characterising the category of **crossing the passage boundary** with the categories of **legitimising parole** and **determining goals**. The relationships between reautonomising and re-entry on parole were explained by the descriptors belonging to the above families: **Critical juncture**, **Status passage**, **Rituals of recruitment** (such as being granted parole at the discretion of the SPA) and **Social control** (the technologies of risk management).

The phase of theoretical coding involved an intense immersion in the data, taking up an inordinate amount of time to mentally process all of the possible relationships and to clarify the developing theory.

Frequent episodes of ‘time-out’ were required in order to come back to the data with a fresh outlook. It was in this stage that extant literature was introduced as data to support the propositions inherent in the theory - a result of extensive reading on theories related to the concepts in a range of disciplines, such as philosophy, psychology, sociology, and health. This process helped raise the analysis to the highest conceptual level possible in order to generate a theory which could hold its own with the criteria of fit, work, relevance, and modifiability proposed by Glaser (1998, p. 4-5; see also Chapter 3). Figure 12 shows the placement of memos with theoretical coding families (numbered) providing the links between categories to give an outline of the theory.
Figure 12. Theoretical Coding of relationships between the substantive categories and the core category of reautonomising. Families are numbered 1-6: 1. Six C’s; 2. Identity-self; 3. Degree; 4. Cutting Point; 5. Interactive; 6.Mainline
The Basic Social Process of Reautonomising

Reautonomising conceptualised the ongoing and dynamic behaviour of participants in resolving their problem to restore their autonomy. The core category of reautonomising met the criteria of a basic social process (BSP) because it ‘processes out’ (Glaser, 1978, p. 97). To ‘process out’, the core category must occur over time and involve change over time, with at least two clear emergent stages which differentiate and account for variations in the resolving pattern of behaviour.

Stages must be easily perceived, either theoretically (by the researcher) or by the persons involved, in order to be treated as theoretical units with unique characteristics for each particular stage (Glaser, 1978, p. 98). Additionally, to be considered a basic social process, the behaviour must continue to happen irrespective of the conditional variation of place, for example, people may engage in the behaviour of reautonomising in a number of situations where restorative responses to autonomy deprivation are enacted. Glaser explains:

BSP’s are theoretical reflections and summarizations of the patterned systemic uniformity flows of social life which people go through, and which can be conceptually ‘captured’ and further understood through the construction of BSP theories.

(Glaser, 1978, p.100)

Three stages of the basic social process were conceptualised theoretically with the codes of orientating to the passage, manoeuvring to optimise autonomy and sustaining autonomy to explain the unique characteristics of each stage and the variation within them. The three stages were processed within a fixed time dimension for participants, with the initial data collection at the beginning of their parole passage and again six months later. Repeat interviews served to compare and confirm concepts generated from the data as well as to clarify the theoretical framework by looking for consistency in the data.

The basic social process of reautonomising explained the interaction between the social-psychological behaviours employed by participants and the social-structural conditions encountered in the setting. Although the
theory mainly focused on the basic social-psychological process (BSPP) inherent in the data, social-structural processes were linked theoretically as catalysts for movement between the three stages of the theoretical model. The stages were not only temporal and dynamic; they overlapped, occurred simultaneously and they moved back and forth. Movement between stages was contingent on at least one or more catalysts, identified as internal and/or external intervening conditions, which facilitated or inhibited reautonomising.

In order to capture the more inherent processes contained within the interactions between the agentic behaviour of participants and the social structures influencing their responses, the expanded concept of Reautonomising: Shaping the Passage of Parole was chosen as the integrative concept for the final grounded theory.

The concept of ‘shaping’ adds depth to the explanation of how the reautonomising behaviour of participants alters their experience of their trajectory in the passage of parole.

**Trusting the Theory**

In order to confirm that the basic social process of reautonomising was well-grounded and could be trusted as a theory to offer a valid explanation of how the main concern of participants is continually resolved, this researcher returned to the existing data with the core category and the process model, to check for any data that may have been missed over the time of coding which could offer more insights for the theory. Questions were again asked of the data: “does this concept represent the pattern of data it purports to denote?” (fit); “do the concepts relate to the issues expressed by the participants?” (relevance); “does the core category account for most of the variation in the resolving behaviour of participants?” (work); and “can the constant comparison of new data from another substantive area still make the theory relevant?” (modifiability). Having trust in the theory for this researcher, involved being satisfied that the procedures of the method had been rigorously applied and the evaluation criteria of fit, relevance, work, and modifiability (Glaser, 1998, pp. 236-237) had been met.
Chapter Summary

In the first section of this chapter, the preparatory procedures of the study were discussed. When conducting this study, this researcher was mindful of the ethical obligations in her interactions with those from vulnerable groups and in settings where choices are constrained. Interview data was gathered in a respectful open ended approach, allowing participants to vent their concerns, rather than mirroring the interrogative interview approaches commonly used in the criminal justice setting. A classic grounded theory study requires the researcher to enter the field with an open mind, with an awareness of how professional interests, theoretical preconceptions and a structured enquiry format can influence the data and not allow the discovery of the real concern of participants. As a consequence of discovering the main concern of the participants, a rich and relevant theory emerged to add to the current debates about the risk management of parolees in the first six months of re-entry.

The second section of this chapter provided an explanation of the grounded theory procedures of constant comparison using substantive coding, theoretical sampling, theoretical sensitivity and memo writing, to discover the core pattern of behaviour participants employed to resolve their main concern. In the context of parole, the core category of reautonomising conceptualised the essence of the participants’ main concern to ‘get their lives back’. The theory building procedures of sorting memos, theoretical coding and comparative analysis, integrated the substantive categories to explain the substantive theory of Reautonomising: Shaping the Passage of Parole as a three stage basic social process.

The next chapter (Chapter Five) will present the empirical findings in the data with a description of the core category, its major categories and sub-categories. Excerpts from participant interviews are given to illustrate the meaning attached to the concept.
CHAPTER FIVE

The Core Category of Reautonomising

Introduction
This chapter describes in detail the major categories and sub-categories which were generated from the empirical data and integrated by the concept of reautonomising as the core category. Each of the major categories: crossing the passage boundary, determining goals, locating the self, reasoning threats to autonomy and self-governing tactics, together with their subcategories, are explained separately, however many occurred simultaneously and in various combinations. Excerpts from participant interviews are included to illustrate the meaning attached to the concepts, rather than to offer evidence or verification of the concepts (Glaser, 2011, p. 59-66). Figure 13 below depicts the conceptual hierarchy of the major categories and sub-categories subsumed as the properties constituting the core category of reautonomising.

![Figure 13. The Major Categories and Sub-categories of the Core Category of Reautonomising.](chart)
The Substantive Core Category of Reautonomising

As a response to past living conditions of autonomy deprivation, reautonomising in this study conceptualised the behaviour participants employed to resolve their problematic of ‘getting their lives back’ on re-entering the community on parole. Drawn from the basic definition of autonomy as self-government, reautonomising was constituted by the structural and psychological conditions which influenced the participant’s goals, abilities and forward progression in the passage of parole. The categories presented below define and specify the properties and dimensions of reautonomising which were grounded in the data to reveal the causes, contexts, conditions, actions and consequences contributing to the behaviour.

Crossing the passage boundary

Crossing the passage boundary conceptualised the separation from the passage of prison to the passage of parole, and as participants made the transition, their status changed from prisoner to parolee. Each of these status passages have a temporal dimension and prescribed conditions that must be met in order to complete them (van Gennep, 1960; Glaser & Strauss, 1971). In the action of crossing the passage boundary, participants moved from the highly structured and controlled environment of the prison to the less restricted environment of the community. Crossing the passage boundary is one of the properties influencing the behaviour of reautonomising and refers to the structural and psychological conditions contributing to the responses of participants as they transition from prison to parole. These conditions are explained by the properties of: experiencing prison, being on parole and legitimising parole.

Experiencing prison

The initial interviews with participants revealed how the experience of imprisonment influenced the way they determined goals for living in the community on parole. For the few participants in the study who had not been incarcerated previously, the experience of imprisonment incurred varying degrees of degradation of the self and the ‘pains’ of imprisonment featured in the well-known works of Goffman (1961), Clemmer (1958) and
Sykes (1958). Sykes saw the loss of freedom due to imprisonment as only one facet of the ‘pains’ experienced by the incarcerated. He described five deprivations or pains of prison life: deprivation of liberty, deprivation of goods and services, deprivation of heterosexual relationships, deprivation of autonomy, and deprivation of security. According to Sykes, the ‘pains’, “carry a more profound hurt as a set of threats or attacks which are directed against the very foundations of the prisoner’s being” (Sykes, 1958, p.79).

Participants who had experienced their first time in prison spoke of their intense feelings of vulnerability, their lack of privacy and loss of connection to the outside world. Imprisonment was an undesirable passage they wanted to avoid in the future:

… the area we were in … because it was closely monitored 24 hours … when we’re in the cells, we’ve got cameras in the cells, we were strip searched twice a day when we went out for lunch and breakfast and of course, you know that makes you … you know … It’s not a … it’s a demoralising feeling and especially the way you're getting, you know, treated. But now it’s different, but I can’t help thinking about how bad it was there.  

(George, Interview 1)

For the majority of participants who had experienced previous imprisonment, life in gaol “was easy” (Damien, Interview 1). The more familiar imprisonment was for some, the more it was perceived as a ‘manageable’ passage, in contrast to the ‘pains’ mentioned by the first timers.

Gaol is to me … gaol is a bit of a joke actually you know. Apart from the way some of the screws and that treat you … like they’ve got a bit of a block on their shoulder … but you know like … you know, I just take it.  

(Joe, Interview 1)

Likewise for Damien:

I reckon it's easier in there sometimes … [Interviewer: yeah?] … got no worries at all, nothing to worry about.  

(Damien, Interview 1)

Not all recidivists thought that prison was ‘easy’. Donny had simply tired of frequent imprisonment and the life he had been leading:

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I don't take no risks anymore. I think um … gaol … got to me this time. I was only in for dirty urine … [previous breach of parole] but it got to me.

(Donny, Interview 1)

Participants felt the pain of separation from past roles and identities, and this disconnection triggered a desire to self-govern within normative expectations (Mark’s comment: “the right path”) and boundaries on release. Mark’s motivation to comply with parole came from his desire to recommence his role as a father and to remain with his family:

Yeah, a great difference … in there I missed my family. I'm not missing out on any more of their lives and I don't want them to miss out on mine either, so I'll do what I can and what I’ve got to do to keep myself on that right path.

(Mark, Interview 1)

Interview data revealed that all participants were relieved to be free of the prison and to start getting their lives back. However, the experience of prison tainted their expectations of what would happen on parole. Those serving sentences less than three years found it difficult to access courses and work in prison. Keith lost confidence in the system and gave up his attempts to maintain his work ethic developed from his self-employment in the community:

When I got to (name of prison), I said to ’em I had to do an anger course … “oh that’s not done (ordered) by the courts, you can’t do one”. I thought that was wrong … and then, the day I got there I wanted to go to work, wanted to go to work, wanted to go to work … wanted to go to work. I done one half day’s work in four and a half months.

(Keith, Interview 1)

**Being on parole**

The sub-category of *being on parole* encompassed the structural conditions of the parole passage and the responses of participants to them. As a status passage, parole is characterised by its historical, scheduled and temporal properties. The NSW State Parole Authority describes the purpose of parole:
Parole serves the community interest by ensuring offenders are supervised and supported during their return to the community, and reduces the likelihood of recidivism. It provides an effective way of protecting the community than would a more sudden release of an offender at sentence expiry, without the assistance and supervision of a parole period.

(NSW Department of Justice State Parole Authority Annual Report 2016, p. 8)

In the anthropological studies by van Gennep (1909/1960), the life of individuals in any society is a series of passages from one stage to another, each stage defined by acts, rites or ceremonies which are socially known, shared and confirmed. These rites signify the passages of separation (such as funerals), rites of transition (liminal periods such as teens, adulthood, betrothal) and rites of incorporation, for example, marriage (van Gennep, 1909/1960, p. 11).

Parole can be viewed as a transitional liminal passage between the stages of being a prisoner (separation) to the end stage of incorporation as an unconditional citizen. However, there are no ceremonial rites of passage when parolees begin their passage of parole at the time of re-entry. They are ushered into society without fanfare, and particularly in smaller communities, are avoided or shunned. Shadd Maruna (2011) draws on the work of Mary Douglas (2003) and Braithwaite (1989) in his discussion of re-entry rituals for prisoners. He sees the reintegration of the former prisoner as devoid of ritual which characterised his imprisonment, and posits that the lack of ceremony or ritual may explain the failings of prisoner re-entry in contemporary society. For all of the parolees in this study, re-entry was signified by a range of emotions (apprehension and uncertainty) and a preparedness to endure the looming months ahead with mixed feelings of fatalism and reluctant co-operation with their CCO. Participants were eager to fulfil their obligations to family that had supported them; Paul stated that “I don’t want to let them down [parents]”, and Sam wanted “to get it right this time”. In contrast, Joe celebrated his re-entry by “having a shot (heroin)”—effectively returning to his past risk behaviours and jeopardising his time on parole to be with his family.
CSNSW COS is the front line department responsible for the management of offenders in the community. Risk assessments are carried out by CCOs on each prisoner released to parole and form the basis of their case management plan devised to target the level of ascribed risk and the identified criminogenic needs requiring intervention. The hallmark of a ‘successful’ legitimised completion of parole is to remain in the passage until the sentence expires without incurring a breach of parole and returning to prison. Another property of the parole passage is that it may be repeated, for example, Donny had breached parole, returned to prison for almost two years and was released again on parole:

   I just done near two years for dirty urine. Now I’m lookin’ to go back for another dirty ... that’s just shit.

   (Donny, Interview 2)

Sanctions applied for technical breaches of parole orders (conditions other than re-offending) may be open to the discretion of the parolee’s CCO, or divested to higher management to decide whether to give a warning or order a reversal of the passage (re-incarceration). Therefore, a reversal is highly contingent on the parolee’s ability to self-govern.

Being on parole can compete with the time needed to devote to other passages of importance to the individual. Other passages which the parolee wished to restore or begin on release (such as student, father, and employee) often conflicted with parole passage conditions which they were unable to control and caused frustration when the participant had to decide what was more important to him. The excerpt from Sam’s interview below illustrates how he tried to fulfill the passage role of father and the demands of the parole passage conditions:

   Oh … they told me the day … the day I got breached … because I went to the office … ‘cause I was meant to see the lady [CCO] on the Wednesday but I was over seeing my kids and I hitchhiked back from Eastern to Central on the Thursday … and then I went in on the Friday and that’s when she told me I’ve got a dirty urine and I said is there any chance that I can see my parole officer lady?... and she goes nah, she’ll ring you during the week … an’ that afternoon, that’s when the police got me and they told me I’ve been breached.

   (Sam, Interview 2, in prison after being breached)
The prescribed conditions of parole supervision are informed by ascribed risk levels derived from statistical assessments in order to promote responsibility and self-government, however, participants focused more on managing the structural constraints of parole than on managing risk factors ascribed to them. Participants felt that their role in their case management was “to do what I have to do” (Sam, Interview 1) in order “get it over and done with” (Lenny, Field note).

On the other hand, Mark was more positive in his approach to parole, and was motivated towards taking control of his life while on parole:

I always thought that that's what parole was … I don't want to think you'd have to sit back and wait until after your parole’s expired before you start being yourself and doing your own thing.

(Mark, Interview 1)

The contradictory logics of supporting self-governance while at the same time being constituted un-governable was not missed by participants. Participants revealed that the restrictions imposed by parole were just another form of policing and that it was “harder out here, than in there [prison].” (Joe, Interview 1).

Despite risk being the central organising feature of case management, participants revealed limited knowledge or understanding about the details of their case management plan or their formal risk assessments. Most had a simplistic idea of the self-governing behaviours expected of them:

Um, just not to smoke pot an’ stuff … an’ stay out of trouble.

(Sam, Interview 1)

Most of the participants did not understand the connection between the expectations of case management (often referred by participants as the rules) with their specific needs and responsibilities, and were confused and resentful when they felt that their autonomy was being undermined by ‘experts’ telling them how to live their lives. Participants often referred to their ascribed risk factors (such as substance abuse, aggression,
unemployment, associates) as ‘things’ or ‘objects’ to be managed; a perception which was influenced by the institutional discourses that surrounded them about risk as if it was fact.

Yeah … she [CCO] said I have to do somethin’ about me risks … you know … me risk factors … drinkin’ an that.

(Sam, Interview 1)

Revisiting the pains of imprisonment thesis of Sykes (1958), there are similarities which may accord with experiencing the ‘pains of parole’. Deprivation of autonomy is seen in the restrictions placed on parolees in the way they can locate from place to place in order to seek work and the imposition of reporting and attending mandated intervention programs. Although these practices are required for monitoring purposes, they place significant obstacles in the way of the parolee’s rehabilitation.

While strict directions are enshrined in the orders of the releasing bodies (SPA and the Courts), such as restrictions of contact with family and associating with particular community members, these restrictions significantly deprive the parolee of the social capital necessary for social re-integration. Other ‘pains’ of parole mentioned by the parolees were the travel time and costs to attend community agencies and programs at the COS office, feeling obligated to friends and family for transporting them in and out of the town to attend programs, and the invasion of privacy and stigma of being ‘on show’ when reporting at the parole office.

Legitimising parole

Being on parole was influenced by the value participants afforded to the passage of parole. Legitimacy was construed in terms of being treated fairly by their CCO, and having supports which assisted them in achieving a level of satisfactory progress towards their goals. The level of legitimacy was higher when participants felt respected and were offered practical assistance by their CCO. All participants in this study accepted that parole could provide them with support, although they felt powerless to challenge the type of ‘support’ that was imposed on them:
I already done that one [program] … that anger management one … and the drug and alcohol one … how many times do I have to do them … when am I s’posed to get on with my life and get it all behind me?

(Joe, Interview 1)

Donny revealed he was “all set to go with a TAFE course” and then “was stuffed up by parole” when he returned positive tests for drugs in urine. He reasoned that he was doing well by “only smoking pot” instead of injecting drugs, and vented his frustration about how they (parole) were not considering his efforts at all:

Yeah ... they said if ya’ don’t go to rehab then go to gaol ... that’s it.”

(Donny, Interview 2)

Parole was viewed as legitimate if parole (CCOs) “do what they say they’ll do” (Jim, Field note). It was important to participants that their CCOs supported them, and that they were “given a bit of slack” (Joe, Interview 2), especially after being caught out breaking the rules or disclosing voluntarily that they had lapsed by using drugs. Parolees may easily slip back into the routine of past risk behaviours when attempts to change fail.

The power relationship between themselves and their CCO emerged as a common contention. When participants breached their parole orders, their CCO was often blamed for being unfair; enforcing the rules without understanding the circumstances behind their infractions or not providing the help participants wanted. It is in this space that the opportunity to negotiate the relationship between the CCO and the parolee is missed. The strict enforcement of practices which centre specifically on monitoring the identified risk factors derived in assessment does not take into account the wider context of the parolee’s life, which in turn creates a resentful ‘subject’ who is more likely to focus on the ‘petty’ constraints imposed on him than the guidance and support he can obtain in the relationship with his CCO:
Well, see this is one thing I've gotta’ do when I was getting’ out. I said to my partner, when I got out … I said ‘listen, I can't plan anything yet’, she said ‘why not?’ I said ‘because I’ve got parole’. ‘Yeah, so?’ she said. I said ‘well … look, they can breach you for the littlest things. If you’ve got a prick of a parole officer he can breach you because you’re late to a meetin’. You know what I mean? That’s just deadset bullshit.

(Joe, Interview 2 in gaol after breaching parole)

The experience of prison life had a contaminating effect on the way participants viewed their relationship with their CCO. Some felt that CCOs were “just like prison officers” (Lenny, Interview 1), and when speaking about their CCO they used a language of oppression and distrust to emphasise their feelings of powerlessness. Having a ‘tough’ CCO meant “you could be breached for anything” (Joe, Field note). Fear that the slightest infraction would incur a breach was evident, although this fear was misplaced as those who lapsed into drug use, or failed to attend appointments were afforded a range of discretionary options over the six month period that data was collected. Despite knowing that they had the freedom of choice to self-govern within the normative boundaries expected of them, participants maintained that they were vulnerable to being treated unfairly by their supervising CCO:

I still believe … if you stuff up once, you're going back in … it’s there like … you leave gaol … you haven't really left, really … because there's still a chance that you can be thrown back in the next day. If you miss an appointment, or you tellin’ your parole officer to get fucked or something … anything can do it … the risk is 100% there, and then when parole’s over … you risk that you make the right choices from there.

(Paul, Interview 2)

Participants reported little understanding of the objectives of parole – a common reply was that “parole is supposed to help you” (Jim, Interview 2). The ‘help’ most participants wanted was related to positive supports so they could establish new identities, rather than being controlled through monitoring drug use and mandating course attendance based on behaviours employed in the past. When the support they wanted was not forthcoming, participants lost interest in cooperating with interventions and decided to wait until parole was over to do the things they wanted:
Everything you do, parole want to know what you’re dealing with you know ... so jobs you get, you don’t want them to know about your past ... you know what I mean ... but parole just brings it up ‘cause they want to know.

(Donny, Interview 2)

Participants expected their CCO to put their prescribed role to the side and see that they were trying to “have a go” in other areas of their lives. Using drugs was seen as only part of the ‘problems’ in their lives, and when non-compliance was detected they felt that there was no point in “trying to do anything on parole”. Donny reveals how his tenuous hold on future plans is influenced by his perception of the legitimacy of parole:

I was doin’ plans to carry on for the next three years ... now it’s all messed up because parole wanted me to do this [go to rehab].

(Donny Interview 2)

Jim felt supported by his first CCO, but found that he was not understood by his new CCO. His statement below reveals his reliance on his CCO to direct his management of risk. His half-hearted attempts to follow directions also reveals his disconnection with the ‘project of parole’ to manage his risk of re-offending. Rather than being interpreted as a lack of autonomy (that is, coercion with no choice), his statement reflects his expectations that CCOs are there to help and must accommodate his lack of committed interest:

Well ... things were … just weren’t working out for me … in the end. When I first got out of gaol I had a brilliant parole officer, she was nice ... best lady I’ve ever met through the system like, with parole wise and um ... I was doing courses ... I done a course an’ that for her … went to TAFE and all that rah, rah, rah ... but you know.

(Jim, Interview 2)

Timing of assistance for individual problems and needs influenced the legitimacy afforded to the passage of parole by participants. All of the participants had the experience of being referred to programs informed by their risk assessments, and few were enthusiastic about participating, especially when timing of programs was delayed, courses were cancelled, or they were considered not relevant to them.
Access to programs in prison was interrupted by inter-gaol transfers and long waiting lists. Most participants released on court based parole orders missed opportunities to access programs in prison due to their security classification, being excluded on the basis of time left to serve in gaol, and frequent movements within the system for medical or court appointments. Some participants intentionally avoided attending programs by getting ‘tipped’ to other gaols:

Interviewer: When you were in gaol, did you do any programs or get involved in anything?
Damien: Nah …
Interviewer: Yeah? … how come? … how come you didn’t?
Damien: Doesn’t bother me … not interested.
Interviewer: Not interested? Were you asked to do things while you were in gaol? [D: yeah] … what did they suggest for you?
Damien: They wanted me to do the VOT (Violent Offender Therapeutic Program-VOTP) or whatever it is … that violent prevention thing. When I got two years at the start, they sent me to [specified gaol] to do it and then I got tipped [transferred to another centre] from there so … ended up not doin’ nothin’.

(Damien, Interview 1)

Lenny was on remand awaiting sentence and tried to access programs to show his willingness to change his lifestyle, as well as to keep occupied while in gaol:

Interviewer: Did you do any programs why you were in there?
Lenny: They wouldn't let me. I was on remand I tried to do a school program they had there … an education program. I wasn't allowed to do it because I was on remand.

(Lenny, Interview 1)

Crossing the passage boundary revealed the accounts participants gave of prison life and how the experience cemented their resolve to stay out. This resolve, however, was tempered with their uncertainty about being able to ‘get through parole’; given their perceptions of parole as an institution and the working relationships they had with their CCO. Interaction with the institutional structures of parole only partially explained the conditions giving rise to the behaviour of reautonomising. Reautonomising was also characterised by the variables pertaining to the determination of goals for the time they would spend on parole.
Determining goals

Individuals engaging in the process of reautonomising began by determining goals for action. For participants, determining goals involved mentally organising and choosing goals which would lead to outcomes they most desired. In determining goals, participants revealed the tensions between choosing goals of personal worth and meaning to them (personal goals) and those which were influenced by external pressures (imposed goals). Time was revealed as a contributing factor in determining goals. Participants employed the action of time framing to accommodate the temporal condition of the parole passage.

Personal goals

As a property of determining goals, personal goals were defined as the meaningful objectives participants were striving for in order to restore their autonomy. Personal goals were an expression of the self he wanted to be, the things that mattered to him and the kind of life he wanted. These goals were derived from the participants’ own value and belief systems and were influenced by internal and contextual constraints which either aligned with their belief systems or ran counter to them.

Participants wanted to establish a sense of belonging to their communities by being ‘normal’; by having those things enjoyed by other citizens in their society, such as employment and financial stability. Indeed, these were the normalising objectives promoted by parole conditions; leading a productive and law-abiding life. Finding a job, reconnecting with family and having a better life were revealed as goals in the data; however these goals were influenced by the authority they gave to them and the coherence of their plans to achieve them. For many participants, goals were merely ideals with little thought and self-direction about how to achieve them:

... me achieving goals? ... like achieving something like? I mean ... probably just a steady job um ... a steady job ... yeah .... just stay happy.

(Jim, Interview 1)

On the other hand, Mark revealed the complexity of determining goals and the catalysts which motivated him: the undesirable context of prison, being
dissatisfied with past behaviours, and seeing a positive outcome to being drug free. In this respect he had mobilised his plans and was prepared to follow through:

When I went into custody they asked me a question ‘what do you want to achieve whilst in gaol?’ and I said look ... I said ... on the outside, I said I was smoking pot and I’ve smoked it since I was 15 years of age ... I said it is time for a change, so I want to get one thing out of gaol, I said, I want to give up the drugs. That was a conscious choice I made because I thought that I needed that change. It wasn't something that was influencing my behaviours or anything like that ... so yeah ... there was no drugs involved with my offence whatsoever.

(Mark, Interview 1)

Although acknowledging that ascribed risk factors (such as illicit drug use) were behaviours they felt they should do “something about”, participants revealed little conviction in the likelihood that they could change - unless they wanted to. Reautonomising in these cases was driven by the salience of the benefits of changing behaviour as well as the sense of knowing that one could change and reap the rewards of a better life in the future. Despite the risk factors ascribed to them by formal assessments, participants had their own hierarchy of needs and the behaviours that satisfied them. An excerpt from an interview with Joe illustrates this point:

I've been using needles all of me’ life and nobody else can get me off them. I've been to every drug and alcohol program known ... and I used to say the same thing to them, ‘listen whatever you’re saying to me, mate ... it might come in useful when the time comes for me and I don't want to use any more’ … but until then …

(Joe, Interview 1)

Similarly, Paul perceived ‘dealing with himself’ as a pursuit that was meaningful to him, though it had little grounding in a concretised plan:

I think my main goal is just stay and deal with meself ... at the moment ... I’ve got to deal with meself. I’ve got me hands full with that [he laughs].

(Paul, Interview 1)
Imposed goals

Goals not generated from the desires or internal motivation of the participants were categorised as imposed goals. Imposed goals were goals the participants felt they should pursue as well as goals they felt compelled to pursue. External social pressures, especially from family members, influenced the motivation to reautonomise. Paul’s desire to reconnect with family was of value to him:

They … they’ve … always been there for me … now it’s my turn … God bless ‘em … for the amount of shit I've done to them. I've been pretty lucky to have them … parents like I do.

(Paul, Interview 1)

Participants weighed up the benefits of complying with the risk management goals targeting their assessed needs as a means to feel in control of how they spent their time on parole. Although not always aligned with their personal goals (the things they really wanted to do), imposed goals served a reciprocal function of providing the structure participants needed on re-entry as well as satisfying the organisational objectives of management and surveillance. Following the ‘rules’ was a common thread throughout the study with most participants subjugating their own beliefs about their risks and their plans to self-govern to the structured objectives of their risk management plan:

I’ve gotta’ do everything she tells me to do … ’cause I’m not gonna’ go back.

(Lenny, Interview 1)

However misaligned imposed goals may have been with the personal goals of participants, some had nevertheless derived a sense of achievement from completing programs and courses, irrespective of whether the goals of the interventions were inculcated into their way of life or not. Mark’s excerpt illustrates this point:

Goals? ... done them … yeah I done heaps. I done um … anger management um … there is a program run by officer [Correctional Officer] … ‘an I done that, and in return got
passed for bricklaying certificate ‘an agriculture … and we done Enough is Enough, you know?… violence programs and stuff like that … which was all beneficial to me because it give me a viewing of ways of … of … other people’s ways of dealing with things that I could take in and work out which way I could deal with that same situation … my way instead of the way that I would have prior to being in gaol.

(Mark, Interview 1)

Reautonomising within the boundaries of parole conditions was difficult, given that participants had stepped out of the social-cultural milieu of prison where everything was done for them and to ask for help was considered a weakness, into one where they were reliant on others to provide the assistance they needed. Participants found it hard to restore self-government, especially when they felt vulnerable, marginalised and lacked the skills to access the services they wanted. Most participants felt the pressures from family and their CCO to self-govern by living a ‘normal’ life, by finding a job and abstaining from drugs and/or alcohol.

However, only two participants had returned to work, with the remaining twelve participants returning to their pre-prison situation of relying on social security allowances (New Start allowance and Disability Support Pensions). With little or no experience of employment and few self-generated plans to find work, participants adopted a passive reliance on job search agencies to find them work. Many of these participants entered parole with little hope that projects for a changed future were possible through their own efforts and often relied on parents and their CCOs to ‘keep them out of trouble’:

Mum keeps me clean, she makes sure I eat, she makes sure I don’t do somethin’ stupid … she don’t mind me smokin’ pot…she knows I’m home when I kick back … she’d rather that.

(Donny, Interview 2)

_Time framing_

Time framing was defined as the organising schema through which participants calculated the timing of their goals for action. By ‘bracketing’ plans and time in this manner, participants derived a measure of control over
current situations which required choices. Participants on court based parole orders (those with sentences of three years or less), articulated their goals in terms of what they would do ‘after’ parole, when they were free to take up the life they left or to forge the life they wanted in the future. The expiry of parole for these participants was a matter of months away and they were focused on this proximity. Participants were not concerned with embedding new behaviours to self-govern while on parole:

Interviewer: So what would you like to do?  
Damien: Just get this parole over and done with  
Interviewer: And then what?  
Damien: Stay out of trouble  
Interviewer: How’re you going to do that?  
Damien: Don't drink.  

(Damien, Interview 1)

Participants sentenced to more than three years were released at the discretion of the SPA, and had considerably more time on parole to show that they could manage their risks and remain law-abiding. Time on parole for these participants was construed in terms of enduring the time between re-entry and parole expiry. They were resigned to their compliance obligations and attempted to realise their goals in the six months of the study, more so than focusing solely on the distant date of their sentence expiry.

Time controlled and managed by others reminded participants of their degraded status. Autonomous agency was inhibited by the tension between personal goals and the time they were required to allocate to the parole passage. Sam related this conflict:

Interviewer: What does parole time mean for you?  
Sam: Nothin’... it means nothin’… there’s nothin’ I can do ... just go see the parole officer and stay out of trouble ... don’t use drugs … other than that, it’s just … it’s their time, not mine.  

(Sam, Interview 1)

In contrast, some participants framed time in terms of the personal spaces outside of time controlled by others. Personal time was time where they
could retreat from systems which reinforced their degraded status, and begin to reconstruct other more satisfying identities. Personal time was valued time, as it represented an undisclosed part of their lives which was beyond the gaze of authority; where they could make decisions and adopt other personally meaningful roles in their social world without censure. Joe valued his personal time where he was able to resume his role as a father:

It’s all good, my kids are great and I am with them all the time now … I think I’m a pretty good father … everyone says that anyhow.  
(Joe, Interview 1)

Determining goals featured as the discriminating property of reautonomising which involved the mental deliberations of participants to set the course for action. The data revealed that the deliberation of goals to restore autonomy occurred in different degrees depending on the interaction of social-structural factors (for example, past experience) and structures of the parole passage (such as the ‘rules’ and time), and how participants decided on a course of action to meet the challenges posed by the perceived constraints or challenges while transiting the parole passage. Goals to restore autonomy were influenced by participant’s self-conceptions, and whether they perceived that there were any benefits in self-transformation.

**Locating the self**

As a sub-category of reautonomising, and closely related to determining goals, *locating the self*, explains inter-subjective behaviour of participants to evaluate a sense of self in the temporal dimensions of past, present and future. *Locating the self* explained the ways participants spoke about their lives; perceiving themselves as being either determined by their past with few prospects for changing their situation, or from the perspective of having a better life in the future. This condition emphasised the pivotal position the self plays as an agent in the concept of self-government. The concepts of self and identity are often used synonymously, however, in this study, the concept of the self referred to the overarching internal view of the person, while identities were seen as constituted by the multiple roles and statuses
conferred on or acquired by the person throughout life, and existed in service to the self (Rocque, Posick & Paternoster, 2014, p. 3).

The concept of the self is considered crucial to our status as agents, for without it, we have no reason to place faith in our ability to affect the world through our choices and actions and our position to do so (Kuhler & Jelinek, 2012, p. xxxiii). In this sense, the category of locating the self and its properties of biographing, locating the self in the past and locating the self in the future explained the psychological condition which played an integral part in the motivations and goals driving the behaviour of reautonomising.

**Biographing**

Locating the self involved the reflexive action of biographing. As an internal dialogical process interpreted in their stories, biographing provided the mechanism to enable participants to integrate their present sense of who they are now with their past selves and the selves they want to be in the future. Their accounts provided an historical view of their social world and how internal and external structures influenced their self-concept. Sam’s excerpt illustrates this:

> I was probably a … I call myself a bit of a dickhead because I should have got an education because I used to go to school with me’ older brother and used to always follow him and do all the bad stuff he used to do, and that sort of buggered me up … it’s just, yeah … but me old man says you can lead a horse to water but you can’t make it drink.

*(Sam, Interview 1)*

Sam also related how he inculcated a sense of self through his past socialisation, and how it became an indelible part of the way he operated in the world. His excerpt reveals the reflexive behaviours of integrating his past, present and future self, which provided the motivational platform to begin to construct a desired self in the future:

> Yeah, well I always ... growing up I was continuously put down ... I wasn't going to achieve ... I wasn't going to become ... or ... do you know what I mean? I was worthless an’ this an’ that ... but when it come to being an adult to try and interpret situations and the things that people say, you tend to do a lot of reflect [sic] on the way it
came at you when you was a child, because that's what you learnt from there … it’s different for me now but. 

(Sam, Interview 1)

In the action of biographing, Mark identified past social learning and how he wanted to change:

I've gotta be a stronger person for my family than the weak person I was when I went and acted the way that I did ... you know what I mean? I put a knife into somebody because it was a continual line of harassment. I blame me’ father for some of it because he never taught me the proper way of dealing with anger … he always met anger with anger … and basically in today's society that's what people understand … is violence with violence, and I sort of took that path and it turned out the wrong way to me but.

(Mark, Interview 1)

Not all participants employed the behaviour of biographing as a self-reflexive mechanism to integrate past, present and future selves. Jim did not feel as if he had control over his future prospects and left his options open for the future. His uncertainty about his abilities to influence his future prospects held him in the present as a ‘liminal self”; between his past self and an unformulated future self. In leaving his future open in this way, Jim was able to remain disengaged from any moral commitment in the future to restrain from risk behaviours which contradicted his self-concept:

Like, every time I've been gettin’ released from prison and officers or anyone says to me ‘what, you coming back or?’ I don't say, ‘no I'm not’. But when they ask me that question I say um … ‘I don't know’ … don't know what lies ahead … do you know what I mean? … like ... maybe … maybe not.

(Jim, Interview 1)

Locating the self in the past

Some participants held on to their past identities as indelible parts of their self-concept, and worked hard to defend these identities. Joe perceived himself as an experienced drug user/dealer, and although he had other roles and identities in his life, drug use was an attractive alternative to more conventional means of satisfying his needs. Joe’s intentions were clear; he had formulated plans for a self in the future that included his drug using
behaviour, and although he espoused a desire to desist, he wanted to be the one to make that decision:

I don't know it's just so hard ... it's just so ... I can’t manage ... the peer pressure of it ... I s’pose because I love it. I don't stop drugs because I don't want to take 'em. I’m stopping drugs because I don’t want to come back to this fuckin’ place [Interviewer: yeah ...]. Sorry about the language, but you know, I won't stop drugs because ... listen, if I could take drugs and not come to gaol, I'd have a shot every day.

(Joe, Interview, 2)

The core concern of participants was to restore their autonomy. For some participants, reautonomising involved restoring the familiar identities and roles constituting the self of their past life, while for others, a past life was no longer recognisable or desirable. In this vein, locating the self was influenced by the time the participant spent disconnected from his social world and the aspects of the self that he wished to disavow or change. Many of the court-based parolees spent less time in lower security prisons and were able to maintain some connections with the community and family with supervised work and day release programs. Participants from this group settled into past roles and identities more readily when released, and were more focused on 'getting parole over and done with’ than on formulating goals for their futures. Participants spoke about getting a job as a means to have financial stability and to be seen as trying to access the means for a conventional life, more so than being motivated by personally chosen and enduring goals for a self in the future. Many participants lacked self-direction and relied on others to provide this for them. Lenny reflected the passive stance taken by most in seeking employment goals:

Lenny: Um ... I've been going to [job search agency]. I've done a bit of work for the Dole not so long ago, on one of those intensive programs ... support or something ... the intensive support program. I've done that ... that's where the job capacitor comes round and they just ring jobs up for you all the time.

Interviewer: That's the job capacity worker from here? [agency]

Lenny: Ah, yeah, from [agency]. They just sit there ... you get the paper and they ring the jobs up for you and they just push your resume through for you and that. I've been doing that.

(Lenny, Interview 1)
Locating the self in the future

For SPA participants, the roles and identities in service to past selves were eroded over the time in prison, leaving them with the task of establishing new identities for a future projected or “possible self” (Markus & Nurius, 1986). This situation created anxiety, as participants were managed according to assessed risks drawn from information about their past offending, and were required to focus on ascribed risks while on parole more so than establishing new sustainable identities in their community:

Donny: Now I just have to take it one day at a time. I tried doing that program ... ah ... literacy an’ numeracy. I was supposed to ... do another trade ... you know? ... with horses an’ that. I woulda’ been startin’ next week ... you know what I mean? Now I’ve gotta’ go to rehab ... over one dirty urine, parole sent me to a rehab.
Interviewer: It wasn’t your decision?
Donny: They reckoned it was advisable. Don’t go to rehab ... (or) go to gaol.

(Donny, Interview 1)

Locating the self in the past and future often existed simultaneously in the present for some participants, however, one orientation was generally perceived as the primary precursor in determining goals to restore autonomy. Participants who had experienced achieving personally derived goals in the past, expressed confidence in their ability to renew that state in the present. Mark had not become immobilised by a sense of self predicated on his past behaviours and he envisioned a future without using drugs:

Mark: Don't get me wrong, I’ve made me mistakes ... that's what [assigned CCO] was just talking with me about. I've had a smoke of pot since I've been out of gaol but ... but, my smoking habit is nowhere near the size of what it used to be. I think I've had probably two, three smokes in seven months (or) eight months that I've been out, so I've learnt from my mistakes. I know what I want and you can't get it if you're on drugs.

(Mark, Interview 2)

Reasoning threats to autonomy

Reasoning threats to autonomy emerged as another set of conditions which explained the rationales influencing the success or failure of the attempts of participants to restore their autonomy. In their efforts to make up for lost time and turn their lives around, parolees were under considerable pressure
to conform to the roles ascribed by their status in the parole passage as well as the competing demands of other passages more important in the parolee’s life, such as impending fatherhood or being in a relationship. Reasoning threats to autonomy involved the external and internal conditions which presented as challenges or constraints in the reautonomising behaviours of participants. Threats to reautonomising were revealed in the data as: maintaining resolve, recognition, and being controlled.

**Maintaining resolve**

Participants revealed that their main concern on re-entry was to ‘get their lives back’ by restoring their capacity to self-govern; conceptualised as reautonomising. Most were confident that they were able to achieve the goal of staying out of prison by calling on their existing personal resources and getting assistance from known agencies and sources in their community. However, maintaining resolve was influenced by the scope of personal resources of each individual and their ability to use these skills to manage undermining internal and external threats. Internal threats such as wavering commitment in the face of visceral, emotional and psychological stressors featured in their narratives, despite interventions for their identified needs. Sam found difficulty maintaining his desired goal of not drinking when feelings of depression threatened his resolve. His limited scope of alternatives to managing his emotional state compounded the likelihood of being breached on his parole:

Interviewer: You did that before, you went to the A&OD group that they had at [parole location]. Did it do much good?

Sam: It did but … it stopped me actually from drinking … but every time I was feeling depressed where I used to have a drink, I had a smoke of pot … I was pretty stupid [sic] on myself … I've got no one else to blame but myself so … it's not a good thing.

(Sam, Interview 2)

Internal states such as depression, boredom and disappointment featured frequently in participants narratives. When the pressure to maintain new skills becomes too much, participants often gave up trying to self-govern within the normative constraints imposed by parole:
Yeah … because I'm always trying to … you know … I know everything I've done wrong you know what I mean? I tried to change it in some sort of way … but I don't know, I just keep making more mistakes too and then I kick myself about them you know?

(Jim, Interview 2 in gaol after being breached)

All participants acknowledged that their drug and/or alcohol use had contributed to their offending behaviours, but many perceived that these behaviours were either situational or overemphasised as the causal factor of their offences by their CCOs.

Participants spoke of their desire to give up drugs and to stop drinking, but only a few had persisted with their strategies over the six months of the study. Michael had persisted:

No, I've been clean for 18 months … I want to stay clean … I’ve got heaps more money … I’m saving now. I've got money put away for the kids for Christmas now. I never used to be able to do that.

(Michael, Interview 2)

Because personal goals were intrinsic to the individual, every hurdle encountered eroded their self-concept and often created feelings of despondency when unable to effect change. Although assisted with many of the practical needs required to manage their transition to parole, participants who were serving longer periods on parole were weighed down with their own expectations and strivings to achieve the basic requirements to have the life they wanted in the community. Donny sounded exhausted from just verbalising the many obstacles to pursuing his goals:

Like, don’t get me wrong, I wouldn't mind working but I haven't got a licence. I haven't even got photo ID. It's hard to get ... if you can't read the book to get your licence you're pretty well up shit creek, and then with employment you need transport … it is hard … you know what I mean?

(Donny, Interview 1)

Many participants spoke of their goals in terms of wants and desires, but found that they were unable to follow through with actions to achieve what
they wanted. Jim realised that it took more than just wanting to control things:

Yeah ... it starts going from there and I just ... I think I've got control of things and then all of a sudden it’s out of me hands, you know what I mean? ... like ... you’ve always got control over something ... but it's having willpower and that to ... to do it.

(Jim, Interview 1)

Some participants had developed few skills to self-govern in the past, and life in prison had contributed significantly to the lack of opportunity to develop self-governing skills to lead a conventional life in the community. Being dependent on others to guide and assist them to establish themselves left participants feeling vulnerable to feelings of incompetency and uncertainty about being able to maintain resolve when left to operate independently:

Sam: The biggest risk is sort of being quiet when I get out of gaol 'an that ...

Interviewer: Is that a risk? being quiet?

No, it's just like ... sort of like a scary feeling ... like you get out of there and you're not used to the environment and that. I'm used to like ... getting people to help me to do things an’ that like. Otherwise when things are left for me to do on my own, I don't actually go and do it ‘cause I was too paranoid … things are going to go wrong … somethin’ like that.

(Sam, Interview 2)

When skills to deal with threats were limited, supports were not aligned with needs and goals were not personally valued, resolve to persist with restoring autonomy was compromised.

Recognition

Being validated as a person who is capable of self-governing was important for participants. When managed according to ascribed risks based on assessments of past behaviours, participants found it difficult to overcome the messages from authority agents that they were unable to manage themselves and required intervention for their deficiencies. The lack of social recognition and acceptance by other members of society was also revealed as a threat to reautonomising, especially when entering the community with the identifiable and socially undesirable status of parolee.
Living with the status identity of parolee made the participant vulnerable to social condemnation and isolation, particularly if he was known in the community by authorities such as the police and other community members. Negative interactions with authority agents such as police, intensified feelings of being singled out according to their status and pushed participants further away from participating in the moral community:

Damien: I don't know ... you just got coppers an’ everything watching you ... an’ coming here ... it’s just a waste of time.
Interviewer: So do the cops cruise past your place and call in on you?
Damien: They don't stop, but they watch me.

(Damien, Interview 1)

Being rejected by others when they are feeling vulnerable and uncertain about where they fit in, creates a fragile base for any self-transformative efforts. Donny predicts his response before he has even been in a situation which could hinder his restorative efforts in self-governing:

Interviewer: What are some of the things that would stop you getting ahead?

Donny: probably a lot of rejection. Like, if I go for a job or ... like, at the moment it's been pretty good, I've got into TAFE ... like the numeracy and literacy and PEET, and I haven't been rejected that way. But if people start lookin’ down on me, you know? Like ... treating me like a bit of shit ... that would send me probably haywire you know? I'd tell them to go fuck themselves or somethin’. I mean, if I went for a job interview and someone looks down on me and said you're not worth it or wouldn't even give me a go, I'd probably rob him (laughs) you know what I mean?

(Donny, Interview 2)

Donny’s motivation to realise his future goals was vulnerable to his interaction with others:

Yeah. Because now I'm trying to make somethin’ of meself with me goals an’ that and if no one is willing to give me a go ... then I'll probably get into that old way of thinking, which I've done before, which is, ‘what's the point?’ Do you know what I mean?

(Donny, Interview 1)
Participants felt that their needs on re-entry were not recognised in terms of access to resources to help them participate in society. This included the structural and social supports they required to help them formulate goals and assist in the steps required to achieve them. Participants with a history of recidivism had little desire to seek out the opportunities available to them, often predicting that they would be “knocked back” (Sam, Interview 1) because of their past and their lack of employability skills. Many of the court-based parolees related that they were ‘on their own’ when it came to visiting the many agencies and gave up trying to pursue any long term goals.

Only two out of fourteen participants in the study returned to employment on re-entry. Of the remaining twelve participants, four were receiving a disability pension and the remainder were registered with employment agencies and were receiving the New Start Allowance (unemployment benefits, called the ‘dole’ by participants). Unemployed participants were resigned to filling in their time while on parole by complying with their parole conditions and “just getting on with it” (Sam, Interview 1). Participants felt that they were abandoned by ‘the system’ and expressed their frustration about the lack of recognition of their basic needs, such as a job to give them financial security. Jim, Paul and Nick were seeking ways to procure more permanent welfare benefits (a disability pension), by emphasising some of their physical and mental health complaints which would be considered to affect their ability to work. Most relied on partners and families to provide accommodation and to support them financially on re-entry and had settled in to a familiar and self-limiting state of dependence.

For those participants seeking work, having a steady job was a daunting and threatening prospect as it was out of their field of experience, and paradoxically, threatened their capacity to live the life they wanted. Jim had settled back into his past routine and showed little commitment to actively determine and plan a future for himself:
Um ... well at the moment I'm not working. I’m unemployed. I’m on Centrelink [New Start Social Security] payments an’... um ... like, I'd like to get a job ... but I've got a back problem ... that um ... sort of restricts me from doing a lot of stuff like. I'm tryin’ to deal with it an all without havin’ to take medication and stuff like that ... you know what I mean? Because you can't work on medication ... like on painkillers.

(Jim, Interview 1)

Of the eight participants on the New Start allowance, none had been placed in work by the second interview. Within the six month period between interviews, six of the eight participants had breached their parole and were re-incarcerated. One participant was still in the community and had a breach warrant issued.

Participants were sensitive about their degraded status in the community and this sensitivity was compounded by being at the mercy of bureaucracies and agencies charged with determining their eligibility for resources on the basis of their past behaviours and ascribed risk. Participants felt they had no control over information about them and felt judged and excluded because of their past. This state of powerlessness eroded their self-direction and persistence to pursue conventional goals; relegating them to a state of passive dependency where they ended up ‘going through the motions’ rather than being actively engaged with the agencies providing support:

Jim: Yeah, well when I got out ... um ... I had to go and see a job capacity assessor at Centrelink and um they assessed me an’ all that and they assessed me for like ... PSP ... Personal Support Program I think it is yeah ... with [name of agency], they help you with, like, where you’re at ... what sort of work you'd like to find, all that sort of stuff ... you know what I mean?

Interviewer: ... and have you been going there?

Jim: Well, they said they'd send me out a letter because ... like, you gotta’... I don’t know ... go through some sort of process or somethin’ and it could be a week, it could be two weeks, could be 12 weeks. I still haven't heard nothin’ so... and my parole officer was going to actually ring ‘em for me.

Interviewer: So they said they were going to contact you?

Jim: Yeah, well I haven’t received any letters or anything yet.

(Jim, Interview 1)
Being controlled

A dominant discourse in participant interviews was the desire to take charge of their lives; to be who they wanted to be and to do what they wanted. Participants resented the intrusion of surveillance and monitoring into the private spaces of their lives, and this resentment was heightened if the intrusion was witnessed by significant others in the participant’s life, as illustrated in the interview with Joe:

Well, you ... you can have three goes at urines ... go three times without bein’ able to ... you can say you can't piss right? ... an’ after the third time it's a breach ... you know? Which is wrong because no one can piss on demand (laughs, exasperated) ... you know what I mean?... like it’s ... like they... my daughter was having a birthday party and we had friends over and they [the CCMG] stood in my laundry for two hours while I was standing there with a jar in front o’ me in me hand, you know?... like an’ it's pretty embarrassing, you know? Like, I don’t get embarrassed really easy, but I felt bad for these children ... you know what I mean?

(Joe, Interview 2, in gaol)

All participants were focused on the constraints of being supervised, and the threat of having parole revoked. Many perceived the constraints as barriers to reautonomising, rather than as beneficent structures and guidelines to promote self-governing. This occurred when their own assumptions about risk did not concur with professional evaluations of their risks.

Not all participants perceived the restrictions on parole as intolerable. When ascribed risks aligned with the participants’ assessment of the behaviours they wanted to change, constraints were seen as part of their overall plan to self-govern. Mark felt he could cope with restrictions and forge ahead with his life in the community:

Well, I am weaving me way between parole in a sense to keep parole happy. I’ve gotta do the right thing in the community... look for work; participate in active areas ... whether it will be with me children or the community. But I've also gotta’ be restricted by parole ... so if I know if I wanna’ go for a holiday up to me brother-in-law who lives in [location], I’ve gotta’ get permission. If I want to go to a funeral, I've got to get permission, so there's all these little restrictions… but otherwise that’s all it is really.

(Mark, Interview 1)
**Self-governing tactics**

The major category of self-governing tactics encompassed the actions participants employed to achieve their goals to restore their autonomy. The tactical behaviours revealed in the data fell into the sub-categories of: *defaulting, avoiding, investing,* and *resisting.*

**Defaulting**

Participants employed defaulting tactics as a preferred means to achieve their goals when alternative actions were rejected, had failed or were limited in scope to satisfy their needs. Defaulting tactics relied on behaviours which had endured over time from past experiences and as routine actions, bypassed the deliberative process of making informed decisions in a range of situations. In some cases, defaulting tactics were the behaviours which sabotaged participant’s resolutions to employ alternative means to cope with challenges and threats to restoring their autonomy. This was because the behaviours employed were used almost automatically and often resulted in feelings of failure; expressed as “it just happened” and “I wasn’t thinking” (Jim, Interview 2).

Defaulting tactics were behavioural backstops when participants had tried new tactics which were not successful or tactics which conflicted with the self he wanted to project:

Interviewer: Had you tried some other ways to manage you getting angry?
Keith: Yeah, that ‘walk away’ stuff ... but, nah ... that’s not just me.

(Keith, Interview 1)

Most participants employed defaulting tactics to some degree. Those persisting with goals for a ‘future’ self, often lapsed to past behaviours in the parole trajectory when resolve wore down or other emotional or relational needs became the priority. Jim expresses his failure on parole as “stepping off the path”. His need for companionship and the negative emotions he experienced from self-restraint outweighed his investment in his goals:
Jim: Yeah, I stepped off the path.

Interviewer: How did you step off the path?

Jim: I just started to see the old crowd again, you know? I started getting bored, like after I'd done me courses like everything I had to do through my CCO. Then she wasn't there. I was just about to get it all right ... then I was starting getting’ bored. Me girl was saying to me ... she said you’re getting bored ... you’re gonna’ get in trouble. She's been with me for eight years now. I said yeah, I can feel it too ... I slipped off the track ... I used ... [Interviewer: OK] ... started smoking pot yeah ... really a lot of it is boredom for me.

(Jim, Interview 2 in gaol)

Participants defaulted to routine behaviours in order to get their lives back to how they knew their lives to be. Defaulting tactics were familiar and bolstered a sense of self and identity, an integral factor in restoring autonomy. Keith tried to manage his ascribed risk of alcohol abuse, but also realised that this behaviour was very much a part of his life:

You can't say in my job... you can't say I'm not going to the pub because the pub ... all my life I've done it, and that's another reason. They drop the truck off this afternoon, at two, you go to the pub ... 'cause all the blokes I work with, I’ve worked with for years, I know 'em more than just work wise ... yeah.

(Keith, Interview 1)

Participants were able to maintain a sense of autonomy by ‘defaulting by degrees’. This allowed them some semblance of control by showing that they were attempting to address their ascribed risk factors by choosing the least ‘risky’ option in their own calculations of risk:

I don't … I've probably drank six beers in the past eight months. It's nothing ... I've had a couple of joints here an’ there. Mum and Dad don't mind … yeah, as long as I don't get on the hard stuff or anything like that. That’s my extra little chill out. It gets rid of my anxiety a lot ... and that's why I’m on Valium. It's not a problem ... like, I don’t smoke weed to get stoned any more. It's more likely if I'm too agitated, I’ve got to have a Valium and a bit of smoke and that's it.

(Paul, Interview 1)
Avoiding drug and/or alcohol use, criminal associates, risk situations and risk environments featured as some of the conditions of parole for participants. All participants showed scores exceeding 5 out of 9 on the LSI-R domain of substance abuse (Alcohol/Drug Problem) and were referred to group programs provided by CSNSW and/or counselling provided by community Alcohol and Other Drug (A&OD) services. Participants with high scores for illicit drug use (13 of 14 participants) were required to abstain from drugs as a condition of their parole supervision and were monitored by intermittent drug testing.

All participants employed avoidance tactics to comply with parole supervision, especially in their attempts to manage their alcohol consumption and use of illicit drugs. Their ability to maintain the tactic of avoidance, however, varied with the salience of their goals and their ability to withstand temptations and situations which threatened their resolve.

The tactic of avoidance involved a high degree of self-imposed restraint and often conflicted with participant’s beliefs about the positive effects they derived from imbibing in ascribed risk behaviours. Participants often spoke about managing their self-assessed risks by using cannabis as a ‘less serious’ way of avoiding injecting drugs. Although cannabis use was monitored and warnings of intention to breach were given by their CCOs, the avoidance strategy of managing drug use failed for most participants in the six months time frame of the study, with participants defaulting to routine ways of operating in their social world.

The excerpt from Jim’s interview illustrates his attempts to manage his risk by avoidance, and his identification of factors contributing to his risk:

[It’s] just that there’s triggers over there for me like ... people I've known all me’ life that do drugs and stuff like ... if it’s ... I'm trying to ... what I’m tryin’ to do is eliminate meself from all of it like … the same people … the areas ... yeah…

(Jim, Interview 1)

Despite attending courses which were related to his assessed needs and risk factors, Jim was unable to employ alternative self-governing tactics to
manage his ascribed risks (alcohol/drug problems). His more immediate and valued needs for social companionship and relief from boredom outweighed his motivation to comply with his supervision conditions to abstain:

That's what I’m saying, I isolated meself. I stayed at home … I did nothing. Every now an’ then I had to go to Centrelink [Social Security Office] an’ see ‘em. Then, I’d pop into [employment agency]. They weren't priorities, you know what I mean? My main priority was to stay at home, that's what I thought, if I stayed at home, I don't see me ... the old people I hang around with. If I don't see them then I’m not doing drugs. That's how I felt ... I'm not doing nothing … but it turned out that it didn’t work and I got very bored with it.

(Jim, Interview 2 in gaol)

Although avoiding social contact to manage ascribed risk appeared as a contradiction to the ideals of reintegration, participants viewed it as an effective way to stay out of trouble by avoiding those who may influence them, especially if drug and/or alcohol use was involved. The tactic of avoidance took precedence over alternative means of social interaction which may have given participants the encouragement and support for normative social and leisure pursuits conducive to engaging with the community and nurturing autonomous ways of living. Donny used the tactic of isolating as his only self-governing tactic which proved to increase his cannabis use to relieve his negative emotional state:

This time I’ve just been spending a lot of time at home. This time ... I'm just tryin’ to stay out of it ... you know? And I know I won't even do that unless I stay at home. I'll just figure it out from there ... do you know what I mean?

(Donny, Interview 1)

Isolating themselves in order to preserve self esteem, and alleviate the pressure of public disgrace and felt stigma, was another avoidance tactic which had a negative impact on participants and pushed them further to the margins of the community. Many participants were reluctant to engage with social groups or pursuits outside of their immediate associates and family, preferring to spend their time on parole away from the judgement of others.

Attending employment agencies and other community facilities where their degraded status was disclosed to others only compounded their fear of being
negatively evaluated and eroded their attempts to reautonomise; often acting as a precursor to abandoning normative pursuits and to seek alternative ways to restore a sense of control in their lives. Lenny expresses his reticence to restore his autonomy:

Yeah, and when they asked me where I’d been I said … ‘away’… they know … but I wasn’t telling them … better off not going there again.

(Lenny, Interview 1)

Participants also used the tactic of avoiding to preserve a routine way of self-governing. By avoiding the acquisition of new skills which created a sense of anxiety and possible rejection by known others, participants felt more comfortable settling back in to habitual ways by eschewing the benefits of change. Consequently, while not changing the routine ways of operating in the world, participants soon found themselves repeating mistakes of the past.

Avoiding also includes the behaviour of temporising. By putting off goals and plans until after parole, participants sought to restore their autonomy by perceiving parole as a temporary event to be endured, after which they could get on with their lives. Temporising also served as a stigma management tactic by waiting until parole had expired before realising goals which would be affected by the status of the parolee. Many participants were reluctant to seek employment while on parole, especially in smaller localities where anonymity was difficult to maintain. Lenny was conscious of negative appraisal by others and decided to ‘wait-out’ his parole:

Lenny: I’m definitely off the drugs an’ stuff. After parole I’m gettin’ work and probably be moving … so. You can’t do anything on parole … you’re a risk … you’re a parolee, you know? And that’s why I’m not doin’ anythin’ now.

(Lenny, Interview 1)

The category of avoiding also encompassed the deliberative action of temporising. Postponing purposeful action left participants in a rudderless state, a type of ‘liminal vacuum’, where waiting-out parole involved
aimlessly filling in time on a day to day basis, leading to low satisfaction with their lives:

I just ... I don't feel like doing anything some days ... you know what I mean? Like, it's not that I feel depressed or worthless or anything, I just say to meself some days I just don't feel like doing anything and I won't do it, you know what I mean?

(Jim, Interview 1)

Investing

Investing was defined as the proactive behaviour of participants in pursuing their future-oriented projects. In economic terms, investing encompasses the costs incurred to receive expected rewards. For participants in this study, investing involved the personal commitment and action of participants to achieve the valued goal of restoring their autonomy. The properties of responding to progress, aligning values and complying comprised the category of investing. In the context of parole, the personal goals of participants were often in conflict with the constraints of the institutional structure of parole. The values and beliefs about their own risk, and the imposed risk dominated practices of control and divisiveness, conflicted when participants wanted to live their lives the way they wanted. Many held beliefs and values about drug use which were grounded in their social-cultural development and experiences and subsequently, reautonomising was devoid of any moral commitment to the normalising objectives of the parole passage:

I can smoke pot an’ I can relax. I’ll always smoke pot ... I told ‘em ... I always tell them ... I’m gonna’ smoke pot whether you’se like it or not.

(Donny, Interview 2)

Investing is not likely to occur when goals hold little or no value for the participant, especially when the outcomes may be negative, for example, in Donny’s case, giving up smoking cannabis meant he had no other established skills to relax himself.
In his philosophical accounts of how people decide to do what they do, Frankfurt elaborates on the connection between what a person cares about and what he will, generally or under certain conditions, think it best for himself to do:

A person who cares about something, is at it were, invested [author’s italics] in it. He identifies himself with what he cares about in the sense that he makes himself vulnerable to losses and susceptible to benefits depending on whether what he cares about is diminished or enhanced.

(Frankfurt, 1998, p. 260)

When participants were able to achieve some of their prospective goals, they responded to progress in their goals by maintaining their investment in their future self over the period of the study. Mark was committed to his goals and followed through with them. His values were aligned with the objectives of parole and his compliance was authentic. He was buoyed by the positive changes in other areas of his life:

I speak to the employment agency if there’s any issues. Me and me missus have good goals. I’ve got good contacts with [agency] and they said I could contact them at any time so ... things are going good. I don’t use pot anymore and don’t have anyone in the house that does either. It’s best for the kids and me ... yeah, things are good now.

(Mark, Interview 2)

However, not all participants had the confidence to pursue goals without support from people they deemed in a position to help them and who they had come to rely on for encouragement:

I went to TAFE I done the PEET program, it went for 8 weeks. It just teaches ya’ how ta’ gain employment ... teaches you how to type up resumes. I done that for the whole eight weeks ... got a certificate for it and all. And then all of a sudden they changed parole officers on me.

(Jim, Interview 2 in gaol)

When participants identified with their goals by endorsing them as their own, they were motivated to pursue them when conditions were favourable. This did not mean that all participants were ethically committed to pursuing goals which were aligned with the goals of their supervision conditions. All
of the participants began to use drugs and/or alcohol on re-entry with conscious attempts to self-regulate by reducing the amount and frequency of their consumption, despite the requirement of abstinence as a risk management strategy. However, participants were not invested in abstinence as a goal and attempted to appear as if they were complying with their order by attending mandated programs on the one hand, and avoiding detection on the other. Tests showing substance use exposed their ‘performance’ of compliance, which consequently fed into their negative appraisal of being seen as someone who is incapable of managing a life in the community. Jim’s excerpt shows how his sense of competence and investment in managing risk relied on his relationship with his CCO:

She made me feel that if I'd done something wrong I could go along and say “now listen, I've smoked a bit of pot or yeah, I've used” and she'd say “look it's not the end of the world, it's okay … we’ll work this, we’ll work around this” … without even throwing the word in of gaol again … do you know what I mean? She'd say we’ll work through this, you know I mean? She'd say “look you know I've put this in the report, she’d say that'll be fine, it'll be all fine” Right? But with [another CCO] … if she …. if I walked in and said listen, I've used or I’ve smoked a bit of pot, she'd say “I knew it, I knew it, I told you so” that's pretty much how it’d go, you know what I mean?

(Jim, Interview 2, in gaol)

Resisting controls

The behaviour of resisting controls was characterised by the overt actions of participants to live the way they wanted on parole despite the constraining conditions imposed to correct their non-normative behaviours. Resisting behaviours were influenced by dispositions acquired through historical social-cultural structures and valued identities. Joe wanted to self-govern according to his values and beliefs and had no moral commitment to the norms of society:

The only thing I was doing wrong … was like taking speed once a week and the reason why I was getting’ dirty urines was … was because … it takes so long to get out of your system when you swallow it to what it does when you shoot it up. I should have just shot it up and they would never have got me for a dirty urine, because if you have it that night, it’s gone the next day if you shoot it up … but I didn't want to use needles because that's half the battle
... is using needles, so I thought I’d do it meself but ... in their eyes ... well they don't really care ... they [CCOs] don't give a shit, all they say is I'm doing my job and all I can put it down to ... is they're no good in the goal for what they do ... so they glorify themselves a job out there to get paid big dollars to drive around and interrupt people's lives ... an’ I do not agree with that one bit mate.

(Joe, Interview 2 in gaol)

Resisting behaviours were sometimes the passive actions of participants to avoid their obligations to comply with the conditions of their parole supervision. Nick failed to attend his appointments with his CCO on many occasions, as well as not completing the mandated courses:

Now I just apparently … I got nine months to go. I get out on [date of release] but I don't know why … what’d I do? Probably just didn't go to the appointments or something ... and I would like to get me parole back so I can be on the outside, but I don't think that's going to happen.

(Nick, Interview 2 in gaol)

Participants expressed resistance to being controlled by using undermining or sabotaging behaviours while attending mandated programs. When values about personal and ascribed risk conflicted, or when participants felt that they had had enough of mandated interventions, they responded with increased resistance to the programs carried out by ‘experts’:

Damien: They wanted me to do anger management or somethin’... they been sayin’ that since I got out, but I don’t know if it’s gonna’ happen or not.

Interviewer: Do you think you need to do anger management?

Damien: Nah, it’s just a waste of time.

Interviewer: Didn’t you do that in gaol?

Damien: Nah ... yeah ... I did it in there an’ here. I did it here too, before ... an’ they [group facilitators] walked out on us ... the people runnin’ it (He grins).
Chapter Summary
This chapter presented the empirical findings which led to the discovery of the substantive grounded theory of reautonomising. The concept of reautonomising integrated the major categories and sub-categories grounded in the data and provided an explanation for the resolving behaviour of participants to restore their autonomy.

The major category of crossing the passage boundary involved the structural and psychological conditions which triggered the behaviour of reautonomising. The experience of prison influenced the approach of participants to being on parole and their responses to the institutional rules and structure of the passage they had entered. Participants construed the legitimacy of parole based on their impressions of the supports parole offered and the fairness of the CCOs assigned as authority agents responsible for their supervision. Many of these assumptions were based on their socio-cultural experiences in the past and previous contacts with the criminal justice system.

The major category of determining goals encompassed the deliberations of the participants in deciding goals for action. As a self-reflexive component of reautonomising, determining goals included the intrinsically derived goals of the participants and the goals that they felt compelled to pursue by external pressures. Both types of goals were defined by their value and meaning to the participants and influenced the actions taken by them to restore their autonomy. As a structural property of the parole passage, the length of time on parole influenced the determination of goals. In the action of time framing, participants used a schema of time to determine and organise goals on parole. Court-based parolees who were serving shorter sentences on parole tended to focus on the end date of their sentence and to postpone goals until then. Longer term parolees released by the SPA, were more prepared for parole with specific goals and plans developed as a pre-condition for discretionary release.

Another condition influencing the behaviour of reautonomising was the major category of locating the self. Participants employed the self-reflexive
action of biographing as a means to understand how events and experiences in their lives led to their sense of the person they are now. In the course of their biographical accounts, participants who based their self-concept on who they were in the past were more likely to be attracted to valued past identities and roles, and maintain routine ways of operating in the world. Participants who located a desired self in the future were drawn to pursue personally valued goals and overcome hurdles to achieve desired and valued outcomes. It was in this stage that participants were able to construct a different self—a self-identity and a social status as a ‘normal’ member of the community, rather than as ‘offender’ or ‘crim’. Locating the self in the future was a pivotal step in the process of moving from the primary stage of desistance to the secondary stage of desisting from crime (Maruna & Farrall, 2004; McNeill, 2006) where they were able to internalise a new self and gain positive social acknowledgement of their efforts to change.

The intervening condition of reasoning threats to autonomy encompassed the perceived threats which hindered the reautonomising efforts of the participants. Participants revealed threats to autonomy as pertaining to their negative internal states and to the social-structural conditions constraining their ability to self-govern. Of all the participants in the study, only four articulated goals related a vision of a future self, and two of the four were actively engaged in reaching their goals during their time on re-entry. The remaining participants reported that they would wait until they were free of the restrictions of parole before making plans for what they wanted in life, and were fatalistic about any possibility of a self in the future which included the social status afforded by a steady job and financial independence. Consequently, by deciding to wait until after parole to pursue the life they wanted (a time when they felt they would have control of their lives), participants were susceptible to the cognitive-emotional states of depression, boredom, and disappointment which surfaced as threats to their ability to self-govern.

The self-governing tactics of defaulting, avoiding, investing and resisting controls, were revealed as the main responses employed by participants to resolve their problematic of restoring autonomy. The tactics were often used
in combination or on their own to deal with the psychological and structural conditions perceived as threats to autonomy. Defaulting was a commonly used tactic when novel skills failed or when decisions to act were based on past dispositions which provided a salient basis for behaviours requiring little deliberation. Risk avoidance was a tactic used by participants to maintain compliance to their parole conditions and had the negative consequences of supplanting other needs, such as companionship, work and community as well as being short lasting. Participants used the avoidance tactic to isolate themselves from self-identified and ascribed risks and to protect the self from stigma. In most cases the avoidance tactic was counter-productive and resulted in negative emotional states and opportunities to reinstate previous coping skills.

When participants were invested in their desire to restore autonomy, they were motivated to pursue their goals to achieve positive outcomes. Only two participants had experienced the achievement of goals while on parole. Desires were not enough to carry the majority of participants through the first six months of parole. Despite the supports offered by parole and the discretion given by CCOs to those who had defaulted through limited personal resources or openly resisting the conditions of parole, participants floundered within the first six months of re-entry with six of the total number of participants being returned to gaol.

Resisting controls was a behaviour manifested by the active and passive attempts of participants to assert their autonomy. Resisting was often in opposition to the objectives of the conditions of parole and reflected a clash of values and beliefs about what constituted risk and who was in control. In cases where participants were breached, many had purposely continued with using illicit drugs or covertly sabotaging or passively ignoring mandated conditions.

All of the above mentioned categories are multivariate and dynamic, and were influenced by the conditions and situations experienced by the parolee. As parolees re-entered the community they were faced with the challenges and obligations to lead law-abiding lives by managing offending-related
risks ascribed to them while under the supervision of community corrections. For the participants in the study, success or failure in managing ascribed risk in the first six months of being on parole was embedded in the core pattern of behaviour conceptualised as *reautonomising*. Irrespective of the barriers faced by parolees, be it a conflict of values, a lack of resources, stagnation, doubts, alienation or the pressures of time, the overarching pattern of behaviour to manage these difficulties as they navigated a pathway through the parole passage, was that of *reautonomising*.

This chapter described the substantive categories and their properties that constituted the core category of *reautonomising*. The following chapter illustrates how the theoretical relationships between the substantive categories were examined and how they were integrated to generate a model of the theory to explain what was going on for the participants.
CHAPTER SIX
The Basic Social Process of Reautonomising

Introduction
This study set out to discover how parolees managed ascribed risk on re-entry to the community. In the course of data collection and analysis, managing ascribed risk emerged as a peripheral concern for participants; obscured by their main concern to restore their autonomy. The substantive theory of reautonomising, however, does reveal how participants have inculcated ascribed risk behaviours into their everyday lives and the salience they give to wanting to change those behaviours.

In the fourth stage of the constant comparative process presented in Section 2 of Chapter 4, theory building procedures were used to weave the fractured story back together by conceptualising how the substantive categories related to each other as hypotheses to be integrated into a theory (Glaser, 1978, p. 72). This was accomplished in three ways: by using Glaser’s theoretical coding families to define and explain the relationships between the substantive categories; by sorting the accumulated memos written on the categories and their properties; and finally, integrating the relationships between the substantive categories by conceptualising the behaviour of reautonomising as a three stage basic social process (BSP). The three stages were theoretically coded as orientating to the passage, manoeuvring to optimise autonomy and sustaining autonomy. As discussed in Section 2 of Chapter Four, the culmination of the grounded theory method is in the theoretical rendering of the relationships between the substantive categories grounded in the empirical data. Glaser emphasises that a grounded theory study is not the reporting of facts but the generation of conceptual hypotheses or probability statements about the relationships between concepts which are grounded in empirical data (Glaser, 1998, p. 3, 22).

In this chapter, an overview of the theory of reautonomising is presented. This is followed by a detailed account of each stage of the basic social
By following the classic grounded theory method, all properties and conditions have earned their way into the theory. Concepts are italicised throughout the chapter and incidents drawn from the data are provided to illustrate the theoretical grounding of the basic social process. Following Glaser’s dictum that “all is data” (1998, 2011), relevant extant literature has been woven into the theory to support hypotheses rather than attempting to prove or disprove existing theories.

Overview of the Theory

In the context of the parole setting, the theory of reautonomising was discovered as a pattern of social behaviour employed by individuals to pursue goals to restore a state of self-government. Amid the various philosophical and psychological distinctions of autonomy, the notion of autonomy in this study is derived from the idea of living one’s own life; in effect, to self-govern. The expression ‘getting my life back’ encapsulated in participants’ own words their desire to restore sovereignty over how they lived their life and this core concern was theoretically conceptualised as reautonomising.

The human striving for self-government is considered in the psychological realm as a human need. Needs are understood as self-directed actions towards goals which aim to bring about a state of well-being or a sense of satisfaction. When the need for autonomy is thwarted, the optimal functioning and wellbeing of the person is compromised. In essence, it is important for people to know and feel that they are both author and agent of their lives, and these states cannot be viewed in isolation from the conditions and challenges people face in their everyday lives. Deci & Ryan (1980; 2000) identified three essential nutriments or ‘needs’ for psychological well-being autonomy; autonomy, competence and relatedness. The pursuit of these needs is part of the adaptive design of the human organism and when thwarted by constraining contexts they are likely to be supplanted by alternative or self-protective processes (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 229).
The grounded theory of reautonomising is a pattern of behaviour manifested in response to conditions of prior autonomy deprivation and is explained as the persistent and agentic behaviour of individuals to restore the basic human need to be both the author and agent of their lives, a condition which varies by being gained and lost in perpetual motion over time (Hague, 2011, p.15). As a resolving pattern of behaviour motivated by the need to restore autonomy, the basic social process of reautonomising occurs over time and involves the three stages of orientating to the passage of parole, manoeuvring to optimise autonomy and sustaining autonomy.

When individuals leave prison to serve out the remainder of their sentence on parole, they begin the process of reautonomising by adjusting to their physical environment and setting the course for action. In the process of employing tactics to navigate their way through the parole passage and other competing passages in their life, the efficacy of their self-governing behaviour may not be adequate or sustainable. This can result in sanctions being imposed by the passage control agents, such as a reversal of the forward passage through parole.

**The Basic Social Process**

Basic social processes (BSPs) are *processual*; meaning that there must be at least two clear differentiating stages which account for the variations in the problematic behaviour being studied. According to Glaser, this allows the researcher to conceptually follow the process through each stage by understanding how their properties, conditions and consequences shape and affect each other, without losing grasp of the whole process (Glaser, 1978, p. 97).

The term *basic* emphasises that social processes continue over time and across varying units of social organisation, for example, reautonomising may occur when individuals move out of settings or passages where exercising free choice has been deprived or constrained, such as psychiatric institutions, drug rehabilitation centres, and military organisations.
BSPs are characterised by their pervasiveness; “the fundamental patterned processes in the organisation of social behaviours which occur over time and go on irrespective of the conditional variation of place” (Glaser, 1978, p. 100). In this study, the parole passage is merely a set of varying conditions of the reautonomising process, thus concentrating on the basic processes which shape people’s lives instead of solely their particular units of participation (Glaser, 1978, p. 101). Rather than imputing the process of reautonomising to a particular type of person (such as that of prisoner or parolee), the work of the grounded theorist is to type behaviour not people. Thus individuals are able to move in and out of different patterns of behaviour; to “roam unlabelled and unclassified” (Glaser, 1978, p. 69).

Reautonomising is a process which is also persistent and ideological. It is a persistent process because it is a fundamental social process which is variable and continues over time and is inherent in the human organism to reach a state of psychological well-being. It is also an ideological process driven by the promise of equal opportunities and freedom for all members to achieve the ‘good life’ in traditional Western liberal societies.

Reautonomising is rendered theoretically as a three stage basic social process which links the interaction between the basic social-psychological processes of the individual (BSPP) and the basic social-structural processes (BSSP) inherent in the context of the parole passage. The three stages of the BSP are defined by the theoretical codes of orientating to the passage, manoeuvring to optimise autonomy, and sustaining autonomy. Catalysts which propel parolees from one stage to another are indicated in the properties, dimensions, conditions and consequences of the process of reautonomising. The stages are temporal and dynamic; they overlap, occur simultaneously or move back and forth. Movement between stages was contingent on at least one or more critical events or catalysts influencing the process of reautonomising to facilitate and/or inhibit the transition of individuals through the passage of parole.
The initial stage of the BSP, *orientating to the passage*, explained the responses of parolees to the change from prison to parole. The stage of *orientating to the passage* provided a space to organise and deliberate for potential action and was influenced by the parolee’s internal motivations to be free of controls and authority and to flex his autonomy ‘muscles’.

Whereas Stage 1 of the BSP centred on the processes involved in *orientating to the parole passage* and the determination of goals to restore autonomy, Stage 2 of the BSP, *manoeuvring to optimise autonomy*, was characterised by the actions taken to deal with internal and external structural conditions which both hindered and facilitated their attempts to reautonomise. The tactics of defaulting, avoiding, investing and resisting were employed by participants in their efforts to remain in the passage of parole and to live the lives they wanted to live.

Parolees moved into Stage 3 of the BSP, *sustaining autonomy*, when they were able to act freely and pursue their preferred goals within the institutional structures of the parole passage and those of wider society. When pursued goals contravened the conditions of their parole order, they were subjected to the sanctions applied by their supervising authority which involved warnings and passage reversal.

The stages of the basic social process of reautonomising are shown in Figure 14, followed by a more detailed explanation of each stage of the BSP of reautonomising.
Basic Social Process of Reautonomising

Time in the Passage of Parole

Structural Conditions

![Diagram showing stages of reautonomising]

Psychological Conditions

**Stage 1 Orientating to the passage**

The theoretical code of *orientating to the passage* conceptualised the interaction of the conditions influencing the motivational mechanisms which propelled individuals into action. For parolees in the study, the most critical juncture which triggered the process of reautonomising was the event of *crossing the passage boundary*.

Arnold van Gennep (1960) brought the concept of status passages into the sociological realm with his investigation of rites and ceremonies of social group transitions which have a particular identity or status. Status passages related to the transitions experienced in life are well known, for example, the passages of puberty and marriage, while others are related to transitions made through careers, personal development or educational achievements. Many studies of status transitions have followed since Van Gennep’s work, such as the passage of the dying patient (Glaser & Strauss, 1971), near death...
experiences (Kellehear, 1990), and HIV-Positive gay men (Lewis, 1999). Status passages are characterised by their transitional markers which identify the separation from a former status, the period of transitional reorientation and the integration and recognition of the new status. Kellehear adds; “by these simple social processes people are allocated their individual role and statuses by their communities and associations” (1990, p. 934).

Maruna (2011b) comments that there is a silence surrounding the re-entry of prisoners—a lack of ritual to symbolically recognize their change in status from prisoner to ‘reformed’ citizen. For all parolees in the study, the main focus of re-entry was contained to physical resettlement and the services needed to achieve this (such as housing, locating agencies), more so than rituals to symbolise moral inclusion in collective society. The lack of any collective expressions of moral inclusion in this stage of the process of reautonomising influenced the way parolees attempted to forge a place for themselves in normative society.

The status passage of parole is a symbolic, well-known and undesirable passage, identified by the change of status from prisoner to parolee. The status passage of parole signifies a transitional and conditional status with its own prescribed ‘rites’ and roles which determines whether the ‘passagee’ will move to the next status passage as an ordinary law-abiding citizen.

Like any passage transition, changes in structures have to be accommodated and new procedures and operating guidelines have to be learnt. Parolees had to become familiarised with their physical environment and adjust to their changed social circumstances. Many had re-entered unprepared; relying on family members for accommodation and having little money and few job prospects (Baldry, McDonnell, Maplestone & Peeters, 2006; Borzycki & Baldry, 2003; Petersilia, 2004).

I got out with nothing this time you know. I got out with what I walked out of gaol in and that was it.

(Donny, Interview 1)

All parolees were aware of the expectations of their CCO and the rules they were required to operate under, although knowledge of their risk
management plan was mainly confined to a round of conditions they were required to satisfy, and negotiating with agencies to obtain social security payments and employment. Orientating involved the processes of determining how they could deal with the rules they had to abide by while creating a life for themselves in the community. The imposed conditions of parole put many participants under pressure to abstain from drug/alcohol use while out in the community. These expectations required a high level of self-responsibility and internal locus of control; skills they had been structurally precluded from while in prison (Halsey, 2010, p. 549). For the majority of participants, drinking alcohol and using drugs had been a familiar way of operating in their world:

The last time I had a little bitta’ pot ... [thinking]. That's the extent of my drug use ... a little bit of amphetamines here and there periodically when I was stressed out. But I never had an addiction for the needle or for amphetamines or .... But when it came to smoko [cannabis], well it was something I was raised with and it was relaxing. It sorta’ kept me to meself and away from everybody because there is always a conflict.

(Mark, Interview 2)

Individuals had to contend with not only their degraded status as a parolee with ascribed risks, but they also faced the prospect of social shunning when knowledge of their release was disseminated throughout the community. Re-entry for most parolees meant a return to a largely marginalised existence; one that he experienced before incarceration which only reinforced his fatalistic outlook on his prospects for getting ahead. In this stage of the BSP, participants expressed the pressures they felt under to ‘make a go of it’, and their uncertainty about how to formulate and pursue goals. Jim’s excerpt anchors this point:

You know it’s totally different out here, like you don’t know what’s gunna’ happen next. I’ve got to make some choices about things and get my life back … my family’s been good but I have to make a go of it this time … don’t want to do that to them again.

(Jim, Interview 1)

It was in this stage that parolees employed the biographical action to locate a sense of self. By reflecting on their past and identifying the things they wanted to change, many individuals were motivated to adhere to the
normalising constraints of the parole passage and work towards a ‘possible’ or future self (Markus & Nurius, 1986) by starting future oriented projects or by eschewing behaviours they felt held them back from being the person they wanted to be. Most parolees had inculcated a sense of knowing their place in the world and expressed a fatalistic outlook about changing who they felt they were. When participants spoke of what they wanted to achieve on parole, most reiterated that they wanted to stay off drugs, stop drinking and stay out of prison. ‘Problems’ with substance abuse were understood within a historical and socio-cultural context, Sam explained: “I’ve done it [used cannabis] since I was a kid … we all did.”Giving up these behaviours presented more of a challenge in regards to severing social connections, and finding alternatives to relieve stress and boredom.

For individuals in this stage of the BSP, the capacity to reflect on their past and deliberate on their goals determined their goals and actions. For most, past experiences with the criminal justice system and a strong identification with their past selves influenced, or in some cases by-passed, self-reflexive deliberations to pursue future self-oriented projects.

Parole is a time limited passage, with a certain date of expiry. Despite this certainty, however, the subjective experience of time in the passage was influenced by the way participants ‘framed’ time in relation to their goals and their ability to tolerate imposed structured time. Goffman (1974) defined the concept of framing as an interpretive schema individuals use to “locate, perceive, identify and label occurrences within their life space and the world at large.” (1974, p. 20). In this sense, parolees used time as the mental schema through which they organised their reality. Individuals with short periods left to serve on parole revealed a sense of complacency and minimal desire to deliberate and plan for goals which had little bearing on their lives in the present. For these individuals, the passage presented as ‘dead’ or ‘killed time’ (Goffman, 1961); time filled in between the more consequential parts of life.

Parolees considered their goals for restoring autonomy in terms of the time remaining on their sentence and in terms of the intrusion of controlled time on what they perceived as ‘my time’. Court based parolees often referred to
wasting their time on parole and did not see any difference in spending the remaining months of their sentence in prison, rather, for some it was a routine experience and it gave them an alternative to the tedious or chaotic conditions they were experiencing in the community.

I've been in and out so many times. Like the first time was an experience for me like. But after a while I kept going back and kept going back and kept going back to gaol and you just get used to it … like the routine like the every-day way of being in gaol … you just get so used to it.

(Jim, Interview 1)

For SPA released parolees however, the prospect of returning to prison on a breach meant more time to serve and more efforts to earn a discretionary release again by the SPA.

The level of legitimacy given to the parole passage also influenced the way parolees set the course for action in this stage of the BSP. Parolees were more likely to legitimise the normative aspects of the passage and engage with risk management interventions in a more substantive way when they perceived that the application of restrictions, procedures and management by CCOs was fair and consistent (Rex, 1999; McIvor, 2009; Digard, 2010).

In the stage of orientating, participants had quickly reasoned how they could accommodate to their constraints and the expectations of their CCO in order to do what they wanted. Participants expressed an eagerness to “follow the rules” and “do what they had to do”; a performance of compliance reflecting the symbolic interaction studies in Goffman’s work (1959, 1967). For some parolees, the prescribed conditions of parole aligned with their own assessment of their risk of re-offending, and they were prepared to comply and accept support. Others however, resented being ‘corrected’ and discredited the notion that the behaviours they had been engaged in for most of their adult lives were risks. Formal risk assessments and categorisations of their ‘needs’ had no bearing on their own estimations of what they needed – to be left alone. Participants sought to find the loopholes or vulnerabilities in the power structure, as a way to deal with the
constraints of the parole passage, for example, looking for a ‘good’ parole officer (CCO) who would allow them ‘to make a few mistakes’.

**Stage 2 Manoeuvring to optimise autonomy**

Whereas Stage 1 of the BSP theoretically explained the structural and psychological tensions in adapting to the passage of parole and setting a course for action, Stage 2 of the BSP explained the manoeuvring behaviours employed by participants to optimise their autonomy as they interacted with the constraining and enabling structures of parole and the wider community. It was within the interstitial space between the self and the power structures of the passage where conflict and tension arose, where past disappointments were repeated and occasionally, their lives were transformed by supports, opportunities and self-fulfilment.

In order to optimise autonomy, individuals used behaviours which operated on a continuum between the dimensions of compliance and resistance. Behaviours were influenced by the level of external intrusion, the internal capacity of individuals for critical self-reflection and the scope of skills available to them in order to self-govern.

One of the commonly used tactics of participants was the behaviour of *performance compliance*. This tactic allowed for the parolee to preserve a sense of being able to self-govern according to his own needs while at the same time appearing to meet the requirement of his parole conditions. In a similar vein to the ‘short-term requirement compliance’ identified by Bottoms (2001), and further developed as ‘formal compliance’ by Robinson and McNeill (2008), *performance compliance* focused on technically meeting the requirements of the parole order “without engaging seriously or meaningfully with it” (Robinson & McNeill, 2008, p. 434).

With the expiry of their sentence within reach, court-based parolees viewed the conditions of their parole as interfering in their lives; they wanted to wait-out their sentence by living the way they wanted while paying lip-service to the restrictions imposed on them. Participants used the tactics of avoiding and defaulting both simultaneously and on their own to preserve a sense of their personhood and to follow the ‘rules’.
Dworkin’s (1981, p. 212) philosophical accounts of autonomy suggests that individuals can reflectively choose to act in ways which, although not aligned with their authentic first preference desires and goals, will accept or endorse alternative actions under constraining conditions as part of a larger set of desires and goals. He states more succinctly:

We only consider ourselves as being interfered with, as no longer acting on our own free will, when we find certain reasons for acting painful.

(Dworkin, 1988, p. 378)

While in this liminal state, parolees passed the time with mundane activities:

Interviewer: Okay so in the time that you've been waiting, what have you been doing?

Jim: Um, just pokin’ around the house ... just doing ah ... going to me courses on alcohol. I ... um that's about it really... yeah.

(Jim, Interview 1)

The process of reautonomising was not always guided by moral commitments to the established norms of the community. For some participants, resistance to the constraining shape and structure of parole served as an expression of their autonomy; a means of asserting a sense of control over their present circumstances with little commitment to the higher principles of a shared way of living and respecting the autonomy of others. Actions to preserve a sense of self based on past social-cultural dispositions and experiences clashed with the imposition of risk management practices aimed at moving the parolee into a field of uncertainty, thus creating the space for the parolee to employ manoeuvring tactics to preserve the status quo.

It doesn’t matter what they [parole] say or do to ya’... when ya’ get out, you’re gunna’ dabble [use drugs] ... just to get back into the scene ... to relax yourself.

(Donna, Interview 2)

The subjective experience of time featured in the way parolees lived in the present and endured the passing of time. By focusing on the parole expiry
date as the time when they would be free to move about and not be tied to
their reporting obligations, many participants placed themselves in a self-
induced liminal state where they were vulnerable to the emotional stressors
of depression and boredom. To relieve these negative states many employed
their familiar coping skills, such as consuming alcohol, using drugs and
seeking out old companions. This behaviour was especially true for court-
based parolees, who had predicted that a short period of self-restraint by
avoiding risks was manageable, and were not deterred by breaching their
parole by violating the technical conditions:

Interviewer: If you had a test that came up positive for drinking and
you were breached, how would that affect you?

Damien: It wouldn't affect me at all really.

Interviewer: Not at all? That would mean serving the rest of your
parole time in gaol ... how would that go?

Damien: It'd be all right.

(Damien, Interview 2)

During this transitional stage of re-entry the opportunity for parolees to
draw on their initial re-entry intentions to ‘get it right this time’ (Jim,
Interview 1.) was lost. Parolees followed the direction of their CCOs to
concentrate on the factors assessed as related to their offending, such as
their addictions and anger, in isolation to other areas of their lives which
may have had a greater impact for restoring their autonomy and desisting
from crime (for example, a success in a course at the TAFE, gaining
employment, or managing a challenging situation with drug using
associates). It was in this stage also, that protective factors such as support
from family and employment became more fragile, with family members
imposing more demands and expectations on them and offers of
employment did not come to fruition.

Stage 3 Sustaining autonomy
The third stage of the BSP of reautonomising is sustaining autonomy.
Sustaining autonomy involved the behaviours of investing and persisting.
Participants were sensitive to the social barriers they faced on re-entry.
When services were slow to respond to their urgent attempts to find work,
they felt powerless to make things happen and resigned themselves to
waiting “until something comes up” (Nick, Interview, 1). Although invested in their commitment to rejoin society by setting themselves up with suitable accommodation and a ‘good’ job, many of the parolees in the study did not persist with their commitments. With no previous employment history or references to render them employable, parolees felt that it was pointless trying.

To help elaborate on the generated properties of the stage of sustaining, and to support the propositions of the theory, data was also drawn from media accounts of parolee experiences in the community. An episode of the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) documentary series Four Corners called Road to Return (Carney, 2007), focused on the experiences of three NSW prisoners released on parole. Transcripts from the interviews in this episode provided more data for the study, with Robert, one of the recently released parolees, conveying his sense of fatalism about being able to ‘make it’ on the outside:

Robert: What happens is, you never stop paying for your past. You see, the system sees once you’re released, that’s it, you’ve paid your debt. Once you’re released that’s the start of paying your debt. That’s the beginning of you feeling totally worthless. You know why? You have no job, and it’s very hard to get one. So you see, gaol to me is a better place to be.

Sustaining autonomy relied on the ability to be supported and recognised for attempts to invent a new identity on release (Maruna, 2001). In his interview for the documentary, Robert expresses his feelings of despair in his liminal and marginal existence, with little hope of having a ‘better life’ in the community:

Robert: I’m not drinking or drugging. I mean, I have a couple of drinks and a few cones, and I won’t lie about that, but nowhere to the extent that I used to. I’m trying to be functional. I’m trying to live accordingly to what they say rehabilitation is. And this is not what it’s produced. And please believe me, no human being deserves to live like this. No-body, no one with a bit of respect for themselves deserves to live like this. So what do you do? Do I go out thieving again to get a better life? That’s not the answer. The answer is I need help. And the reality is, there’s none available.

All parolees in the study were able to sustain varying degrees of autonomy within the spaces between the constraining and enabling structures of parole
and the wider community. For the parolees, sustaining autonomy was influenced by a sense of the self embedded in past practices; the ‘habitus’ (Bourdieu, 1980) or schema through which they conducted their lives in the present. This influence was evident in the defaulting tactics used by all of the parolees when their initial efforts to avoid ascribed risks broke down through boredom, lack of support, or the need for companionship. The triggering point for defaulting tactics involved a sense of fatalism as well as a drive to revert to familiar behaviours which could give them some comfort or relief (for example drugs and alcohol, returning to old neighbourhoods).

In the grounded theory research conducted by Halsey, Armstrong and Wright (2017) exploring the process of desistance, the cutting point for the mood of desperation and fatalism felt by participants in their study was captured in the words of participants as “fuck it” moments. A similar mood was revealed in this study, as it was in these moments that reautonomising involved defaulting—a return to behaviours which reinforced and confirmed a past sense of self more so than striving to sustain a future (and somewhat unknown) sense of self.

To be employed and financially independent was a desired goal for all but four participants, who were placed back on the disability pensions that they were receiving before going to prison. One parolee had resumed his self-employed position on release, while the remaining nine parolees were receiving New Start social security allowances and were referred to various job search agencies. It is within this stage of sustaining autonomy that the level of personal investment in efforts to self-govern had broken down. The lack of employment opportunities for parolees who returned to small communities exacerbated their feelings of exclusion, and eroded their confidence and motivation for change.

When goals were relinquished through lack of access to autonomy supports, a space was opened up for compensatory behaviours to satisfy their need to feel worthwhile, and to cope with associated negative emotions such as depression and boredom. Sustaining autonomy was considered in light of the parts of the participant’s life that had the most meaning and value to him. Family relationships, financial stability and a sense of recognition were
mentioned by all participants in the study as being important to their overall feelings of well-being.

All participants had the domain of drug and/or alcohol use ascribed to them as a risk factor associated with re-offending. Those with higher score loadings on the domain were required to submit urine tests as well as attend interventions offered by community agencies and groups facilitated by COS. Between the time of re-entry and their first interview (approximately six weeks), all participants had used drugs and alcohol, albeit intermittently and covertly to avoid detection and sanction. It is within this context that investment in their stated goals to self-govern was not sustained.

For those participants who perceived the constraints of abstinence enforced by their parole supervision as a threat to their need for autonomy (to be in control of their own lives), being risk-averse was not centred on their ascribed risk factor (Alcohol/Drug use), but on the likelihood of detection and possible sanction. Where CCOs worked with parolee participants to broker assistance for them when lapse to drug use was revealed by confession or by positive drugs in urine tests, participants managed to stave off being breached and remained in the community (Paul, Mark and Donny had co-operated with their CCO to attend drug intervention programs). Of the five participants who had breached their parole and were interviewed in the prison (not including the two who had breached parole and were unavailable for interview) drug use was seen by them to have contributed to their offending (Joe, Jim, Lenny, Nick and Sam).

Parolees who had been using drugs before (and in) prison, were drawn back into these behaviours by overwhelming visceral and affective urges which by-passed their capacity for critical reflective action to maintain control. Self-governing tactics which ran counter to the compliance conditions of the passage often went undetected. In these instances, parolees were involved in ‘the game of luck’ (Goffman, 1967, p.149). The following excerpt illustrates how quickly Joe returned to his drug use to ‘celebrate’ in terms of a personal ritual for re-entry despite the conditions imposed by parole:
Joe: I’d got out of gaol … I don’t drink and I just wanted to celebrate getting out of gaol and that’s it. Listen, I love having a shot there’s nothing better.

Interviewer: So how soon after, when you got out of gaol did you have the shot?

Joe: That afternoon [laughs] … [laughs again]. Just a celebration. Most people go … everybody … I know that gets out of gaol either goes to the pub or, you know … goes and gets drunk, does this does that. I don’t do that … I want to be with my family so … I got a shot on the way home … had it … and that was it.

(Joe, Interview 1)

Participants identified the critical points where their efforts to self-govern broke down as being related to internal states, for example, “I wasn’t thinking”, and “it just happened”, and external conditions which also influenced negative internal states, for example, “nothing was happening”, “they didn’t get back to me” (Jim, Interview 1). Relying on external supports placed parolees in a vulnerable state of feeling inadequate and ‘different’. In this stage, the affective state of feeling worn down by having to persist without results exceeded tolerance levels and as a result, many participants relinquished their goals of abstinence from drugs and/or alcohol and resumed old ways of operating.

All participants had experienced previous contact with the criminal justice system as probationers and/or recidivists, and were wary and critical of formal authority agents; often seen as a threat to their autonomy. Prevailing dispositional attitudes were, for some parolees, reinforced by their interactions with their CCO, and had spilled over to their interactions with agents and staff of social security, housing and welfare services. Many parolees felt the stigmatising effects of being judged as ‘unworthy’ of supports. Negative emotional states were exacerbated by having to wait for long periods for support services and by having every facet of their lives scrutinised by agents in control of the services. Participants tended to avoid agencies and charitable organisations and attempted to manage on their own, or to rely on family supports in order to avoid exposing themselves to further humiliations and negative evaluations by others.
Whose gunna’ give you a job? You’re a parolee mate … been there, done that. I’m not doin’ nothing until I’m off it [parole].

(Joe, Interview 1)

During this stage, parolees experienced disappointment in not being able to realise their aspirations for a better life in concrete ways. Many had attended programs and courses as part of their case management plan whilst in prison, and had expected that they would now receive more practical help on parole to live a conventional life, rather than repeat the same kind of programs while on parole. However, the reality they faced on re-entry did not match their anticipation of a possible future. One parolee grounded the reality of the barriers encountered when trying to participate in normal society on release; “we’ve been sold a lemon” (Joe, Interview 2).

Participants expressed strong affective feelings of being treated according their master risk status; as if they were incapable of making decisions and managing their lives. Gergen (2011, p. 206) comments, that “when individuals are held singly responsible for their untoward actions in this way, the web of relations in which the individual is enmeshed are left unexplored”.

Summary of the BSP

The basic social process of reautonomising is a pervasive, persistent and ideological process which occurs over time, modelled theoretically by the three stage process of orientating to the passage, manoeuvring to optimise autonomy and sustaining autonomy. All stages were influenced by the interaction of basic social-structural processes (BSSPs) and basic social-psychological processes (BSPPs) which interacted to provide the catalysts to move from one stage to another.

The first stage of the BSP, orientating to the passage, explained how psychological processes of self-reflection and deliberation were involved in the determination of restorative autonomy seeking goals. This stage set the course for action and explained the tensions between pursuing goals which mattered to the parolee and the risk management practices of community
corrections. The four individuals who were mobilised towards a vision of a future self (Markus & Nurius, 1986), chose actions to advance their self-projects while those individuals with a self-concept embedded in the past, chose actions to maintain practices which had been consistently embedded in their social field (Bourdieu, 1980). The main emphasis in this stage of the process was on the self-reflexive capacity of individuals to make choices which would lead to restoring autonomy. A time framing schema was not only used in locating a sense of self, but was also employed in determining their goals according to time to serve on parole which set the course to move into the action stage of the BSP.

As parolees moved into Stage 2, *manoeuvring to optimise autonomy*, future-oriented individuals used tactics to move through the passage, driven by goals which were determined by them to be in their best interests. This stage explored the tensions between the desire to be the agent and author of their own lives and the constraining pressures of the risk management practices and structure of the parole passage. The restoration of autonomy was found to be a dimensional phenomenon, reliant on the enabling and constraining social structures for its restoration. When tactics were used to restore autonomy, irrespective of moral commitments being aligned with risk management practices, individuals moved to Stage 3 of the BSP: *sustaining autonomy*.

Time in Stage 3 was variable and was primarily influenced by the value and meaning given to personal goals, the level of investment and persistence in pursuing goals over time. Where goals were not intrinsically derived (authentic goals), and structural supports were inaccessible or not offered, manoeuvring tactics broke down over time and resulted in defaulting or resisting behaviours. When detected by the CCO, sanctions were applied and the parolee’s conditional status in the passage was compromised.

The remainder of the chapter includes the salient features of the BSP in the discussion of the substantive grounded theory of *Reautonomising: Shaping the Passage of Parole*. 
Reautonominising: Shaping the Passage of Parole

The aim of this research was to understand how parolees manage ascribed risk on re-entry. By using the grounded theory procedures, the behaviour of reautonomising conceptualised the social behaviour of participants to restore their autonomy. In this section of the chapter, the substantive grounded theory of reautonomising: shaping the passage of parole is discussed as a process which is concerned with the interstitial space between the agentic behaviours of the individual and the structures of parole and the wider society. It is in this space that subtle power relations are played out by the practices of parolees as they engage with the institutional power of the correctional complex. Rather than examining the dynamics between the correspondence of power, agency and structure from an ontological perspective of subjectivism or objectivism, the social behaviour of reautonomising is examined from a critical realist perspective, informed by the theoretical contributions of Giddens (1979, 1990), Foucault (1988, 1991b), and Bourdieu (1977, 1980). By examining the practice of reautonomising through the lens of these varying theories of the relationship between structure and agency, answers to the research question: how do parolees manage ascribed risk, were clarified.

Giddens (1979; 1987) offered his Structuration theory as an adequate conceptualisation of social action by reconstructing the concepts of structure and agency (Baber, 1991). He re-conceptualised structure as “both the medium and outcome of the practices which constitute social systems” (Giddens 1981, p. 27) and in doing so he rejected the identification of structure exclusively with constraint; in his theory, structure was both constraining and enabling (Baber, 1991, p. 222).

In contrast to Giddens’ (1979, p. 65) idea that structures are not enduring entities but “exist in the moments of the constitution of the social system”, Foucault’s (1978, 1988, 1991) work examined the dynamics of power between the State and its subjects, where the State takes on the responsibility of managing and disciplining populations through a series of interventions and regulatory controls: “a bio-politics of the population” (1978, p. 139). Foucault coined the term ‘bio-power’ to explain the diverse
techniques of the State to achieve the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations through political, economic and institutional processes (Foucault, 1978, p. 140), and the way people are themselves produced by, and subject to the forces of biopower (Danaher, Schirato & Webb, 2000, p.74). It is through these regulative discursive processes where norms are constituted—through systems of classification to sort out the genuine subjects—the particular kinds of individuals who would be named as ‘normal’ subjects and those who do not meet the criteria of being ‘real’ (reasonable and reasoning) human beings (Danaher, Schirato & Webb, 2000, p.126).

Institutional risk assessment instruments (such as the LSI-R) and other modes of separation and classification used by CSNSW can be seen in Foucauldian terms as technologies of power; objectifying and differentiating individuals by submitting them to certain ends or domination in order to regulate their behaviour (Foucault, 1988, p. 18). The use of these technologies highlight the paradox of parolee management, where discourses and practices coerce the classified and ‘different’ (publicly shamed) subject to work on the self in order to be accepted into ‘normal subject’ ranks. Although constituted as subjects by government practices of power and normalisation, Foucault’s writings also emphasised that individuals are not ‘docile bodies’ helplessly moved about by the technologies of power, but are capable of responding to and resisting these practices by using their own means to operate on their thoughts and conduct—as technologies of the self (Foucault, 1988, p. 18; Danaher, Schirato & Webb, 2000, p. 128). In this manner, power and agency are never divorced; a position consistent with Giddens’ view that structure is both enabling and constraining (Akram, Emerson & Marsh, 2015, p. 349).

In line with the structuralist movement of the time, Bourdieu’s (1977, 1980) sociological theories dismantled the dichotomy of objectivist-subjectivist treatment of social action with his synthesising conceptual arsenal of the notions of *field*, *habitus*, and *capital* to investigate the relations of power, structure and agency. The concept of *field* bridges the social spaces between structure and agency, and contains the fluid sets of activities, hierarchies and institutions which produce and reproduce certain discourses and practices,
such as careers, professions or social class groupings (Crawshaw & Bunton, 2009, p. 270).

It was in and between fields that specific power relations operated and where the parolees struggled to obtain the resources and opportunities to reautonomise. The schemas by which parolees perceived, judged and acted in the field were acquired through lasting exposure to social conditions and conditionings, and were often shared by people subjected to similar experiences, such as family and peer groups.

For Bourdieu (1977, 1980), the *habitus* are systems of durable transposable dispositions produced by social structures and producing practices patterned after the social structures that spawned them (Navarro, 2006, p. 16). Put more simply, the habitus can be defined as the product of structure, producer of practice, and reproducer of structure.

*Capital* refers to any valued resource available to individuals in a given social arena which enables them to appropriate the specific profits arising out of participation and contest within it. Bourdieu (1986) sees resources functioning as capital within a ‘social relation of power’ because this is precisely what determines value upon resources after interest is manifested (and/or disputed) (Navarro, 2006, p. 16). Capital can be in different forms (economic, cultural, social and symbolic) creating distinct forms of hierarchies and volumes of power. For example in Western society, possessing a low level of education may convey both symbolic and cultural capital which may then be linked to low social status and economic capital (Crawshaw & Bunton, 2009, p. 270). Effectively, this means that any individual, group or institution in a social space with the highest volume and composition of capitals has the most power to contest their position in the field. Crawshaw & Bunton add:

“Bourdieu’s theory of practice, where practice refers to ‘what people do’, is thus premised upon understanding the relationship between individual practice, the fields in which such practices take place, the power relations at work within those fields and what he describes as the habitus”.

(Crawshaw & Bunton, 2009, p. 270)
It is in Bourdieu’s critiques of the domination of systems with the most political, cultural and symbolic capital that power is examined as a form of *symbolic violence*; the imposition of systems of action which separate the dominant from the subordinate and which solidifies and legitimises structures of inequality (Wacquant, 2008).

Bourdieu’s work illuminates how institutional discourses and practices and wider social structures determined the actions or ‘practice’ of parolees as they entered the field of parole, and how reautonomising conceptualised their struggle for power within the field.

The immediate and residual effects of imprisonment on individuals can help understand the way social, cultural and structural influences can implicitly and explicitly structure behaviours and dispositions in powerful ways (Crawshaw & Bunton, 2009, p. 270). These effects were revealed by sociological and criminological studies which identified and described the various cultural, behavioural and social impacts of imprisonment; the most well-known of these being Clemmer’s ‘prisonisation’ (1940) and the ‘pains of imprisonment’ in the work by Sykes (1958). Goffman’s (1961) sociological investigation into total institutions introduced the ‘spoiled identity’ and ‘degradations of the self’ as theoretical insights into not only the effects of these institutions on the images of the self, but exposed the importance of the self in contexts where individuals have limited power, resources and control of their self-images (Branaman, 2010).

The dispositions and practices inculcated from the prison environment and the stark deficits in economic and social capital, let alone symbolic capital of the status as parolee, all combined to set the scene for the struggle to regain personal power in the field of parole. Travis and Petersilia (2001, p. 301) note:

> Prisoners moving through the high-volume, poorly designed assembly line [of corrections] … are less well prepared individually for their return to the community and are returning to communities that are not well prepared to accept them.

After living in an isolated, secure and ordered environment characterised by autonomy deprivation and degradations of the self (Goffman, 1961),
prisoners are released to parole with a considerable handicap to continue their sentence under the auspices of Community Corrections:

Parole serves the public interest by ensuring offenders are supervised and supported during reintegration, and reduces the likelihood of recidivism. It provides a more effective way of protecting the public than would a more sudden release of an offender at sentence expiry, without assistance and supervision.

(NSW Department of Justice State Parole Authority Annual Report 2015, p. 8)

The prescribed conditions of the parole passage, serves to continue the carceral ‘gaze’ (Foucault, 1975/1991) over individuals to give the community confidence in the steps taken to ensure their safety from the possible harm of parolees re-offending. The mainstay of service provision by Community Corrections is underpinned by risk technologies which focus on the assessment of the individual’s weaknesses; those areas which have been identified as causes of his irrationality and inability to self-govern according to the established norms of autonomous participation in the community.

Viewed through the lens of Foucault’s (1991b) governmentality thesis of disciplinary technologies and the symbolic violence concept in Bourdieu’s examination of power in fields (1980), the parolee is in a position where he is separated out and seen as un-governable. The two perspectives appear to de-emphasise the self-reflexive subject by privileging external structures, (a perspective Giddens (1984) tried to refashion in his theory of Structuration), however it is clear that both perspectives consider agents as capable of reflexivity as they interpret and act within the interstitial structures of power relations: viewed as fields of knowledge, discourses, games of truth, subjectivities and dispositions that apply within contexts (fields).

In this study, the acquisition by parolees of all forms of capital necessary for re-integration was severely limited by the deprivation of resources in the prison, access to supportive structures in the community, and the controlled and regulated conditions of parole which restricted the parolee’s opportunities to lead the ‘normal’ life he so desired. This runs counter to the legitimised coercive application of risk management practices and
interventions of the governing authority (CSNSW), that the parolee, as subject, must be a rational and prudent self-manager who possesses the capital (for example social and economic) to achieve citizen status at the end of his parole.

The dominant Western liberal ideology permeating contemporary culture sees the individual as a self-knowing subject capable of controlling his or her thoughts and action (Danaher, Schirato & Webb, 2000, p. 30) and is by extension, contained in the notion of autonomy as being “one’s own person, directed by considerations, desires, conditions and characteristics that are not simply exposed externally on one but are part of what can somehow be considered as one’s authentic self” (Christman & Anderson, 2005, p. 3).

Parolees experienced the pressure of the wider community to conform to the norms of conventional living and to comply with his supervision conditions as a pre-requisite to remain in the community. However, the expectations of the controlling State authority and those of the wider society far outweighed the lived reality of the parolee.

As an institutionally identified (ungovernable) ‘risk subject’, he is separated out from the normal society through divisive risk practices of categorisation, labelling, specific treatments and retention of criminal records and registers (sex offenders, violent offenders). The irony of the technologies of ascribing risk to individuals is that “risk only becomes something calculable when it is spread over a population” (Ewald, 1991, p. 203). Reith comments that risk information and calculation of risk probability can provide plenty of information about certain events “but cannot tell us about the individual case: and how we fit into future scenarios, or whether it is applicable to us at any particular moment in time” (Reith, 2004, p. 397).

As ‘knowledgeable actors’, parolees employed various means of playing the system with small acts of defiance to “challenge the givenness of the situational power relations” (Ewick & Silbey, 2003, p. 1331). As a means of ‘secondary adjustments’ (Goffman 1961) or ‘weapons of the weak’ (Scott, 1985), parolees were able to “accommodate to power while simultaneously protecting their interests and identities” (Ewick & Silbey, p. 1329). The impact of prison life and their perceptions of what was possible for them to
achieve on parole became the central feature of the practices employed by parolees to restore their autonomy, which in turn shaped their experience of parole. Armed with few resources to call upon, the tactics used to optimise their autonomy often increased their subordination in the power structure between themselves and parole. For some of the parolees, the more powerless they felt in their relationships with their CCO, and their interactions with wider social structures, the more they retreated to past practices. Ewick & Silbey comment:

“Perceptions of authority and power, including assessments of legitimacy and injustice, are necessary to act in any social system; they generate conformity to social expectations at the same time as they permit and sometimes encourage resistance to norms, authority, and power”.

(Ewick & Silbey, 2003, p. 1333)

Risk management as the dominant system in the field of corrections, is responsive to political and public pressures, and when isolated failures in the system occurs, it responds with more stringent and consequently more punitive actions to shore up public confidence in the ability of the system to manage (for example: “Murderer Andrew McGrath could be the subject of a ‘high risk’ offender extended supervision order”, 2016). As a result of threats to the legitimacy of the field, more creative technologies have been invented to increase the cultural capital of the dominant systems for them to persist with their status and role in the market of competing fields. The number of offence-targeted cognitive-based therapies (CBT) contained in the CSNSW Compendium of Behaviour Change Programs has increased, each with specific entry and exit criteria, offering ten addiction-based interventions, six aggression/violence programs and nine sex offender interventions which include a program for ‘deniers’.

Despite the sophistication of risk technologies and treatments informing practice, the parolees in the study did not see the management of risks ascribed to them as their main concern. Risk was perceived objectively by the parolees; as something which had to be included in their determinations of getting through the parole passage – as a ‘rule’ to be complied with. In playing the ‘game’ of the field (Bourdieu,1980), parolees in the study were passive in their engagement with the objectives of ‘addressing risk factors’
and used manoeuvring tactics in order to optimise their chances to live the life they wanted.

Really, all I’m thinking about is getting parole over and done with. Once parole is over and done with I'm right. I can start thinking about other stuff...

(Paul, Interview 1)

The study revealed that the process of reautonomising was underpinned by the notion of the self as an integral component of restoring autonomy. The concept of the self, as Mead (1934) contended, is comprised of the social feedback one receives from others and one’s attitude towards oneself in terms of this feedback. A sense of ‘who one is’ is developed from this continuous feedback loop. As such, social recognition is important for the development and maintenance of the self (as social and cultural capital) and as an essential component of one’s personhood. Kitwood defined personhood as a relational concept:

“… a standing or status that is bestowed upon one human being by others, in the context of relationship and social being. It implies recognition, respect and trust”.

(Kitwood, 1997, p. 8)

Chapter Summary
When speaking of the threats to restoring autonomy, parolees revealed the complexities of the internal and external barriers which interacted and influenced the achievement of their goals. Most of the parolees in the study returned to routine practices, shaped by past events and structures. As they operated in the field, they also shaped the constraining structures of parole, for example, a positive urine test changed the operation of the parole structure with the imposition of more control and monitoring. This response from the passage agents in turn, influenced the attitudes towards their CCO and the system as a whole by reinforcing old beliefs or creating a schema of new beliefs (Bourdieu, 1984).

When supports were not available, or interactions with support services were negative, dispositional systems became more entrenched and created
negative feelings of rejection, depression and projected anger. Meeting the essential material needs of re-entering prisoners (such as housing, finances and employment) has long been argued as essential for the reintegration of prisoners re-entering the community (Baldry, McDonnell, Maplestone & Peeters, 2006; Petersilia, 2004), however many of the services available were not accessed by parolees in this study because of felt stigma, ignorance of resources available, and negative experiences of rejection because of their criminal record.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Implications and Conclusion

Introduction
The first section of this chapter discusses the implications for practice which arose from the grounded theory of reautonomising. These implications are by no means exhaustive, but include the most salient factors revealed in the basic social process of reautonomising. The remaining section of the chapter contains the conclusion of the study.

Implications
The research began with an aim to understand how parolees managed ascribed risk on re-entry to the community. This interest was in response to seeing the steady flow of parolees coming back to prison after spending only a few months on parole. As a correctional psychologist-practitioner and concerned citizen, it was felt that an investigation into this phenomenon was warranted. The study revealed that parolees were concerned with restoring their autonomy, and the pattern of behaviour used to resolve this concern was conceptualised as reautonomising. The theory of reautonomising revealed that parolees only attempted to manage ascribed risk if it posed a threat to their goal to ‘get their lives back’. The interaction between the organisational structures of CSNSW and the subjectivities of the parolee provided an examination of the complex power relationships between the two and the implications for how CSNSW avoid the unintended risks of risk governance.

The way organisations organise risk provides a useful means to examine the implications for NSW correctional managers and practitioners in this section of the chapter. The recent work of Hardy and Maguire (2016) offers an explanation of three modes of risk in organisations dominated by risk discourses and practices such as CSNSW.
**Implications for managers**

The implications for managers of organisations (such as CSNSW) lies in the different modes of the dominant discourse of risk which leads organisations to normalise risk in particular ways and why it may be difficult to change even when they are ineffective. Hardy & McGuire’s Foucauldian analysis of organisations situated in risk discourse, identified three different modes of organising risk: the first mode is the prospective organising of risk through formal assessment techniques to predict harms and hazards and to avoid or minimise them through effective risk management; the second mode of organising risks occur in real time by implementing predetermined plans and protocols to control risks and contain their consequences; and thirdly, the retrospective organisation of risk to review and analyse how risks have occurred and how to improve the organisation of risk in the future (Hardy & McGuire, 2016, p. 81).

It is within these modes that the organisation of risks are normalised, and in certain situations the modes vary in effectiveness. This can be seen in the efforts of CSNSW to call for more effective methods of risk assessment to counter the high recidivism rates of offenders released to parole. However, enacting alternative ways of organising risk requires resisting the dominant discourse of risk because the power relations associated with this discourse privilege certain forms of knowledge and authorise certain risk identities over others, which may, as Hardy and Maguire note, contribute to greater ‘riskification’, as organising is intensified in the name of risk (Hardy & McGuire, 2016, p. 82). Implications for CSNSW managers centre on their preparedness to research these modes of risk organisation and to withstand the dominant discourses of risk in order to bring about change which may be more effective in the control and management of risk.

Breaking down the practices that objectify groups of individuals as they enter the community may be one step towards challenging the normalisation of risk and identity through organisational discourse. Foucault used the concept of discourse and discursive fields in his writings to explain how the power of language, texts and practices can operate as forms of knowledge (as ‘truths’) through institutional settings to constitute and govern subjects (1978, 1988). It is in these practices, relayed from policy-makers down to
the CCO working with parolees at the coal-face, that continue to objectify the individual in terms of the ‘truths’ of knowledge produced through organisational practices (for example, statistical risk assessments) and by conferring specific social identities (high-risk offender) and directing management and control of risk (assessed risk factors) through evidence-based practices. Resisting discourse within these power relations may be a challenge, however, as Foucault comments discourses provide “a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy” (1978, p. 101).

The reliance on prospective modes of risk organisation reifies the expert knowledge of risk as authoritative, unbiased and scientifically objective (for example, the expertise of risk assessment) and reduces the risk knowledge of lay people merely as perceptions or subjective distortions of ‘real’ risks, notwithstanding that the derivation of objective measurement and identification of risk is based on human constructions of risk. A challenge for CSNSW managers is to draw on alternative discourses such as participation, deliberation and precaution to include more stakeholders, increase public involvement and introduce lay knowledge (Hardy & Maguire, 2016, p. 87; Stirling, 2008).

The mode of real-time risk organisation in contrast to prospective predictive risk organisation relies on the built in planning for risks which materialise in the present. In the site of parole, this mode of risk organisation centres on formal actions to manage non-compliance with legal directives of the parole order and directives administered by CCOs (such as reporting, attendance to programs). Implications for managers in this mode of risk organisation focus on the ability of the CCO to recognise the signs of parolee distress and needs which may exist outside the realm of structured and objective risk factors.

The mode of retrospective risk organisation is evident in the enquiries into offenders who commit serious crimes while on parole. This mode of retrospective organisation of risk often fails because it uses narrow terms of reference and is likely to call for the restoration of existing systems albeit with minor amendments, for example an incompetent risk analysis by particular actors rather than the inadequacy or fallibility of the risk
assessment process. Holistic accounts of the past crafted in inquiries often fail as a basis for change because they often involve only partial accounts of risk. More successful retrospective inquiry requires the convergence of knowledge from combination of views and accounts which offer multi-causal explanations rather than identifying a single culprit or cause.

*Resources*

One of the main issues revealed in the study was the lack of interventions offered in the prison which could have articulated with case management carried out under supervision in the community. The lack of resources and the punitive measures of holding prisoners back from release when their non-parole period has expired contributes to the ‘pains of imprisonment’ and denudes the legitimacy of CSNSW to carry out their objectives to reduce re-offending. A recent Audit Office NSW report declared:

In the years 2015–16, 75 per cent of prisoners with an identified program need reached the earliest date they could be released on parole without completing a program. These prisoners are often released with no intervention in prison to address their offending, or refused parole and held in prison longer.

Audit Office of NSW (3 May 2017)

This is especially true for court-based parolees, who often slip through the cracks. They are a mobile group of prisoners, often moving from one gaol to another or to court attendances and back, and were often excluded from programs because of their short non-parole period. Prisoners released by SPA, on the other hand, are required to engage in rehabilitation programs while in prison and to have a satisfactory plan for managing their risk when they are released to the community. Rituals to enter the passage of parole can be rigorous and demanding and often result in delay in discretionary release by the SPA if the prisoner cannot access the program at the centre of his classification or has to go on a waiting list.
Court-based parolees in this study found that their voluntary efforts to attend programs in prison were restricted:

Interviewer: so while you were in for that period of time, did you go to any courses or?

Paul: they don't even do them ... they didn't do them, you know they say they do but they don't ... I got no help in gaol really ... except from [name] the um chaplain she was she was probably the one most who helped me out

(Paul, Interview 1)

Given that statistical studies show that many court-ordered parolees were returning on technical breaches during the short periods that they served on parole, correctional managers need to investigate more creative alternatives to encourage compliance with orders, apart from warnings and breaching parole.

Perfunctory assignment to programs not aligned with the real needs of parolees cemented their dispositional schemas about the hopelessness of their situation. Most of the parolees in the study felt that the programs were a way of filling in time and offered them no practical assistance for finding work and establishing themselves in their communities. Mandated program interventions intensified their feelings of subordination and resulted in tactics of resistance.

Parolees were not involved in devising their case plan and goals for parole and beyond. Most court-based parolees re-entered with no sense of purpose or planning. SPA parolees were the only participants to speak of their plans for the future and had actively sought support services to carry them out. An implication for managers and practitioners resides in the collaborative case planning with the focus on practical assistance for needs which may lead to a whole of life plan rather than the focus on parole expiry.

Data also revealed that when autonomy was threatened, parolees responded by disengaging from their goals and in most cases they relinquished risk management goals very quickly. It was clear that the parolees’ habitus limited their engagement in seeking the capital or ‘goods’ to forge new identities in the community, and the scarcity of opportunities reinforced
their acquired dispositions. Participants were not connected to the community and isolated themselves to manage felt stigma and antisocial environments.

**Implications for practitioners**

The Good Lives Model (Ward & Stewart, 2003; Ward & Brown, 2004), presents as a more relevant model for intervention and brings the concept of the self and the psychological need for autonomy into focus as an essential component of human flourishing (Deci & Ryan, 2000). By identifying primary needs of importance and value to the individual, and developing capacities to achieve the more meaningful and valued goals in their lives through guided self-reflection, parolees may be able to develop a more integrated sense of self to assist them in rejoining society.

Revisiting the strength-based approaches underpinned by the universal human needs of well-being such as those identified by Deci & Ryan (2000) and the prudential needs identified in the work of Ward and colleagues (Ward & Brown, 2004; Ward & Maruna, 2007; Ward & Stewart, 2003), may provide a way for practitioners to recognise the root cause of distress and concern in their clients and learn how to support the process of reautonomising as well as manage and reduce risk. This requires practitioners to evaluate the frameworks of particular rehabilitation theories according to their overarching aims, values, and principles, the etiological assumptions that help guide forensic and correctional interventions, and the practice implications (Ward, Yates & Willis, 2011, p. 95). In other words, practitioners need to examine the ‘why and what’ of their practice in the supervision of parolees rather than perfunctorily follow a management plan dominated by the statistical assessments of risk and set responses to minor rule-breaking behaviour.

Practitioners working within the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model of offender management (Andrews & Bonta, 2003) have become increasingly focused on the instruments of assessment, however most parolees in the study showed little real knowledge of the relationship of their assessed needs to their offending and hence, disputed the risk value placed on them.
Interventions for the ascribed risk of parolees in this study focused on the monitoring and surveillance of drug and alcohol use and attendance to referred agencies. Participants who had repeatedly returned drug positive urine tests were considered to be at risk of re-offending and received warnings of breach action. CCOs are under pressure to find alternative means to manage repeated infractions by parolees, and are limited to the availability of intervention supports operating in the parolee’s location. For repeated drug/alcohol infractions, parolees such as Donny and Jim were directed to residential rehabilitation programs out of the area in which they lived. For these parolees, rehabilitation was viewed as an unpalatable choice offered to them, but nevertheless considered by them as the lesser of two evils. The main disincentives associated with attending a residential rehabilitation program reported by participants were reported as being isolated from their family, travelling to and from the facility, being with people they didn’t want to mix with, and giving up their present freedom in the community.

Other intervention avenues need to be explored which may shore up the social capital required to withstand the stigma and marginalisation felt by parolees. Linking parolees with projects and voluntary programs available in their communities may help more so than being reminded of their deficits in risk targeted programs.

Although the court-based parolees had a limited length of time on supervision, the opportunity to establish meaningful and satisfying connections with the agencies which could support their attempts to reautonomise (and therefore manage risk) was wasted. Participant’s ability to negotiate with job seeking agencies and to access help from community supports varied according to their voluntary investment, perceptions of helper efficiency and perceptions of helper recognition and respect. More timely, efficient and appropriate practical assistance for financial and employment security is required to allow for a seamless transition to the community and to develop autonomous skills. Mentoring those who have been caught in the cycle of repeated incarceration is necessary to build the capital required to ease the transition from prison to parole.
All parolees spoke about their interactions with their CCOs and constructed their schemas of legitimacy of ‘the system’ around the relationship. For many participants, their CCO was their most significant support person, and the quality of this relationship determined their engagement with the interventions offered. Parolees reported that a good relationship between themselves and their CCO was related to the more humanistic approach used by their CCO in the way they tried to understand the social context in which parolees attempted to self-govern. Attention is warranted in the silent resistance of some CCOs who sustain their practice of working within a humanistic framework with parolees in the face of pressures to maintain the standards of risk management and public safety agenda of CSNSW. It is in this tension between the ‘habitus’ and organisational ‘field’ (Bourdieu, 1977) that parolees may benefit from their supervision relationship.

The concept of autonomy needs more recognition and examination in correctional practice. This study has revealed that parolees engage a process of reautonomising in the first six months of re-entry in an attempt to resolve their concern about wanting control of their lives—expressed as “getting my life back”. One of the biggest hurdles for correctional practitioners is to provide meaningful interventions to reduce the risk of re-offending and promote re-integration. However, as with most correctional interventions, the focus on individual irrationality is shown by the high proportion of cognitive behavioural programs now offered to offenders throughout CSNSW, and is seen as the primary obstacle to leading a law-abiding life. This focus on the individual as ‘the problem’ obscures the social context and the relations of power in which decisions are made to restore autonomy.

Desistance studies have recognised the importance of social structures in the process of offenders desisting from crime. Since the classic study of Sampson and Laub (1993), factors such as stable relationships, breaking away from anti-social attachments, and satisfying employment were seen to assist the process of re-integration and desistance from crime. Desistance involves the agency and decision-making of the individual to desist from criminal activity while interacting with his social environment and therefore relies on the presence of supporting structures (both internal and external) to achieve a life as a law-abiding citizen. In the process of reautonomising, the
parolees were influenced by their own subjectivity surrounding their status and contextual situation as well as the organisational structures which either hindered or enhanced their attempts to reautonomise. Parolees who planned for a future self and invested in their goals were able to sustain their efforts in order to get their life back. However, this investment was influenced by external structures such as opportunities and support in their social environment and internal dispositional structures which provided the motivation to achieve their goals.

Limitations of the Study
The grounded theory of reautonomising was generated from twenty four interviews with fourteen participants. Eleven participants were released on court-based parole and three were released by the SPA. As is common with small qualitative studies, the discovered grounded theory of reautonomising is a substantive theory and cannot be generalised to the experience of all parolees re-entering the community. Therefore the study is context-bound and can only offer a small slice of action in the social field of parole.

A limiting factor in conducting the study was attempting to recruit participants after they attended their mandatory reporting meeting with their CCO. Although the CCO’s role in each location was limited to notifying this researcher of recently released parolees and providing an area to conduct the interviews, four potential participants voiced their concerns about disclosing personal information which they felt could ‘get back’ to their CCO and affect their parole supervision. This response is worthy of further investigation, particularly in terms of the legitimacy afforded to the supervision relationship that parolees have with their CCO, and how this influences the likelihood of their seeking help and support when things go wrong.

Strengths of the study
Although embarking on this study as a novice grounded theorist, the classic method of grounded theory provided the freedom to discover and explain the concern of importance to the participants, and to acknowledge their concern as worthy of investigating. This researcher’s commitment to work closely with the data and to adhere to the procedures of the grounded theory
method, allowed the emergence and discovery of a different perspective on
the processes involved in the early re-entry experience of the participants.
The strengths of the study lie in the criteria for quality and trustworthiness
drawn from quantitative research tests for rigour, and applied to the
grounded theory method developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The
criteria of fit, relevance, workability, and modifiability were followed
throughout the analysis to generate a middle-range theory to explain the
social process the participants employed to restore their autonomy.

‘Fit’ means that the theory must fit the data. All concepts were derived from
the data through the iterative stages of the constant comparative method.
The categories, sub-categories and properties encompassed all of the data
collected and reflected the concerns of parolees in the study. Chapter Four
describes how the method of constant comparison was applied
systematically to validate the categories.

Relevance refers to the applicability of the theory to the substantive setting
studied. The theory of reautonomising is explained as a process which is
influenced by social-structural and social-psychological conditions which
hinder and facilitate the parolee’s efforts to resolve his problem of restoring
his autonomy.

Workability refers to how the core category accounts for all variation in the
data and how it resolves the problematic of the participants. The grounded
theory of reautonomising is a workable theory which explained the
processes parolees employed to ‘get their lives back’—to retrieve a felt state
of autonomy.

A grounded theory is modifiable if new data can be accommodated and it
still retains its fit, relevance and workability. With theoretical sampling
from a range of settings, particularly highly controlled settings,
reautonomising can be expanded to fit the concerns of participants who
have similar goals (to restore their autonomy) and who experience similar
challenges in achieving them. The theory of reautonomising can
accommodate new data from a range of substantive settings and still retain
its relevance over time.

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The question of what makes the theory of reautonomising a ‘good’ theory can be answered by examining the theory against the criteria of significance, internal consistency, parsimony, empirical adequacy and pragmatic adequacy (Fawcett, 2005, pp. 131-134). The substantive theory of reautonomising contributes in a significant way to the existing criminological and correctional knowledge about the lived realities of parolees as they re-enter the community—specifically in pragmatic terms for current correctional practice and design of programs for risk interventions. The theory gained its internal consistency in the transparency of the philosophical assumptions which underpinned the research and the systematic procedures of constant comparison used to generate the theory which was grounded in the empirical data. Parsimony was achieved through the process of conceptual abstraction of the data to achieve a simple and practical explanation for the problem experienced by participants and how they attempted to resolve it. Empirical adequacy was met by the constant comparison of the data to confirm that the category of reautonomising and its properties was congruent with the empirical evidence (Fawcett, 2005, p. 134) and offered a set of plausible hypotheses to explain the resolving behaviour of the participants in the study.

The concepts that emerged in the study are worthy of more examination in further studies with parolees. The concept of time-framing may have implications for the way supervision in the community is managed, particularly with the supervision of parolees serving short periods of time on parole. Further sampling may provide answers as to why the statistics show the majority of parole revocations are parolees on court-based release. The category of locating the self also points to the need to explore goal setting with parolees on re-entry, not only for the management of ascribed risk, but for a ‘whole of life’ plan to ascertain what an autonomous life means for them and the supports they will need to reach their goals.
Conclusion
This study sought to discover theory to explain how parolees managed ascribed risk on re-entry by using the classic grounded theory method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The grounded theory method was chosen as the most suitable method to tap into the reality of the participant’s world to discover their concern, and to develop a theory explaining how they resolved their concern without imposing professional assumptions onto the data. As is typical of the method in its principle of suspending preconception and grounding the theory in the data, the main concern of participants was one of discovery—revealing a social pattern of behaviour which was not centred on the management of ascribed risk, but on restoring autonomy. The theory of reautonomising emerged to explain a three stage basic social process involving the stages of orientating to the passage of parole, manoeuvring to optimise autonomy and sustaining autonomy. The binary relationship between structure and agency and the spaces in which parolees interacted between them to restore a state of self-government, underpinned the grounded theory of reautonomising in the study.

On a micro-level, autonomy requires the capacity for decision making and the competence to pursue a desired or ‘good life’ by using the opportunities and resources available. Autonomous living incorporates the notion of the self; the developed internal structure which relies on interaction with others to make sense of who one is in the world and how one actively pursues a life desired. The Western liberal ideology of autonomy is the basis for democracy and derives its value from the notion that all citizens are imbued with the democratic and egalitarian rights to live a ‘good life’ within the norms of society and without undue interference from government. However, in order to control and maintain order in its populations, government interference is justified when individuals are deemed as irrational or incapable of being autonomous, particularly where the well-being of its subjects is threatened (such as self-harm and harm to others).
This study emphasised the dimensional nature of the concept of autonomy and the basic desire humans possess to be self-directed and self-ruling. The study also raised the question of whether autonomy is a viable goal for all members of society.

Despite the claims of post-modernist qualitative researchers that the grounded theory method stems from positivism, Glaser (2007) asserted that the grounded theory method does not deal with facts or findings; it deals with variable and modifiable concepts that apply as explanations which are integrated into a theory of interrelated categories and their properties. In following this essential tenet of the method, this researcher found that the research interest into how parolees managed ascribed risk emerged only as a peripheral issue for participants.

The study found that the main concern of parolees was not one of determinedly managing ascribed risk, but one of attempting to restore self-government—to be able to live their own lives the way they wanted. Risk technologies used as a means to classify and relegate specific personal characteristics as ‘needs’ for intervention were seen as conditions of parole over which individuals had little control, however much they tried to circumvent the rules or openly resist the organisational goals of being transformed by normative constraints.

The theory of reautonomising complements research focused on the interplay between the social practices of agents and the way these practices influenced and were influenced by social and psychological structures. From an ontological and epistemological view, the study has attempted to explain some of those ‘deep’ structures situated in this interplay by discovering how parolees made sense of their situation and how they acted upon them. A critical realist lens helped to understand the complexities of the agency-structure dichotomy and to offer the theory of reautonomising as a part of the constantly evolving interaction of power in the ‘deep’ spaces between the poles of agency and structure.

Post-structuralist theories of Foucault (1991b) and Bourdieu (1980) place the social actions of parolees within the realm of the macro-structures of power, government and social institutions. This study informed how the
institutionally ascribed notions of risk, which serve to further embed stigmatising and symbolic subjectivities, are interpreted and ‘managed’ by the populations for which they are intended.

For participants in the study, reautonomising in its simplest meaning to restore self-government was influenced by the salience of their personal goals, the location of the self and their responses to perceived threats and challenges to their autonomy posed by internal and external constraining structures. The findings in the study revealed that contrary to the interventionist principles of risk management, where risk rationalities and technologies underpin the management of offenders, participants in the study did not frame their attempts to reautonomise in terms of risk. Parolees were motivated by the desire ‘to get their lives back’; a desire influenced by their internal constructs of the person they wanted to be, irrespective of moral commitments to the normative pressures of the parole passage and the wider society. The concept of reautonomising was revealed as a context dependent, relational concept—one that needs to be further explored from a social-cultural perspective in the field of correctional practice.
REFERENCES


doi:10.1177/026455050204900202


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APPENDIX A

Information for Research Participants

I am a doctoral student at Charles Sturt University in Bathurst and my name is Susanne Frost. The person supervising my research is:
Doctor Christine Jennett
PHD Adjunct Senior Lecturer
School of Social Sciences and Liberal Studies
Charles Sturt University Bathurst
Phone contact:

My research is called:

Ascribed Risk and How it is Managed: The Experience of Released Offenders

Ascribed risk refers to the risk assessments that were carried out by the probation and parole officer to identify what things about you and your life were related to your offending and how much and what sort of help you need to reduce your likelihood of re-offending. You would have been placed in a risk of re-offending category of low, medium or high depending on how many times you have been convicted and the number of problems you had in your life.

My research will investigate the ways people experience managing their lives when they first get out of prison and how that relates to the problems which have been formally assessed by correctional staff. The reason I am doing this research is to add to the knowledge and practice of the programs which are offered to people before they are released from gaol. This research will also assist in the development of post release programs.

I will ask you a number of questions about the experiences you had as soon as you got out. These questions will relate to everyday living (work, home, friends, money) as well as how you think about the problems you face, what is happening for you now and how you go about managing them. Things change over time, so I would like to interview you again in six months, to hear of your experiences and how you may have adjusted some things to manage in the community. The interview will be similar to the first interview, with some different questions depending on what you have been experiencing.

The research involves two face to face interviews; one approximately six weeks after your release and the other six months later. Each interview will last for approximately one hour and be audio-taped. Your name or any other personal information will not be used to identify you.
Tapes will be transcribed word for word on to my computer to allow me to examine all of the interviews for common themes. From these I aim to develop a model which represents the re-entry experiences of all the participants. I would like to discuss my findings of the interviews with you before I finalise my research paper to make sure that I have interpreted your experience as you see it. The research will be submitted to Charles Sturt University for examination in approximately two years time. Any publications arising from the research will be made only with your permission.

I would like your consent to access your records held by the NSW Department of Corrective Services. This is how I will find the information relating to your risk assessment carried out by the probation and parole service.

Audio-tapes and any other information gained from the course of this research will be stored in a locked file and destroyed five years after at the completion of the research. If I employ someone to transcribe your audio-taped interview, I will ensure that all information will be confidential, accounted for and kept under the same secure conditions as described above.

Interviews can take place at the local probation and parole office where you are reporting so that you will not be inconvenienced by making a special trip to town. If you prefer, I can arrange to see you in another site at a time suitable for you.

Interviews will not be treatment or counselling sessions. If any issues come up for you that are distressing or indicate a need for intervention, I will firstly discuss this with you and refer you to your probation and parole officer if deemed appropriate.

This research is voluntary and you will receive no reward for participation. There will be no penalty or discriminatory treatment if you do not participate. You will be free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation at any time.

The interviews will be confidential with the limitations of:

- If you state intention to harm yourself or others
- If you disclose details of any offence for which you have not been previously been apprehended, prosecuted or convicted.

These are professional and legal requirements which I am obliged to carry out.
If you have any questions about the research and how it will be carried out, please contact me. Details are given below:

Susanne Frost
Doctoral Student
School of Social Sciences and Liberal Studies
Phone contact:

Charles Sturt University's Ethics in Human Research Committee has approved this project. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this project, you may contact the Committee through the Executive Officer:

The Executive Officer
Ethics in Human Research Committee
Academic Secretariat
Charles Sturt University
Private Mail Bag 29
Bathurst NSW 2795
Tel: (02) 6338 4628
Fax: (02) 6338 4194

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.
CONSENT FORM

Consent for participating in research titled:

Re-entry: How Parolees Manage Ascribed Risk

Supervisor:
Doctor Christine Jennett
Adjunct Senior Lecturer
School of Social Sciences and Liberal Studies
Charles Sturt University
Phone contact:

Principal Researcher:
(Doctoral Student)
Susanne Frost
School of Social Sciences and Liberal Studies
Charles Sturt University
Phone contact: 0418416088

I have read and understood the information sheet given to me. I understand I will attend two interviews, each interview lasting for approximately one hour. The purpose of the research has been explained to me including the (potential) risks/discomforts associated with the research.

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research and received satisfactory answers.

My consent is entirely voluntary and I am free to withdraw my participation in the research at any time. If I do withdraw consent to participate I will not be subjected to any penalty or discriminatory treatment.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of this research about me are confidential and that neither my name nor any other identifying information will be used or published without my written permission.

I understand that the interviews will be audio taped and management of information provided has been explained to me.

I understand that all information will be handled in the strictest confidence except as required by law. These exceptions to confidentiality have been fully explained to me.

Charles Sturt University’s Ethics in Human Research Committee has approved this study. I understand that if I have any complaints or concerns about this research I can contact:

Executive Officer:
Ethics in Human Research Committee
Academic Secretariat
Charles Sturt University
Private Mail Bag 29
Bathurst NSW 2795
Phone: (02) 6338 4628 Fax: (02) 6338 4194

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.

I consent to participate in the study and to permit the release of information in my records held by the probation and parole service of the NSW Department of Corrective Services to the researchers for the purpose of the study.

Participant Name.............................................. (Signature) ..................................Date..............

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